

# **2022 Regional Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses**

## **FRIDAY MORNING - PART ONE**

On behalf of the governing body and all of those working at the world headquarters of Jehovah's witnesses, it's my pleasure to welcome you to the 2022 "Pursue Peace" convention.

These convention segments which constitute special editions of JW broadcasting this month and next have been translated into more than 500 languages. The scripture theme for this session and the next is Psalm 29:11,

**"Jehovah will bless his people with peace".**

As you watch the following music video presentation, notice the peace we find by observing Jehovah's creations, reading his word, and sharing his message with others. Please enjoy the presentation.

We are delighted you could join us for the opening session of the "Pursue Peace" convention of Jehovah's Witnesses. Let's sing together song number 86 entitled,

***"We must be taught".***

That's song number 86.

What kind of peace does God give, and to whom does he give it? Brother Stephen Lett, a member of the governing body of Jehovah's Witnesses will answer these questions in the opening talk of our program. Please pay close attention as he develops the theme,

***"Jehovah is the God who gives peace".***

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome all of you and to say Shalom. Why is saying that appropriate. Well Shalom is the Hebrew word for peace, and it occurs over 200 times in the

bible. When it's used as a greeting, just as I used it, it means, may you have peace. So what could be a more appropriate way to greet all of you at the start of this "Pursue Peace" Convention of Jehovah's Witnesses.

We are very pleased that you're with us and we assure you you will not be disappointed. To the contrary, you'll be glad you were able to devote three days to learning what the bible says about how to gain and maintain peace in all areas of your life. But now, let's begin by talking about the person who has drawn us all together for this convention, Jehovah, and how we delight in talking about our marvellous heavenly father.

Philippians 4:9 calls Jehovah the

***"God of peace".***

Now, it's true, He possesses many qualities, love, justice, wisdom, power, but, He also possesses the quality of peace. If you think about it, He is at peace with himself, at peace with angels, at peace with faithful humans, yes, He is the God of peace. But, here's a question, does Jehovah keep this peace to himself? Well, let's get the answer, Romans chapter 15,

Romans 15, and please, let's read verse number 33.

**"May the God who "gives" peace be with all of you, Amen".**

So, He generously gives this peace. As we'll be discussing in fact, He gives every good gift, every perfect present, according to James 1:17., And one of his finest presents is the gift of peace. But now, here's another question, what kind of peace does Jehovah give?

Well, many equate peace with freedom from conflict and strife in one's life, but the peace Jehovah gives is a lot more than that. The peace that only Jehovah can supply brings in feelings of safety, security, well-being.

This, Jehovah given peace, is described very nicely in Philippians chapter 4. Let's go there, Philippians 4, beginning in verse 6,

**"Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything, by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving, let your petitions be made known to God, and the peace of God that surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus".**

So notice Jehovah is saying, do not be anxious over anything.

Would Jehovah tell us to do something it was impossible for us to do? No, but, obviously, He's talking about not being overly anxious. Controlled anxiety can actually be beneficial. It can move us to show concern for others. It can motivate us to work enthusiastically to accomplish an assignment. But now what about excessive uncontrolled anxiety? Well, that can lead to physical problems.

Depression can be crippling, debilitating, and feebling. But now, how can we avoid being overly anxious over anything? The answer is given in the next words of Philippians 4:6 and 7. After telling us not to be anxious Jehovah gives the antidote, He basically tells us to pray, supplicate, petition Him, and we will get that peace of God.

But now, what does the scripture mean when it says that this,

**"Peace of God surpasses all understanding"**

Well, we could say that it's so amazing, so powerful, that we limited humans cannot fully understand it. It defies logic from a human standpoint. Our hearts and minds may be filled with so much worry, fear, anxiety, we see no way out, but we beg Jehovah for the peace that he can supply and then what happens? Our minds and hearts amazingly are filled with calmness, security, tranquility.

Lorraine, a young girl whose mother was dying of cancer said this, "I was in the room when my mother took her last breath. I asked Jehovah to give me the strength to endure and to get through this. Immediately, I felt the

**"Peace of God".**

But now what is meant by the expression,

## **"The peace of God will guard your hearts and your mental powers".**

Well, the Greek word translated guard is a military term that evokes a mental picture of soldiers maintaining a day and night watch. In the same way, see, this piece of God can act like a 24-hour guard over our hearts and mental powers, keeping them calm, secure, and tranquil.

Now, here's a question, what is the key ingredient to our being able to receive this miraculous peace of God? The answer, having a close friendship with Jehovah.

The apostle Paul experienced first hand, many times, that having inner peace depends not on circumstances but rather on a close personal relationship with Jehovah. For example on one occasion, because Paul and Silas boldly preached, they had their garments ripped off of them. They were beaten many blows with rods, they were thrown into the inner prison. Their feet were fastened in stocks. But in the middle of the night, what did Paul and Silas began to do?

They began to pray and sing songs of praise to Jehovah. In amazement, all the other prisoners were listening to them. So obviously their very, very, unfavourable circumstances, had not robbed them of their precious peace of God. So, let's learn this valuable lesson from Paul and Silas. Having the peace of God is not dependent on our circumstances, but, it is dependent on having a close personal relationship with Jehovah.

Thus far we've discussed how Jehovah is a God of peace who gives peace, and we've talked about what kind of peace He gives, but now we ask, to whom does Jehovah give peace? The simple answer is, Jehovah gives peace to those who draw close to him and want to follow his guidance. So, receiving peace from Jehovah starts with living a clean life, following Jehovah's righteous moral standards.

Many people in Satan's world, as you know, believe that God will accept them as they are, that God in effect will lower his standard to accommodate them. Can you imagine such pride? That would be like a pot telling its maker the potter how the pot must be used and the potter must accept this whether he likes it or not. Well we know it doesn't work that way does it. We have to come up to Jehovah's righteous standards. Now, He'll help us but we do the changing certainly not Jehovah.

Interestingly, James chapter 3 verse 17 says that

**"The wisdom from above is first of all pure, then peaceable".**

So if we want peace from Jehovah that will result in peaceful lives we must be pure, according to Jehovah's moral standards. Isaiah 48:22 reads

**"There is no peace, says Jehovah for the wicked".**

Or put another way, those who wickedly set their own moral standards will receive no peace from Jehovah and will not have peaceful lives, but we work hard to live by Jehovah's standards.

Now, it's true Jehovah does his part to help us, but, he does expect us to do our part. We

could say that his blessing on our effort is somewhat like multiplication. What do we mean. Well if we put forth no effort, there's nothing for Jehovah to multiply. See, what is 10 times 0? Zero. Hundred times zero, a thousand times zero, a million times zero, we still have zero. So if we don't do anything Jehovah has nothing to multiply.

Galatians 5:22 tells us that

**“Peace” is an aspect of “the fruitage of the holy spirit”,**

So, the holy spirit will help us cultivate and demonstrate peace. In fact, John 14:26 describes the holy spirit as a

**“Helper”.**

But that expression “helper” doesn't indicate it will miraculously do the job for us, with no effort on our part.

To illustrate this, if we can, imagine that you're working very hard to paint the outside of your house, and a good friend comes to help you. Now, you're painting together but then you decide, I'll just go back in the house and I'll just take it easy. Well, how long will your friend keep painting? If he continued painting, he's no longer a helper he's doing the job for you.

Luke 11:13 tells us that Jehovah will,

**“Give holy spirit to those asking Him for it”,**

So, if we ask for holy spirit, and then do our very best to work in harmony with that helper, we will enjoy peace with God, and we will enjoy and promote harmony, unity, and good relations with others. And what a pleasure it is to associate with those who display peace, this important aspect of the spirit's fruitage.

When a sleeping baby is suddenly awakened in the middle of the night by a loud noise, he becomes frightened doesn't he? and he cries out for help. But, when a parent cuddles him and soothes him with reassuring words, he calms down immediately.

Well David at Psalm 55:16 through 18 said that when he was troubled, he “called out to God” and that Jehovah “heard his voice” and “gave him peace”. Like David, when we're in anguish, we can supplicate our heavenly father and he will soothe and restore our peace. In fact, our loving father is eager to do this for us.

Open up to Jeremiah 29, and notice he's eager to replace our anxiety with the peace from him. Jeremiah 29:11,

**“For I well know the thoughts that I am thinking toward you declares Jehovah, thoughts of peace, and not of calamity, to give you a future and a hope, and you will call me, and come and pray to me and I will listen to you”.**

Isn't that beautiful, our God is ready, willing, and able, to replace our anxieties with this amazing peace that only He can give.

Well, we've now discussed how Jehovah is the God of peace, we've discussed who he gives

the peace to, to those who draw close to him, and earnestly seek peace from him. But now, let's examine how each of us can promote peace with others. In the following video, Brother Kenneth Cook of the governing body will explain how this convention program will help us to "Pursue Peace".

### **VIDEO STARTS**

On behalf of the Governing Body I can say that we really appreciate your attending this "Pursue Peace" convention.

Speaking of peace, we love the serene setting here at our world headquarters on Blue Lake in New York state. At times, the water is as smooth as a mirror. We occasionally see eagles and hawks fly by. And in the fall of the year, when the leaves change colours, the forest can look spectacular.

More important than this tranquil setting though is the abundant peace that Jehovah has given to his organization. We can say this because of the peace and harmony that unite us no matter what our nationality, language, race, tribe, or social background is. This is truly spectacular. Especially when we consider all the turmoil in the world and how divided people are politically, socially, and religiously. However, we cannot take our beautiful peace for granted, it's not maintained automatically. Each of us personally must "Pursue Peace" in order to have God's approval.

Jehovah certainly wants his worshippers to enjoy lasting peace. That was true in ancient times. God told Moses to have the priests in Israel bless the people with very reassuring words. Notice these words that we find at Numbers chapter 6 verses 24 through 26 and hear what the priests were to say to the people,

**“May Jehovah bless you and safeguard you, may Jehovah make His face shine upon you and may He favour you. May Jehovah lift up his face toward you and grant you peace”.**

The next verse states,

**“And they must place my name upon the people of Israel that I may bless them”.**

Jehovah has placed His name on us too and He is richly blessing us.

Let's consider what this convention program is going to cover so that we'll know how we can continue to enjoy God's blessing of peace.

First, we'll consider, *“How to be at peace with God”*. Our greatest peace comes from having a personal relationship with Jehovah. Making Him our best friend benefits us and leads to peace in every other aspect of our life. How can we reach out for a close relationship with God? We need more than a superficial knowledge of Him, we need to get to know Jehovah as a person, and admire his qualities and ways. Then we can love what he loves and hate what he hates.

During this program, listen for details about Jehovah that will draw you ever closer to him.

Second, we'll consider *“How to be at peace with others”*. Our homes should be havens for

peace for our families. This means more than the absence of arguing, it involves putting the interests of our family members ahead of our own.

As we'll learn from this program, that includes showing love and respect to one another, working as a team, improving family communication, and worshipping Jehovah together.

Third, we'll consider *"How to be at peace despite trials and troublesome world conditions"*. During this convention, we're going to tour the world to see how despite opposition, illness, economic problems and natural disasters, our Brothers really care for one another. How they receive help from Jehovah's organization, and how they continue their spiritual activity.

No matter what may threaten our lives or livelihood, we can be confident that Jehovah can help us get through it and retain our peace of mind and heart.

Fourth we'll consider *"How to enjoy peace eternally"*. Once God's kingdom has lifted mankind to perfection, we'll no longer have to "Pursue Peace". As Psalm 72 verse 7 promises,

**"The righteous will flourish, and peace will abound until the moon is no more"**

In other words, there will be peace forever.

This program will help us to anticipate future blessings from Jehovah. Can you see why **"Pursue Peace"** was well chosen as the theme for this year's convention? To pursue something means to chase it in order to capture it.

Because of the influence of Satan his wicked world and our own imperfections, peace is constantly trying to elude us. Therefore we have to chase after it to capture it in our lives. This convention program will help us do that.

May the God of peace be with all of you now and forever. That's the heartfelt wish of all of us on the Governing Body because we love you dearly.

Please enjoy the entire convention program.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

We warmly thank Brother Cook for highlighting some of the ways this convention program will help us to "Pursue Peace".

But now let's briefly preview the convention program that is coming our way, that has been provided by the God of peace, and you may want to follow along by using your copy of the convention program.

You'll note, day one has the theme "Jehovah will bless his people with peace". The first symposium will illustrate how love for God, love for neighbour, and love for God's word, lead to genuine peace. This year's dramatic bible reading is based on the life of Jacob, and as you will see, Jacob gives us an excellent example as to how we can pursue the things making for peace.

Thereafter that, we will have the talk, *"The Result of True Righteousness will be Peace"*, and we'll see in that talk how we can resist temptation. Just as a lion devours prey and assimilates it into his body, Satan tries to get us to succumb to temptations so he can devour us and

assimilate us into his world, but during that talk, we'll learn how to reject his temptations.

Then, in the second half of day one, we'll enjoy our second convention symposium, *"Take delight in God's promises of peace"*. We will be greatly heartened by Jehovah's promises of peace found in the book of Isaiah. For example, one of the talks has a theme, *"The wolf and the lamb will feed together"*.

Today, we can't even imagine feeding a wolf and a lamb together. If we tried such, it would likely result in lamb chops for the wolf, but Jehovah's promise in Isaiah assures us that peace will exist between humans and animals and between animals and other animals.

The third convention symposium has the thought-provoking theme, *"Follow the road map to family peace"*. We'll learn how despite challenges, marriage mates, parents, and children, can successfully follow that road map to family peace.

Then we'll enjoy the talk, *"Loyally support the Prince of Peace"*. That talk will remind us of the importance of maintaining our neutrality by not taking sides on political issues.

To conclude day one, we'll have the intriguing talk, *"Do not be misled by imitation peace"*. It will contrast the world's so-called peace with a genuine peace that Jesus will give his followers.

But then day two, notice the theme, *"Be found spotless and unblemished and in peace"*.

The second day starts with a symposium designed to invigorate us for our ministry, so that we can be ready to share the good news of peace. That will be followed by the talk, *"Young people, choose a path that leads to peace."* And that talk will encourage our dear young ones to pursue the full-time ministry. And we want to say to you dear young ones, if you do this, you will enjoy a happy life, and you will have no regrets. Next, we will see a video that shows how our Brothers around the world are continuing their spiritual activity, and are enjoying peace despite difficult trials. Then, a highlight of the day will be the baptism of new disciples of Jesus. In the baptism talk, the baptism candidates will be encouraged to go on walking in the way of peace, and why, because this is truly the best way of life.

Two more symposiums will use video dramatizations to contrast traits of *"Peace Wreckers"* with the qualities of peace makers, and what a stark contrast between the two you'll see in in these symposiums. It's kind of like the contrast between bitter and sweet.

Part one of this year's bible drama will remind us of ancient examples of God's people who pursued peace, and will definitely be able to relate to their examples and relate it to our current situation in life.

The day will conclude with showing us how to, *"Safeguard our uniting bond of peace"*. We'll see how we can do so by putting the application of bible principles always ahead of following local culture and traditions;

Now day three, the theme, *"May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace"*.

The opening symposium will examine seven examples of ones who sowed peace and reaped peace. We will examine Joseph and his Brothers, the Gibeonites, Gideon, Abigail,

Mephibosheth, Paul and Barnabas and modern examples.

We truly hope that many accept our invitation to hear the enlightening public bible discourse entitled, *"Friendship with God, how possible"*.

Now if we think about it, we're not born as friends of God because we're born as sinful offspring of Adam.

Actually, we think about it, we're born as enemies of God.

Sometimes you'll hear people say of a little baby, look at that little angel, but more accurate would be to say, look at that little enemy of God. Now of course, we love that little baby, and it's not not hopeless because our loving creator has made reconciliation with him within the reach of everyone. We can become a good friend of God and that close relationship with Jehovah will become our most valuable possession.

But then, after we enjoy part two of the bible drama, the concluding talk of this convention will fill our hearts with a joyful prospect that universal peace is sure to come. It's guaranteed by the God who cannot lie.

Finally, we'll join in singing a beautiful new original song, and will close with a prayer of praise to Jehovah the source of peace.

So dear Brothers and Sisters, there's a brief synopsis of our wonderful three-day convention, provided by the God of peace, that is coming our way. And throughout, the program will be enhanced with dozens of videos and we'll see our Brothers either in real life settings or dramatic dramatizations that we'll definitely be able to relate to, in fact, the following video is a little small sampling of the videos you will see during this convention,

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Hey everyone guess who just walked in, Olivia. Today's poll, would she ever, no she would never, she's an angel.

I wanted to go up to the girls and smash their phones...

Neutral, ain't no neutral you're just a coward, take your trash...

What I was feeling back then was just sadness, never really peace...

Hello everyone, Haley from junior design here...

Is there just a little bit of envy in there?...

In June of 2018 a huge group of armed men came to us. They represented the ideals of my childhood...

Do you have any idea what this is gonna cost us? I didn't have a choice, You went behind my back...

Where's your mask? Do you know how many people have actually gotten sick? Zero...

That's what always happens when you're just about to lose all your strength. Jehovah does

that something for you...

I'm so grateful that we made peace before the world turned upside down...

### **VIDEO ENDS**

But here's an important question for all of us. Will we prepare our heart to receive God's peace during this convention. Ezra chapter 7 verse 10 tells us that,

**“Ezra prepared his heart to consult the law of Jehovah and to practice it, and to teach it to the Israelite's”.**

Now, what was the result? Verse 11 tells us, he became an,

**“Expert in the study of the commandments of Jehovah”.**

Well in imitation of Ezra, how can we prepare our heart for what we're going to take in, at this convention? Well for one thing, very important, by prayer and meditation we can make sure that our heart is ready, receptive to receive Jehovah's instruction and we can also make sure that in our heart, we are determined to apply what Jehovah teaches us.

But then, another thing we can do, we can pay close attention to the music video presentations that will be shown before every session of the convention begins. Now these presentations have been carefully crafted to help prepare our heart for each session.

Much time, effort, and expense has been expended in preparing these beautiful presentations. So please, listen carefully as the sounds and sayings prepare your heart to accept the spiritual instruction that will follow. Yes may each of us be determined to listen attentively to what Jehovah is teaching us.

May we be determined to imitate the Psalmist who humbly stated at Psalm 85 verse 8,

***“I will listen to what the true God Jehovah says, for he will speak peace to his people”.***

If we do, we will learn how to "Pursue Peace" with all people to the praise of Jehovah, the God of peace, who blesses his people with peace.

Yes we will be successful in pursuing peace until we no longer have to pursue it. Now, what do we mean, well think about it does Jehovah have to "Pursue Peace"? Does He have to chase it in an effort to try to catch it? No, Jehovah merely displays peace. Well in the new world, what a wonderful time it will be when we no longer have to "Pursue Peace" but like Jehovah, we can merely display peace. But right now let's be determined to continue to "Pursue Peace" and may this wonderful convention that is coming our way help us to do so.

Thank you Brother Lett for helping us prepare our hearts for the rest of the program. We are ready for Jehovah to teach us how to "Pursue Peace". How is peace related to love? How can we show love? And, What blessings result when we do? The first symposium of this convention will answer those questions. Brother Seth Hyatt a helper to the service committee of the governing body will begin with the talk,

***“How Love Leads to Genuine Peace, Love for God”.***

What do you think, is there a connection, a relationship between love and peace, and if so what role does love play in achieving genuine peace? The bible helps us to appreciate that love is an essential element in achieving genuine peace, so we're interested in showing love.

As students of the bible, we know that humans were created in the image of God and as a result, you and I have the ability to show love. But we also know that we live in a world that has a very distorted view and definition of love. That combined with our own imperfection means that if we're not careful our view of love can become distorted. So, how do we guard against that? By allowing Jehovah to teach us how to love, and when you think about it, what better teacher could we have.

The bible says that "God is love". That means that Jehovah, our creator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, who embodies, who personifies love, is willing to teach us how to love, And how does he do that? Well, by means of his word the bible, and, by means of his own beautiful example.

As we get acquainted with Jehovah, we learn what love really is, and as we put that love to work as Jesus did, then we're in a position to enjoy genuine peace.

In this symposium we're going to explore how love for God, love of neighbour, and love for God's word the bible, can lead to genuine peace.

First, let's talk about love for God. How important is that, If we want to enjoy genuine peace? Well Jesus provides some insight in a statement he made that's recorded in our bibles at Matthew chapter 22. Let's look at it. Matthew chapter 22 and we're going to read verse 37.

Now to provide some context for these words, Jesus has been asked a question by a man who is well versed in the law. What is the greatest commandment in the law? Notice how Jesus responds.

**"He said to him, you must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind, this is the greatest and first commandment".**

"You must love Jehovah your God". A command. Love for Jehovah is essential. It has to be the most important relationship in our life. More important than any human, more important than anything. We want to love Jehovah, to what extent?

Well, Jesus says, "*With your whole heart*". And what does that involve? The context of Jesus words helps us to understand that he was talking about a person's feelings, emotions, desires. So, does love for God involve our emotions? Absolutely. But it has to involve more than a simple affection for God. Why do we say that? Well, what did Jesus say next? "With your whole soul". That is with your entire being. We use everything we have to praise Jehovah and to prove our love for him. Even more is involved. Jesus concludes by saying, "With your whole mind".

So our intellectual faculties are involved. We're willing to take the time to get to know Jehovah's thinking and make it our thinking. We want to think the way Jehovah thinks. We want to understand his purpose and his requirements for us and, we want to understand his personality.

Now, when we think about that kind of love, it's clear that it encompasses our thoughts, our words, and our actions. Nothing is left out. And that kind of love provides a basis for a friendship with God, and that results in peace with God.

So there we see the progression loving Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, and mind leads to peace with God. And , as we enjoy peace with God, we can also enjoy inner peace, and peace with those around us.

Now, how does that work? Well, our love for Jehovah motivates us to imitate him, and we cultivate the qualities that Jehovah displays. For example, patience, kindness, mildness, qualities that make us attractive to others, and qualities that promote peace with others.

I'm sure you would agree that we want to be at peace with God. But sometimes our peace can be threatened. We may experience pressure, we may be the subject of some wrong, some injustice, some evil that threatens our peace. And then the question is, will we handle things in a way that is pleasing to Jehovah, or will we become impatient or try to take matters into our own hands?

In the following dramatization, notice how a family draws strength from a bible account that highlights love and respect for Jehovah's sovereignty.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Olivia, Olivia, hurry, you're gonna be late for school.

Thank you.

Okay mom, I'm going to preach,

See you,

Bye mom, love you.

Have a good day,.

See you later mom.

Today's pole...

Okay, I'm totally posting that. Do it. Okay, it's up.

Hey everyone, Brooke here,

And Amanda,

Guess who just walked in? Olivia, and there's Jake. Today's pole, would she ever?

No she would never, she's an angel.

I think it's all an act. You know she's wild. Oh, she saw us.

I don't even think she likes guys.

What if she's into girls?

Everybody's getting it. I bet she's still a virgin.

Hey, can I see that? Yeah, of course, here you go.

Enjoy Life Forever. Now, how are you going to do that?

Well, that's a very good question. Actually, well God promised...

No, no, no, not God. You, what are you doing?

Me, well, I try to help others.

Try? Man, all you do is stand next to your little cart while the rest of us stand up for your rights bro.

Well, I'm actually neutral. Neutral?

Ain't no neutral, you're just a coward, take your trash.

How'd it go?

It was a tough day at the cart but I'm okay.

Brooke here and Amanda guess who just walked in?

Olivia, what's wrong

Hey everyone, Brooke here, and Amanda,

Guess who just walked in Olivia and there's Jake. Today's pole, would she ever,

No she would never, she's an angel.

I think it's all an act, you know she's wild. Oh, she saw it.

I'm so sorry that happened to you, you know, it reminds me of a situation Paul was in. I think it was Acts chapter 16 and verse 23.

**"After they had inflicted many blows on them, they threw them into prison and ordered the jailer to guard them securely. Because he got such an order, he threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stalks, but about the middle of the night, Paul and Silas were praying and praising God with song, and the prisoners were listening to them".**

What do you think made them want to sing? They loved Jehovah and when they focused on that, how do you think they felt?

I think they felt some peace.

That's right, how about we dig a little bit deeper?

Okay

**VIDEO ENDS**

But what did you notice, Gabe and Olivia are under pressure. Olivia in the classroom, Gabe at the witnessing cart. How will they handle the pressure in a way that preserves their peace with Jehovah? Well, it's a good question and really all of us need to reflect on that question when we're under pressure.

We know that Jehovah's way is the best way. We're convinced that his way of ruling is the best way, but when we're subjected to pressure, perhaps the victim of some injustice, or even of some evil, we may be inclined to take matters into our own hands, and when we do, it can jeopardize our peace.

So, how do we demonstrate respect for Jehovah's sovereignty? The inspired advice in Romans chapter 12 can help. Let's look together at Romans chapter 12, beginning in verse 17.

**“Return evil for evil to no one”, so this provides the context for what follows. We may suffer some evil, “return evil for evil to no one. Take into consideration what is fine from the viewpoint of all men”,**

And then notice verse 18,

**“If possible, as far as it depends on you, be peaceable, be a peacemaker with all men”.**

Now these words really heighten our appreciation for Jehovah's reasonableness. Why do we say that? Because Jehovah doesn't ask us to do something that we can't do. He doesn't ask us to control others, no, “to the extent it depends on you”, Jehovah asks that each of us control ourselves, our response to a situation, and to be peacemakers. and then, an explanation, verse 19,

**“Do not avenge yourselves beloved but yield place to the wrath”,**

Why? for it is written,

**“Vengeance is mine, I will repay says Jehovah”.**

So the advice is, be a peacemaker and leave wrath to God. Let him determine if, and when, and upon whom, vengeance will be brought. It's easy to say, but, is it always easy to do? No.

The example of king David can be very helpful to us. Through no fault of his own, David became the target of king Saul's murderous hatred, and on several occasions Saul tried to kill David. For several years, David lived as a fugitive, but there were opportunities during that time for David to harm Saul, even to kill him.

Now, he could have justified that in his mind but, do you think, had he done so, it would have threatened his peace? His peace, especially with Jehovah. We know that it would, so how did David respond? On one occasion, he said to his men, it is unthinkable, from Jehovah's standpoint, that I should do such a thing to my lord, the anointed of Jehovah.

What helped David? Well, he saw a bigger picture than David and Saul didn't he, he saw a picture with David Saul and Jehovah, and he knew that if Saul needed to be corrected Jehovah would do it in his time, and way. As a result, David was willing to be patient, and he preserved his peace, his peace with God, his inner peace, and his peace with those around

him.

What a beautiful example and we can be sure that if we demonstrate our love for Jehovah by respecting His sovereignty, waiting on Him, that we will enjoy peace, as well. Jehovah assures us that He will bless His people, He will bless us with peace, so let us be determined to love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, and mind, and to demonstrate our love for Jehovah by patiently waiting on him and respecting his sovereignty, His way of doing things. If we do, we will enjoy the incomparable peace of God.

Now Brother Ralph Walholz, a helper to the personnel committee will present the next talk of this symposium,

***“How love leads to genuine peace , love of neighbour”***

Foretelling dominant traits that would exist in the last days, 2 Timothy chapter 3:2 says that,

**“Men will be lovers of themselves”.**

Is it wrong for us to love ourselves? No, it's normal, even necessary to have a healthy love of oneself, after all, Jesus said,

**“You must love your neighbour as yourself”.**

And we'll talk more about that in a minute however, the love mentioned here is distorted and selfish and because it prevents love of neighbour it becomes a barrier to peace.

Some bible scholars suggest that Paul put love of self at the top of his list at Second Timothy chapter 3 verses 1 through 5, because all the remaining negative characteristics in the list result from it, and those traits too are a barrier to peace, for example,

**“Not being open to any agreement”,**

mentioned in Second Timothy chapter 3 and verse 3 often leads to anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech.

Rather than bringing peace, such a lack of self-control stirs up strife. On the other hand, love of neighbour has the opposite effect, it leads to genuine peace.

Please turn to Matthew chapter 22 verse 36, one of the pharisees versed in the law tests Jesus,

**“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law”.**

Jesus responded with the words in verse 37, just considered at length in the preceding talk,

**“You must love Jehovah your God”.**

But then Jesus goes beyond the original question and quotes a second commandment. Let's read verse 39.

**“The second like it is this, you must love your neighbour as yourself”.**

Jesus is saying that the two commandments love of God and love of neighbour are linked. Now, how exactly would you define neighbour? Please turn to Luke chapter 10. Notice how Jesus answered this very question,

**“Who really is my neighbour”.**

Jesus responds clearly with his renowned illustration of the neighbourly Samaritan. In Jesus day, the Jews disdained Samaritans. Their attitude moved Jesus to make a powerful point. In his illustration. Jesus said that the Samaritan took extraordinary measures to help a Jewish man, the Jew had fallen victim to robbers, and his own countrymen ignored him, leaving him half dead. What Jesus said must have stunned the audience. Luke chapter 10 verses 33 and 34 reads,

**“But a certain Samaritan travelling the road came upon him and at seeing him, he was moved with pity, 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”.**

Jesus then asked a penetrating question in verse 36,

**“Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbour”?**

His words recorded in verse 37 are also directed to you and to me, go and do the same yourself. Yes, our neighbours include not only our family members and our Christian Brothers and Sisters but all whom we encounter from day to day. In other words, our love extends to those who are not of our own race, tribe, nationality, or religion.

How do we show that love? Please turn with me to Romans chapter 13. Because we love our neighbour, we avoid conduct that erupts disrupts peace, instead, we strive to apply the inspired counsel at Romans chapter 13 verses 8 through 10.

**“Do not owe anything to anyone except to love one another, for whoever loves his fellow man has fulfilled the law. For the law code, you must not commit adultery, you must not murder, you must not steal, you must not covet, and whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this saying, you must love your neighbour as yourself. Love does not work evil to one's neighbour therefore, love is the law's fulfillment”.**

That means that our responsibility is to treat others in ways that promote peace. When others treat us unkindly, we endeavour to imitate Jesus, when he was being insulted, he did not return the insult when he was suffering, he didn't go threatening, imitating the "Prince of Peace", and the God of peace, gives us inner peace.

In the following dramatization notice how a family benefits from the apostle Paul's example of displaying love of neighbour, even when provoked.

What are you gonna do, you're just a coward, man, all you do is stand next to your little, you don't do anything? You just stand next to your little cart, once again, no neutral right.

Gabe what happened today? It's just I've been yelled at in service before but this time i

wanted to, I don't know, I wanted to go up to the girls and smash their phones. I'm so glad that you didn't, yeah but I feel guilty because I was like, I was like so angry.

It's okay let's keep reading. We had left off in Acts 16 verse 26.

**“Suddenly a great earthquake occurred, so that the foundations of the jail were shaken, moreover all the doors were instantly open and everyone's bonds came loose. When the jailer woke up and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself assuming that the prisoners had escaped, but Paul called out with a loud voice, do not hurt yourself for we are all here, so he asked for lights and rushed in, and seized with trembling, he fell down before Paul and Silas”.**

Now, think about what the jailer had done to Paul. He could have hated him for it,

Yeah, he could have, but I guess he saw the jailer's pain instead of just his own, yeah, Paul loved his neighbour. He didn't hold back trying to save his life.

Hey, how do you get the nerve to keep coming out here.

Look, you were right about what you said. No one should stand around while other people suffer injustice.

So, do something, fight like we do.

This is my way of making a difference, the only way that I know the world can really change.

Come on man, the bible?

Like, I get what you're thinking but let me show you just one scripture.

All right, one scripture.

So, this is a verse in the bible that convinced me of how i can make a difference. It's in Matthew chapter 24 verse 14. Here it says,

**“And this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come”.**

In the dramatization, Paul could have reacted in a negative way towards the jailer, however, in spite of the way he had been treated, he displayed neighbourly love, and this had a powerful effect on the jailer, and brought praise to Jehovah.

Because we are imperfect, we must work hard at cultivating love for our neighbour. This is illustrated in what happened with the apostle Peter. Prior to becoming a follower of Jesus. He did not have fellowship with non-Jewish people, but after he became a Christian, God taught him that division between Jews and Gentiles was not to continue, and Peter got the point.

In Acts chapter 10 verses 34 and 35, Peter's quoted as saying,

**“Now I truly understand that God is not partial, but in every nation the man who fears him and works what is right is acceptable to him”.**

Peter even stayed in the newly converted gentiles home for days, and he continued the practice of eating with non-Jewish Christians however, 13 years later, while in Syrian Antioch, Peter suddenly stopped associating with gentile Christians, why?

He feared the reaction of some Jewish Christians who were slow to accept change. This illustrates that prejudice can be deeply rooted. It takes constant effort to rid ourselves of it but, we must learn to view others impartially as Jehovah does. We want to treat others as Jehovah treats them.

In his Sermon on the Mount Jesus said,

**“You heard it was said you must love your neighbour and hate your enemy, however I say to you, continue to love your enemies, and to pray for those who persecute you”.**

Then, as recorded in Matthew chapter 5 and verse 45, he explains why we want to show that type of love,

**“So that you may prove yourselves sons of your father who is in the heavens, since he makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous”.**

This love, produced by holy spirit, is markedly different from the sort of love that is common in the world. It's based on a higher principle. Jesus said, even sinners will follow a policy of like for like, but, if we want to prove ourselves sons of our father who's in the heavens, we must be different. We welcome others as God in Christ have welcomed us.

In Romans 15:7 the bible says to us,

**“Welcome one another, just as Christ also welcomed you”.**

The Greek word used there conveys the idea of receiving someone kindly or hospitably, such as into one's home or circle of friends. Prejudice withers as love grows. Remember that at one time we were all strangers or foreigners, not close to God but, Jehovah drew us to him with cords of love. Christ welcomed us, he opened the door as it were so that we could become part of God's family. Since Jesus has kindly accepted us as imperfect as we are, it should be unthinkable for us to reject anyone else.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, divisions, prejudice, and hostility will doubtless increase in the world as we approach the end of this wicked system. As servants of Jehovah though, we seek the wisdom from above which is impartial and promotes peace.

We rejoice as we forge friendships with people from other lands, accept cultural differences and possibly even learn the languages of others.

When we do this peace flows just like a river, and justice, like the waves of the sea. We work what is good toward all, but especially our Brothers. Love of neighbour moves us to make sacrifices in behalf of others and to share the good news at every opportunity. Our master Jesus said, this is my commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you.

What are the blessings that come from love of neighbour? Jesus answers that at John chapter 15, and we'll read verses 8 through 10. Beginning with verse 8. *Number one,*

**“My father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit, and prove yourselves my disciples”.**

*The second blessing, verse 9,*

**“Just as the father has loved me, so i have loved you, remain in my love if you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love just as i have observed the commandments of the father and remain in his love”.**

Brother Robert Cerranco, the helper to the writing committee will now present the final talk of this symposium,

***“How love leads to genuine peace, love for God's word”.***

Can you imagine a collection of some 40 million books. They would fill more than 800 miles or 1300 kilometres of bookshelves, and yet, that is what you can find in what has been described as the largest library in the world, the library of congress in Washington DC in the United States. Which book would you say is the most worthwhile to read among all those millions of volumes? We can let the apostle Paul answer that question. In his Second letter to Timothy at Second Timothy 3:15, he referred to the holy writings,

**“Which are able to make us wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus”.**

He was referring of course to God's own written word, that we know as the bible. The contents of this book can give us the wisdom that we need to gain salvation, and that makes it the most worthwhile book on earth.

But how can a book have such a profound effect on a person. Well, when describing books and their authors per-say, the secular writer Gilbert Hyatt once stated, *“books are not lumps of lifeless paper, but minds alive on the shelves from each of them goes out its own voice”*, so, by taking down one of these volumes and opening it, one can call into arrange the voice of a man, the author, far distant in time and space, and hear him speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart.

When we take this book,, the bible down off the shelf and open it, we are calling into range the voice of its author, Jehovah, and is he speaking to us, mind to mind, heart to heart. Indeed, He is, for example, at Jeremiah 29:11, Jehovah tells us,

**“I well know the thoughts that i am thinking toward you, thoughts of peace and not of calamity, to give you a future, and a hope”.**

and at Proverbs 27:11, Jehovah tells us,

**“Be wise and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me”.**

How grateful we are that Jehovah has given us his precious word the bible that reveals his intimate thoughts and feelings. That draws us close to him, and it teaches us how to gain everlasting life. Because we love Jehovah, we also love and cherish what he tells us through the pages of his written word and that is exactly how the Psalmist felt who wrote the 119<sup>th</sup> Psalm. Please open your bible to Psalm 119<sup>th</sup> and find verse 161, that's Psalm 119<sup>th</sup> verse 161, in the latter part it says,

**“But my heart stands in awe of your words”.**

Now see what more he wrote in verses 167 and 168,

**“I keep your reminders and I love them dearly, I observe your orders and your reminders for you are aware of all that I do”.**

This bible writer did not view God's orders and reminders as just a list of cold legalistic statutes. And we can be sure that he did not consider them to be burdensome, instead he knew that they formed the basis for the best life possible and that is why he not only wanted to learn God's orders but he also desired to observe or obey them. The Psalmists believe that God's word is the one thing worth studying, and that, because of knowing God's orders and reminders, we are far wiser than people who know everything else except God's word.

Now look at what more he wrote in verse 165,

**“Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law, nothing can make them stumble”.**

Herein lies a major reason why we love God's word. Abiding by it leads to genuine peace. Everyone longs for peace in their life and through the pages of the bible we learn how to attain it. That is why we choose to live by God's word even in the face of the trials that arise in our life.

Some of which may try to steal away our peace of mind and heart, and yet Jehovah knows what we are going through every day of our lives and stands ready to help us. If we love and obey Jehovah's word, we will not be stumbled spiritually by what someone else does or says or by any other matter or situation in life, but how does love for God's word lead to such peace and keep us from stumbling?

We know that all scripture is inspired of God, making the bible the most reliable guide for every aspect of life, after all, his wisdom is infinitely superior to our own. Reading the bible enables us to look at matters from God's elevated point of view. It is just as the prophet Isaiah wrote at Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9. If you'd like to open to that please, Isaiah 55 8-9 he wrote,

**“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, and your ways are not my ways declares Jehovah, for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts”.**

Just imagine, Jehovah's thoughts and language must be vastly superior to those of humans. When he communicates with us as he does through the pages of the bible, he simplifies how he expresses his thoughts so that we can understand them then. As we take in all that Jehovah says, we can let his thinking guide our thinking. Reading the bible can be likened to peering into a mirror because its message has the power to allow us to see ourselves as we really are, and it shows us where adjustments are needed in our attitude and conduct.

Thus far in this symposium, we have seen how this can actually work. We have seen two dramatizations of a widowed mother using the bible to help her teenage children avoid being stumbled by other young people who had been harassing them. Remember her son Gabe had been called a coward by a couple of tough-looking youths while he was engaged in public

witnessing, and her daughter Olivia had been chided by other girls for not being interested in dating one of the guys in her class.

Their mother used what Jehovah inspired the apostle Paul to write about with his ordeal in prison to show how he was able to preserve his peace in a very difficult situation and that in turn helped Olivia and Gabe to safeguard their own peace.

Let's see what more the mother finds in the bible to help Olivia avoid being stumbled into conduct that could rob her of peace.

Guess who just walked in, Olivia and there's Jake.

Olivia, what are you thinking?

I don't know how they can do that. I don't even follow them. If this doesn't stop, I don't know if I can...

You're strong, Okay, you just can't let them get to you.

It feels out of your control doesn't it?

Hey, I think we need another bible example. Remember when we studied about the Shulamite girl?

Yeah I remember.

And who was pressuring her?

Solomon, but she wasn't interested in him, just like I'm not interested in that boy Jake, so..

But it wasn't just him. There were the daughters of Jerusalem in Solomon's court. They urged her to accept his attentions, but do you remember what she said? In song of Solomon chapter 2 and verse 7 says,

**“I put you under oath o' daughters of Jerusalem, by the gazelles and the doe's of the fields, Do not try to awaken or arouse love and me until it feels inclined”.**

So despite all of the pressure, who was really in control?

She was. No one was going to push her into something that she didn't want to do.

She even said,

**“I am a wall”.**

You have the same power, and if you believe that, it'll change how you handle the pressure. Now give me a hug.

Hey guys, update on yesterday's topic, I guess she's still needs a man.

I just posted it, go like my video.

All they want is to see me give in.

Hey guys, update on yesterday's topic, I guess she's still.

Why would I give them the satisfaction. My peace comes from doing the right thing. Nobody can make me stumble, I am a wall.

Olivia's mother thought of another inspired bible example that of the Shulamite girl who was being urged by the young women in Solomon's court to accept his amorous attentions, but despite the pressure, the Shulamite girl remained in control, for no one was going to push her into something that she did not want to do.

Olivia got the point. As she thought to herself, my peace comes from doing the right thing. Nobody can make me stumble, I am a wall.

It is obvious that the mother had a real love for God's word, knew it well, and calmly and skilfully used it to guide the thinking of her children, to keep them from stumbling.

So, many people these days put God's word out of their mind to prevent it from influencing their life, but as the world's morals decline, we must stick loyally to God's word to conform our conduct to his pure and holy thinking, and strengthen our determination to live by his standards.

That is just what the apostle Paul urged us to do at Romans chapter 12 and verse 2. If you would turn there please, Romans 12 and verse 2. Paul wrote,

**“And stop being moulded by this system of things but be transformed by making your mind over so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God”.**

God's word strengthens us to resist conforming to the corrupting practices of Satan's world and to suppress temptations toward wrongdoing.

Now, as we prove to ourselves that the will of God is good and perfect, then we should also accept that loyally obeying God is the best way of living. There is a direct connection between heeding scriptural teachings and obeying or enjoying genuine peace, however for Jehovah's word to have such power in our lives, we need to read the bible every day and meditate on why it's counsel it's beneficial. That means reading it at a pace that allows us to ponder on what we are reading, and doing this helps to fix in our minds the portions that are especially helpful to us. When asked why he reads the bible every day one Christian replied, “If i repeatedly pray to Jehovah during the day and expect him to hear me, why shouldn't i also listen to God by reading his word every day. If we want to be a good friend, why would we do all the talking”? He makes a very good point doesn't he? By reading the bible, we are listening to Jehovah, and that is how we get his viewpoint on matters.

So, do you allow God to speak to you every day? We can measure how effective our bible reading is by the influence it has on our attitude and conduct. When our peace is disturbed, we can look into the source of divine wisdom for God's guidance.

Speaking prophetically of anointed Christians at Isaiah 54:13, the prophet wrote,

**“All your sons will be taught by Jehovah and their peace will be abundant”.**

Now, those words apply, in principle to Christ's other sheep, as well.

Thankfully, when Christ's anointed Brothers, the faithful and discreet slave, prepare spiritual food for us such as this convention program. They hold firmly to Jehovah's word and they never water it down. We always receive spiritual instruction that upholds Jehovah's high moral standards and we are blessed with upon abundant peace when we accept Jehovah's instruction.

Isaiah penned another prophecy that is being fulfilled today and that we find it Isaiah 2 verses 2 through 4. He saw in a vision of the last days, people from all the nations streaming to true worship, and for what reason? Isaiah wrote of Jehovah,

**“He will instruct us about his ways and we will walk in his paths”**

And in what would this result,

**“So that they will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation nor will they learn war anymore”.**

In his goodness, Jehovah is willing to teach we imperfect humans, how to achieve genuine abundant peace earthwide, and he does that through the pages of his own written word. What a privilege it is to be taught by our God. No matter what problem may threaten the peace of our personal life, our family, or our congregation, we are confident that the solution can be found in the bible and as we have learned from this symposium, our continued love for Jehovah, for our neighbour, and for God's word, will lead to our enjoying everlasting peace in God's new world.

Thank you Brothers for teaching us how love motivates our pursuit of peace. Each of us now has an opportunity to praise Jehovah with song. We will sing song number 24 entitled,

***“Come to Jehovah's mountain”, song number 24.***

## **FRIDAY MORNING - PART TWO**

There is an ongoing need for volunteers at Bethel and on theocratic construction projects. Although the Covid-19 pandemic has limited the number of those who may be invited at this time, there is still a need for volunteers.

As you watch the following video, please note the spirit displayed by those who make themselves available for Bethel service.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Making yourself available for Bethel service is like knocking on a door that leads to many other privileges of service. Of course, to serve at Bethel requires a self-sacrificing spirit and a willingness to serve wherever there is a need in harmony with the attitude displayed by the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 6:8,

**“Then I heard the voice of Jehovah saying, whom shall I send, and who will go for us?”**

**And I said, here I am, send me”.**

When Isaiah learned about an opportunity to do more in Jehovah's service, he responded eagerly even though he did not know exactly what he was going to be assigned to do. It was enough for him to know that Jehovah was extending an invitation to serve in a special way and Isaiah wanted to volunteer.

The same spirit is shown by Bethel family members worldwide . If the branch committee determines that there is a need for your services, they will decide where you can best be used, whether at Bethel or perhaps on the theocratic construction assignment. Submitting your application may open a door of opportunity to serve Jehovah and his organization in a variety of ways.

**VIDEO ENDS**

That was an excerpt from the video, “Making yourself available for Bethel service”. If you are interested in serving at Bethel or on theocratic construction projects on a part-time or full-time basis, please watch the entire video on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

Baptized Christians who are 19 years of age or older and are interested in volunteering should apply. Speak to your congregation secretary for more information. If possible, please submit your application electronically on [jw.org](http://jw.org).

Have you ever found yourself in a situation where your piece was threatened? How did you handle it? We can learn much from the faithful man Jacob about how to make peace. Please open your bibles to Genesis chapter 26 and follow along as Brother Mark Sanderson, a member of the governing body, applies the lessons in the dramatic bible reading with the theme,

***“Jacob a man who loved peace”.***

Have you ever been the victim of oppression or injustice? Have you been angered by something someone has said or done? Who of us hasn't. In situations like that, people who don't know Jehovah often react in a way that's far from peaceful. They retaliate, they fight, they hit back. But we know that Jehovah sees what happened and he can set matters straight. We're wise to remember the words of Jesus, “Happy are the mild tempered, Happy are the peacemakers”.

The bible describes a man who remained mild and peaceable in some extremely difficult and stressful situations. Repeatedly he chose not to fight, preferring a course that led to peace. That man was Jacob.

Jacob learned from the peaceful example of his father Isaac. There was a famine in the land, and Isaac moved his family to Ge'rar, which was ruled by Abimelech, king of the Philistines. Let's read about the problems that arose and see how Isaac dealt with them.

Please turn to Genesis chapter 26 and verse 12.

**“And Isaac began to sow seed in that land, and in that year he reaped 100 times what he sowed, for Jehovah was blessing him. The man became wealthy and he continued to prosper until he became very wealthy. He acquired flocks of sheep and herds of cattle and a large body of servants and the Philistines began to envy him, so the Philistines took soil and stopped up all the wells that his father's servants had dug in the days of Abraham. Abimelech then said to Isaac move from our neighbourhood for you have grown far stronger than we are, so Isaac moved from there and encamped in the valley of Ge'rar and began dwelling there, and Isaac again dug the wells that had been dug in the days of his father Abraham, but, that the Philistines had stopped up after Abraham's death, and he called them by the names that his father had given them. When the servants of Isaac were digging in the valley, they found a well of fresh water, and the shepherds of Ge'rar began quarrelling with the shepherds of Isaac saying the water is ours. So he named the well E'sek because they had quarrelled with him, and they started digging another well, and they began quarrelling over it also, so he named it Sit'nah. Later, he moved away from there and dug another well but they did not quarrel over it so he named it Re-ho'both and said, it is because now Jehovah has given us ample room and has made us fruitful in the land. Then he went up from there to Be'er-she'ba. That night, Jehovah appeared to him and said, I am the God of your father Abraham, do not be afraid for I am with you, and I will bless you, and multiply your offspring on account of Abraham my servant”.**

The Philistines, motivated by envy, stop up all the wells that Abraham had dug, and the king asks Isaac to move from the neighbourhood. Isaac now has a decision to make. Perhaps some encourage him to stay put. Think about how they might have reasoned. You've done nothing wrong Isaac. Jehovah told you that you and your offspring would possess the land. You have nothing to fear, you have many servants, and they're stronger than the Philistines. Why not hit back against those who have done this to your wells?

In this situation what would you have done? Isaac chooses a peaceful course. He decides to move on. This is not easy. Isaac has many servants and flocks of sheep and herds of cattle. He has tilled the ground, planted seed, and it's produced plentifully, but he leaves that behind and moves on.

But Isaac's troubles are not over. In his new location, his servants dig wells and find fresh water, but the shepherds in that area say the water is ours. Isaac then digs another well, but the local shepherds quarrel about that one too.

Again, instead of fighting over the matter, Isaac moves and finally finds a place where he can reside in peace.

Jacob saw that his father's peaceful actions had a good effect, and he knew that Isaac had received Jehovah's blessing.

What's the lesson? Parents, never underestimate the powerful effect your good example can have on your children. Jacob has a twin Brother Esau. Of the two, Esau is born first, but Jehovah foretells that contrary to custom, the older Esau will serve his younger Brother. Jehovah foresees what kind of personalities they'll develop and he knows that Esau will have

little appreciation for spiritual matters.

This becomes evident when Esau exchanges his right as firstborn for a mere bowl of stew. Sealing the matter with an oath.

But something more is involved, in selling the birthright. He also gives up the right to receive a prophetic blessing from his father. Years pass, Isaac has grown old and he decides it's time to impart the blessing to his firstborn.

He may not know that Esau had sold his right as firstborn, in any case, he tells Esau that he will bless him, but asks him first to provide him with a tasty dish of fresh game from the field.

Rebecca the twin's mother overhears this conversation and persuades Jacob to impersonate his twin Brother. While Esau is out hunting, the plan is successful. Isaac unwittingly blesses Jacob.

Esau at learning of this is furious.

Let's take up the account from Genesis chapter 27 and verse 41.

**“However, Esau harboured animosity against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him and Esau kept saying in his heart, the days of mourning for my father are getting closer. After that, I am going to kill Jacob my Brother”.**

When the words of her older son Esau were told to Rebecca, she at once sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, look your Brother Esau is planning to take revenge by killing you. Now my son, do as I say. Get up, and run away to my Brother La'ban at Ha'ran. Dwell with him for a while, until your Brother's rage calms down, until your Brother's anger towards you subsides, and he forgets what you have done to him. Then I will send for you from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day.

After that, Rebecca kept saying to Isaac, I am disgusted with my life because of the daughters of Heth. If Jacob ever takes a wife from the daughters of Heth, like these daughters of the land, what good is my life. So Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and commanded him saying, “You must not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan. Go away to Pad'dan-a'ram, to the house of Be-thu'el, your mother's father, and from there take for yourself a wife from the daughters of La'ban your mother's Brother. God Almighty will bless you and make you fruitful and multiply you, and you will certainly become a congregation of peoples. And he will give to you the blessing of Abraham, to you, and to your offspring with you, so that you may take possession of the land where you have been living as a foreigner which God has given to Abraham. So Isaac sent Jacob away and he departed for Pad'dan-a'ram, to La'ban the son of Be-thu'el the A-ra-mea'an, the Brother of Rebecca, the mother of Jacob and Esau”.

Jacob's parents tell him to travel to his uncle La'ban to find a wife. Of course, the core issue is the problem with Esau. Recall that earlier, Isaac had a problem with the Philistines, a problem that evidently could not be settled peacefully so, what did Isaac do? He moved on.

Now Jacob faces a similar situation. His Brother is seething with anger, so Jacob leaves. It means leaving his home and his family, it means making a long journey to a distant land. Jacob could have chosen to stand his ground. He owns the birthright, he could argue the matter with his father and mother. I'm no child, I'm 77 years old.

Jacob does none of those things. The bible simply says, Jacob obeyed his father and his mother and departed. What's the lesson? When we face a situation that can't be settled peacefully, we probably won't need to flee for our lives to a distant land. Sometimes however, it is the course of wisdom to walk away from a situation.

Proverbs chapter 17 and verse 14 says,

**“Beginning a fight is like opening a floodgate, before the quarrel breaks out, take your leave”.**

While Jacob is on his way to his uncle, Jehovah appears to Jacob in a dream and assures him of his support and protection. That does not mean that Jacob's troubles are over. At the journey's end. He moves in with his uncle's household, in time, a situation arises again that shows that Jacob is a man who loves peace.

Let's read about it from Genesis chapter 29 and verse 16.

**“Now La'ban had two daughters, the name of the older was Leah, and the name of the younger, Rachel. But the eyes of Leah had no lustre whereas Rachel had become a very attractive and beautiful woman. Jacob had fallen in love with Rachel so he said, I am willing to serve you seven years for your younger daughter Rachel. To this, La'ban said it is better for me to give her to you than to give her to another man. Keep dwelling with me. And Jacob served seven years for Rachel but in his eyes they were like just a few days because of his love for her.**

**Then Jacob said to La'ban, give over my wife because my days are up and let me have relations with her. With that, La'ban gathered all the men of the place and made a feast, but during the evening he resorted to taking his daughter Leah and bringing her to him that he might have relations with her.**

**La'ban also gave his female servant Zilpah to his daughter Leah as a servant. In the morning, Jacob saw that it was Leah, so he said to La'ban, what have you done to me? Was it not for Rachel that I served you? Why have you tricked me? To this Laban said, it is not our custom here to give the younger woman before the firstborn. Celebrate the week of this woman after that you will also be given this other woman in exchange for serving me seven more years. Jacob did so, and celebrated the week of this woman, after which he gave him his daughter Rachel as a wife. Besides, Laban gave his female servant Bilhah to his daughter Rachel as her servant”.**

Jacob has reason to be upset. He had arranged with La'ban to work seven years for Rachel. At the end of the seven years, a wedding feast is arranged, but the heavily veiled woman brought into him is not Rachel, it's Leah.

Imagine how shocked Jacob must have been. Instead of admitting to his deceit, La'ban gives

an excuse. What thoughts come to Jacob's mind? Does he consider that Jehovah might be working out his promise to make Jacob's offspring plentiful, like the dust particles of the earth? We don't know. As it turns out, Leah bears him six sons including Levi, and Judah, family heads of the two most honoured tribes of Israel.

Of course, Jacob couldn't have foreknown this, still, Jacob the peacemaker accepts Leah and goes along with La'ban's outrageous request that he work an additional seven years for Rachel. What's the lesson? It's disappointing when others don't hold to their agreements. Like Jacob, can we find it in our hearts to forgive and find a way to preserve peace with them?

Jacob serves La'ban for 14 years for his two wives and he works for Laban another six years for a flock of his own. Finally, at Jehovah's direction, he gathers his family along with his animals and without informing La'ban he leaves for home.

When La'ban learns of this he is furious. He chases and catches up with Jacob.

This is a dangerous situation, one that can easily turn violent. Imagine how it might have been, Jacob had come to a mountainous region, possibly it's morning and the air is cool, there are the sounds and smells of animals, Sheep, Donkeys, Camels. There are many. The servants attend to them, getting them ready for the day's journey, but then come cries of alarm.

La'ban has come, and he's not alone. He arrives with strong men. They gallop in on camels, they dismount. This is not a friendly visit. La'ban's men are ready to obey orders from Laban.

Jacob's servants quickly gather to the scene. All eyes are fixed on La'ban and Jacob who argue. The previous night, Jehovah had warned La'ban in a dream to be careful about what he'd say to Jacob, still, La'ban is angry and aggressive. La'ban makes two charges. First he says why have you resorted to outwitting me and carrying my daughters off like captives taken by the sword? Why did you run away secretly and outwit me and not tell me?

The answer to that charge is obvious, Jacob replies, it was because I was afraid, for I said to myself, you might take your daughters away from me by force. La'ban also charges that Jacob has stolen his household Gods. Rachel has indeed stolen the Gods but, Jacob knows nothing about this. A search is made but the idols are not found. Jacob then makes his defence, Let's take up our reading at Genesis chapter 31 and verse 36.

**“At that, Jacob became angry and began to criticize La'ban. Jacob then said to Laban, what is my offence and for what sin are you hotly pursuing me? Now that you have searched through all my goods, what have you found that belongs to your house? Put it here in front of my Brothers and your Brothers and let them decide between the two of us. During these 20 years that I have been with you, your sheep and your goats never miscarried, and I never ate the rams of your flock. I did not bring you any animal torn by wild beasts, I would stand the loss of it myself, whether the animal was stolen by day or was stolen by night, you would demand compensation from me. By day, the heat consumed me, and the cold by night, and sleep would flee from my eyes. This makes 20 years for me in your house. I have served you 14 years for your**

two daughters, and six years for your flock, and you kept changing my wages ten times. If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the one whom Isaac fears had not been on my side, you would now have sent me away empty-handed. God has seen my affliction and the toil of my hands and that is why he reproved you last night. Then

La'ban answered Jacob, the daughters, are my daughters, and the children, my children, and the flock, my flock, and everything you are looking at is mine, and my daughters. What can I do today against these, or against their children whom they have borne. Now come, let us make a covenant you, and I, and it, will serve as a witness between us.

So Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. Then Jacob said to his Brothers, pick up stones and they took stones and made a pile. After that, they ate there on the pile of stones and La'ban began calling at Je'gar-a-ha-du'tha but Jacob called a Gal'e-ed.

Laban then said, this pile of stones is a witness between me and you today. That is why he named it Gal'e-ed, and the watchtower, for he said: "Let Jehovah keep watch between you and me, when we are out of each other's sight, if you mistreat my

daughters and if you start taking wives in addition to my daughters, though there is no man with us, remember that God will be a witness between you and me. Laban went on

to say to Jacob. Here is this pile of stones, and here is the pillar that I have erected between you and me. This pile of stones is a witness, and the pillar is something that bears witness that I will not pass beyond this pile of stones to bring harm to you, and you will not pass beyond this pile of stones and this pillar to bring harm to me. Let the God of Abraham and the God of Ne'hor the God of their father judge between us. And

Jacob swore by the one whom his father Isaac fears. After that, Jacob offered a sacrifice in the mountain, and invited his Brothers to eat bread, so they ate and spent the night in the mountain, however, La'ban got up early in the morning and kissed his grandchildren and his daughters, and blessed them, then La'ban departed and returned home."

Jacob had served Laban faithfully for 20 years even though Laban had defrauded and exploited him. Laban doesn't acknowledge that but rather dishonestly claims that he is the rightful owner of all that Jacob has with him.

Laban then suggests that they make a covenant of peace, ensuring that neither family will bring harm to the other. Laban's motive is not that he loves peace. It might have been to ensure that Jacob will not return with the household Gods after La'ban's death to deprive his sons of their inheritance. In any case, Jacob agrees, everyone relaxes, there's to be no violence and a monument is set up to memorialize the agreement.

Despite the many years of oppression, Jacob agrees to a covenant of peace. He does not harbour resentment or seek revenge. That crisis is over for Jacob, but now, another one looms.

Jacob sends messengers to his Brother. They say that Jacob is returning and that he seeks Esau's favour.

The messengers return with the news that Esau is on his way to meet him, and with him are 400 men. Oh my, is Esau still angry? Understandably Jacob is worried. He does not want to

fight with his Brother.

Let us see how he handles the situation. Please turn to Genesis chapter 32 and verse 13.

**“And he spent the night there, then, he took some of his possessions as a gift for Esau his Brother, 200 female goats, 20 male goats, 200 female sheep, 20 rams, 30 camels nursing their young, 40 cows, 10 bulls, 20 female donkeys, and 10 full-grown male donkeys. He handed them over to his servants one drove after another. And he said to his servant, cross over ahead of me and you are to set a space between one drove and the next. He also commanded the first one, in case Esau my Brother should meet you and ask to whom do you belong, and where are you going, and to whom do these ahead of you belong, then you should say, to your servant Jacob, it is a gift sent to my lord to Esau, and look, he himself is also behind us. And he commanded also the second, the third, and all those following the droves according to this word, you are to speak to Esau when you meet him. And you should also say, here is your servant Jacob behind us, for he said to himself, if I appease him by sending a gift ahead of me, then afterward, when I see him, he may give me a kindly reception”.**

Jacob wants peaceful relations with his Brother. He sends a generous gift, hundreds of animals to help make that possible. Was Jacob weak-minded? Too cowardly to stand up to his Brother? Not at all, why?

As the time neared for the meeting with Esau, Jacob wrestles with an angel until dawn to receive further assurance of Jehovah's blessing.

Let's now see what happens when the two Brothers meet. Please turn to Genesis chapter 33 and verse 1.

**“Now Jacob raised his eyes and saw Esau coming, and 400 men were with him. So, he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two female servants. He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children after them, and Rachel and Joseph behind them. Then he himself went ahead of them and bowed down to the earth seven times as he came near to his Brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and he embraced him, and kissed him, and they burst into tears. When he raised his eyes and saw the women and the children, he said, “Who are these with you? To which he said, the children with whom God has favoured your servant. At that the female servants came forward with their children and bowed down, and Leah too came forward with her children, and they bowed down, then Joseph came forward with Rachel, and they bowed down. Esau said, what is the purpose of all this camp of travellers that I have met? He replied, in order to find favour in the eyes of my lord. Then Esau said, I have a great many possessions my Brother, keep what is yours, however Jacob said no, please, if i have found favour in your eyes, you must take my gift from my hand because I brought it so that I could see your face, and I have seen your face, as though seeing God's face, in that you received me with pleasure. Take please the gift conveying my blessing that was brought to you for God has favoured me, and I have everything I need. And he continued to urge him so that he took it”.**

What a happy outcome. Instead of an angry confrontation, there is a joyful reunion. The two men shed tears, they embrace, again Jacob is the peacemaker. How did he prove that?

He prayed and he acted in harmony with his prayers. He sent gifts, he showed honour and respect to his Brother, calling him lord and bowing seven times. What's the lesson? Doesn't this account well illustrate the extent to which we should be willing to go to preserve peace with our Christian Brothers and Sisters.

We learned so much about seeking peace from Jacob. When threatened by his Brother, while living at home, he moved away. When deceived by La'ban regarding Rachel and Leah. He yielded when chased down and accused by La'ban. Jacob agreed to a covenant of peace and when confronting Esau, he offered a gift.

Keep in mind, in none of these situations was Jacob the one who needed to apologize, yet, throughout his life Jacob loved peace. He relied on Jehovah and Jehovah blessed him. Jehovah never forgot Jacob, and how he pursued peace in his dealings with others.

When we do the same, when we "Pursue Peace" in the face of injustice, in the face of persecution, in small issues as well as in big issues, Jehovah will not forget us either.

Jehovah will richly bless us if we love peace, just as Jacob loved peace. How comforting it is to reflect on Jehovah's love and support for those who make peace.

This bible account is filled with practical examples that each of us can imitate. You'll be pleased to know that the dramatic bible reading, "Jacob, a man who loved peace", is now available for download on the jw.org website, and in the jw library app.

How can we maintain our God-given peace despite living in an unGodly world? Please pay close attention to Brother David Shaffer, a helper to the teaching committee, as he answers this question in the talk,

***"The result of true righteousness will be peace".***

Earlier, we considered the expression at Philippians 4:7.

***"The peace of God that surpasses all understanding".***

That is the tranquility and calmness, we enjoy because we have a close friendship with Jehovah. What a remarkable blessing.

But, although we enjoy God-given peace, our life in this system of things is not problem-free is it. Psalm 34:19 acknowledges as much when it says,

***"Many are the hardships of the righteous one but Jehovah rescues him from them all".***

We may experience family opposition, persecution, war, natural disasters, or severe illnesses, but none of these hardships can separate us from God's love. Neither death, nor life, nor

angels, nor governments, nor things now here, nor things to come.

None of these things can rob us of the peace Jehovah gives and yet there is something that can, please turn with me to Isaiah chapter 32 verse 17. And as we read this text, notice that it refers to peace as a result! Do you think of peace that way, as a result? If peace is a result, what causes it Isaiah 32:17.

**“The result of true righteousness will be peace and the fruitage of true righteousness will be lasting, tranquility, and security”.**

What a beautiful expression, lasting tranquility and security. Again, from what does it result? True righteousness.

What if righteousness no longer mattered to us? What if a person concluded, it makes no difference how I live or what sacrifices I make. If I'm going to suffer hardships either way, I might as well do whatever I please while I can.

What's wrong with that thinking? Would it show appreciation for peace? and all that Jehovah has done to make it possible?

Peace is a result, and behind every result is a cause. If we want peace, we have to pursue righteousness. An unrighteous person cannot be at peace with God. Serious transgressions put a strain on a person's relationship with God.

Recall king David's words found at psalm 38:3? Sensing Jehovah's disapproval, he wrote,

**“There is no peace within my bones because of my sin”.**

Inevitably, the unrighteous person will reap what he sows and lose his peace. What is righteousness and how do we pursue it? Righteousness is what we have or what we show when we do what is right according to Jehovah's standards, and those standards are not just rules we follow, but principles that guide the way we deal with each other.

As universal sovereign and creator, Jehovah God determines what is righteous. Isn't that what was represented by the tree of the knowledge of good and bad in the garden of Eden. As a result of Jehovah's command to abstain from its fruit, that tree represented God's right to determine for his creatures what is good and what is bad for them, and although Jehovah has given humans free will, the right to choose. He has not granted humans, not even perfect ones, the right to set the standard for what is righteous and what is not.

Now notice once again that Isaiah 32:17 says that,

**"The result of true righteousness will be peace".**

It uses that term twice. True righteousness, not everything called righteousness is true righteousness. Many people view righteousness as just a personal virtue achieved by following the rules. At Matthew 23:28, Jesus said that the Pharisees appeared righteous on

the outside, but inside, they were lawless.

Ecclesiastes 7:16 talks about those who think their standards are more righteous, even than Gods, and at Romans 10:3, Paul talked about people who seek to establish their own righteousness.

But false piety over righteousness and self-righteousness are not what Isaiah 32:17 is talking about.

Today, many argue for the acceptance of conduct that Jehovah forbids. They may even find support from a world already alienated from God. But wide acceptance in a growing community does not redefine righteousness. None of that is true righteousness.

Our loving creator sets the standard for what is right, not our feelings, not the community at large.

Now, while you're here in Isaiah, please turn to chapter 48. In order to be viewed as righteous, we have to trust that Jehovah should set the standard of right and wrong. In addition, we must prove by our speech and actions that we agree with Jehovah's standards and obey him, and that takes real courage in a wicked world. But when we do that, we enjoy the result.

Notice what it says at Isaiah chapter 48 verses 17 and 18.

**“This is what Jehovah says, your repurchaser, the Holy one of Israel. I Jehovah am your God, the one teaching you to benefit yourself”, or as the footnote says, “teaching you for your own good”, “the one guiding you in the way you should walk. If only you would pay attention to my commandments, then your peace would become just like a river and your righteousness like the waves of the sea”.**

Paying attention to Jehovah's commandments results in two things. First, our peace will become just like a river, serene, abundant, ongoing, second, our righteousness will be like the waves of the sea.

Remember your last trip to the beach? As you stood there on the shore, or perhaps on a high hill overlooking the ocean, watching the waves roll in one after the other, just as they have for thousands of years, could you feel a sense of constancy?

Jehovah says that our course of doing what is right can be just like that. He will guide us in the path of righteousness, He will bless us with unending peace. In the process, we learn through experience how Jehovah's wise and loving ways truly benefit us personally. But if we refuse to do that, we learn what agitation and discord truly mean.

As verse 22 says,

**“There is no peace says Jehovah, for the wicked”.**

It's not a heavy-handed threat to manipulate human behaviour, as if Jehovah needed to do

that. It's a fact, a truth, a timeless principle. God is love, he teaches us for our own good, and the result, if we pay attention, is peace.

Isaiah 48:17-18, and these verses assure us that imperfect humans truly can have a righteous standing with God, let's explore that further. Do you recall the very first time the word righteous is used in the bible?

Turn with me please to Genesis chapter 6. Now you likely recognize this as the account about Noah. Noah lived in an extremely wicked world. During his lifetime, rebel angels left their assignments in heaven, materialized, married human women, and fathered hybrid offspring, who became violent giants.

Now, how did all of that wickedness and violence affect Jehovah? According to Genesis 6:6, his heart was saddened, which is a remarkable thing to contemplate, isn't it?

Jehovah's feelings are affected by our decisions because he cares for us. That ancient world became so wicked that Jehovah decided it must be destroyed. and yet. right in the midst of all this depravity, Noah showed a different spirit.

Notice what it says in Genesis chapter 6 verses 8 and 9.

**“But Noah found favour in the eyes of Jehovah. This is the history of Noah. Noah was a righteous man”.**

There it is, and why was he described as righteous? He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries, yes, Noah was not like the rebel angels or their offspring or like degraded human society. Noah walked with the true God and thus, the second time we find the word righteous is in Genesis chapter 7 and verse 1.

**“After that Jehovah said to Noah, go into the ark, you and all your household because you are the one I have found to be righteous before me among this generation”.**

Because of Noah's righteousness, he and his family survived the flood to worship Jehovah on a cleansed earth, and after the waters subsided and the family emerged from the ark they witnessed a splendid sight, one never before observed. A serene multicoloured arch in the sky, a rainbow, a reassuring indication of peace with God. Peace resulting from righteousness.

And where does the word righteous appear next in the bible? In the account about Abraham, notably in his famous conversation with Jehovah found in Genesis chapter 18 where Jehovah promised Abraham that if he found as few as 10 righteous people in the city of Sodom, he would not destroy that city.

Now, what was it that distinguished Abraham as righteous in that immoral climate? As you read Genesis chapters 12 through 22, you get the sense that Abraham was a man of great faith, unwavering faith. He was ready to do whatever Jehovah asked of him.

Now, citing Genesis chapter 15 and verse 6, and other texts, James 2:23 says that

**"Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness, and he came to be called Jehovah's friend".**

Jehovah's friend, peace with God resulting from righteousness. Now, what about God's people today? Turn with me please to Isaiah chapter 60. Isaiah chapter 60, Jehovah refers to Noah and Abraham as righteous, but what would he say about you and me? Well notice what it says toward the end of this chapter. Isaiah 60 verses 21 and 22.

**"And all your people will be righteous, they will possess the land forever, they are the sprout that I planted, the work of my hands for me to be beautified, the little one will become a thousand, and the small one, a mighty nation. I myself Jehovah will speed it up in its own time".**

Yes, prospective members of the great crowd have been declared righteous as friends of God as Abraham was in Jehovah's eyes, they are, as it says, in Revelation chapter 7 and verse 9,

**"Dressed in white robes".**

Today, they're serving alongside God's spirit anointed ones, who are declared righteous for life. Jehovah, our repurchaser, the Holy One of Israel has bought us back from bondage to sin and death, through the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and thus, with faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, imperfect people are considered righteous in the sight of God.

Now, in calling us righteous, Jehovah God by means of Jesus has done something for us that we could not do for ourselves in our imperfect condition but, does that mean that we can do no wrong? No, it does not mean that. In order to maintain our peace, we must cooperate with Jehovah.

Turn with me please to Romans chapter 1. Now, like Noah and Abraham, we live in a wicked and violent world where we are exposed to a spirit of disobedience. Satan wants us to become part of this world by adopting its unrighteous standards. In the world, sexual immorality is practiced without shame, homosexuals flaunt their conduct, but Jehovah tells us that homosexual acts are unrighteous.

God specifically warned the Israelite's against this and other forms of immorality. Leviticus chapter 18 and verse 22 says that homosexual acts are detestable.

Does Jehovah still find it so offensive? Well, notice what he inspired for both Jews and Non-Jews in the Christian Greek scriptures here at Romans chapter 1 verses 26 and 27.

**"That is why God gave them over to disgraceful sexual passion, for their females changed the natural use of themselves into one contrary to nature, likewise also, the males left the natural use of the female, and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males working what is obscene and receiving in themselves the full penalty which was due for their error".**

So, Jehovah has not changed according to the creator. Homosexual acts constitute disgraceful, obscene error. Some would disagree as verse 28 points out such ones do not consider it worthwhile to acknowledge God, but with what result, as it says, they are in a disapproved mental state, just the opposite of peace, and merely approving of unrighteous conduct displeases Jehovah.

Notice how this is indicated in verse 32,

**“Although these know full well the righteous decree of God, that those practicing such things are deserving of death, they not only keep on doing them but also approve of those practicing them”.**

Still we do not hate individuals who practice unrighteousness nor do we judge them, on the contrary, we share the good news with them, we remember that we were all born with the same infirmities and have the same sinful tendencies but, we also have the same inherent spiritual need and thus we recognize that others can have the same peace the same privileges, and the same prospects we enjoy if they pay attention to Jehovah.

First Timothy 2:3 and 4 says that,

**“God’s will is that all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth, and people practicing all manner of unrighteousness have accepted the truth, that is, what some of you were”,**

First Corinthians 6:11 says.

**“And yet that is what some of you were. But you have been washed clean; you have been sanctified; you have been declared righteous in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God”.**

So we communicate impartially with all our neighbours, but we hate unrighteous conduct, and we refuse to compromise bible principles.

Now, sometimes moral issues become the centre of heated political debates. We avoid getting drawn into such controversies, but, now in practical terms, what might that look like?

In the following video, notice how adults can respond effectively when questioned on highly controversial issues.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

There you are? Did you both get the email survey I sent, and you're both coming right?

I must have missed it. I was on calls all morning. What's this about?

Well, the whole office is leaving early. We're going downtown to support the march for gay rights.

She won't go.

Why?

It's against her religion. Some of her people came by my house, and when I asked, they said your church won't support gay marriage.

Irene?

It's true, as Jehovah's witnesses, we hold to the bible standard on marriage which is only between a man and a woman, and we remain politically neutral. That's such ignorant thinking.

I understand it's a sensitive subject,.

I have a daughter who deserves her rights.

Trust me Amber, as one of Jehovah's witnesses, we believe everyone has a right to choose how they live and I would never force my beliefs on anyone.

But you won't go.

Just as I would never force my beliefs on you, all i ask is the same respect, and no, I won't be going.

I have to go back to work.

Look, obviously Irene, I don't agree with your perspective but, I do appreciate that you're not pushing it on anyone else.

Thank you.

**VIDEO ENDS**

In contrast with the majority of mankind who are divided, true Christians are united. We loyally support Jehovah's right to rule. We don't set the standards and we're not trying to solve the world's problems on our own. We fully support God's kingdom.

Now, as we observed in the video, moral and political issues might be brought up in the workplace, but, more often, our young ones, even very young ones, are confronted with these same topics. How will they respond? Are your young ones ready? As you watch the next video, notice how Olivia defends Jehovah's righteous standards.

**VIDEO STARTS**

Great discussion today everyone. Remember, midterms are this Friday, no excuses, that includes you Jordan. You were noticeably silent during our discussion today Olivia.

I was? I guess I just didn't have much to say.

Aren't you concerned about gay rights?

Um, well, it seems like a political issue and and I stay neutral when it comes to political stuff.

But it's not a political issue, this is a human rights issue.

Mr Dallas, she's like crazy religious.

Hey, there's nothing wrong with that.

No, you don't understand, Jehovah's witnesses hate everybody that isn't straight.

That's not true, we don't hate anyone.

I've spoken with your people before, they seem big on equality.

We are, the bible says God isn't partial, so we believe that everyone should be treated fairly.

Good, so I assume you have gay members in your church?

No we don't.

But I thought you just said everyone should be treated equal, I'm confused.

Yeah, called it.

Jordan, don't you have a class to get to?

As I was saying, how is that not a little hypocritical, saying that you love everyone, and then excluding certain people.

Honestly Mr. Dallas, I wondered the same thing.

Okay, and well, I researched it in the bible, and I realized that God accepts all people but, He doesn't accept all conduct.

What does that mean?

It means that you can't be abusing drugs, you can't be stealing, or being violent, and still be a witness. There's just certain actions that God just doesn't accept.

Including how someone expresses their sexuality?

In some cases yes. We follow God's standards not having sex without being married.

Well if that's how you feel, that that's your right, personally it seems a tad archaic to me but to each their own.

Hey, hey, does the bible really say all that?

Yeah it does.

Okay, maybe you could show me sometime.

Yeah, for sure,

Awesome.

## **VIDEO ENDS**

So, we can expect future instalments in this saga but, did you notice how Olivia was able to defend Jehovah's righteous standards. She kept her peaceful spirit didn't she? She acknowledged that she had the same question as the teacher but, she had done further research on the subject. And did you appreciate how she subtly showed that Jehovah's standards benefit both the individual and the community? As example, she highlighted the avoidance of drug abuse and theft. Values she knew her teacher would appreciate.

Parents, are your young ones able to explain why we do or don't do certain things? Do you know how your children really feel about Jehovah's standards? Are they obedient simply to avoid making you mad? If so, will that truly be enough?

Encourage your young ones to prove to themselves why Jehovah's standards are wise. Help them to see how they can explain their choice to live by Jehovah's standards. Teach them how to resist pressure to follow the world.

We are so thankful that even during these critical times, hard to deal with, we can enjoy the inner peace that Jehovah gives to the righteous. But let's remind ourselves of what Jehovah promises to bring about once Satan's unrighteous system is removed.

Turn with me please to psalm 37. Here in these familiar verses we find a beautiful description of what is to come, and notice once again how the bible makes the correlation between peace and righteousness. Psalm 37:29. Do you have it? What does it say? Who will possess the earth? The righteous. And for how long will they live on it, forever. And then according to verse 11, what will they find there? Peace, the result of true righteousness will be peace. And how much peace will they find? A little peace? Just personal or family peace? Remember, the righteous already had peace with God even when wicked people still existed but, what will Jehovah provide to all those who continue loving him? The abundance of peace.

And how will you feel about that? Delighted or exquisitely delighted. So stick with it dear friends. During this convention, be on the lookout for the connection between peace and righteousness. Continue on the course of righteousness, help others to find the way of peace, in that way, we can enjoy peace with Jehovah now.

Throughout the remainder of these last days and on into the future when Jesus rules as king over a cleansed earth, in which the righteous will flourish and peace will abound.

Thank you Brother Shaffer for helping us to understand why upholding Jehovah's righteousness is essential for enjoying true peace. We have been well instructed during this first session of our convention.

We look forward to our next session in which we will consider in greater detail, promises of peace found in God's word. We will also see how bible principles can help families to enjoy greater peace now, and how we can avoid pursuing imitation peace.

Now, let's conclude this session by singing song number 97 entitled

***“Life depends on God's word”.***

After singing the song, you may have your local concluding prayer. Again, that's song number 97.

### **FRIDAY AFTERNOON PART 1**

Welcome back Brothers and Sisters for the second session of the 2022 "Pursue Peace" convention of Jehovah's witnesses. This session corresponds to the Friday afternoon section on your program and it will continue to develop the scriptural theme from Psalm 29:11.

Jehovah will bless his people with peace. Let's begin with a music video presentation. As Jehovah's people, we love to tell others about our God and our hope. The following video features Brothers and Sisters sharing the good news of peace around the globe.

We'll also see the work done at various Bethel facilities in support of this worldwide preaching work.

Enjoy

Jehovah's promises of peace bring us great delight. When we think about what life will be like in God's new world, it fills our hearts with appreciation and love for Jehovah. Let's express those feelings as we sing song number 144 entitled,

***“Keep your eyes on the prize”.***

That's song number 144.

The bible book of Isaiah contains many promises for the future. Do you take time to contemplate what that future will be like? The following five-part symposium will help us to picture that wonderful time.

Yet ahead, we will also learn how Jehovah is fulfilling his promise to care for his servants even now. Brother Samuel Hurd, a member of the governing body, will present the first talk entitled,

***“Take Delight in God's Promises of Peace, My Servants will Eat, My Servants will Drink”.***

In his word, Jehovah has promised to bring peace to his loyal servants. As we have learned, that peace is more than the absence of conflict. It involves our overall well-being, including our health and security.

God's heart-warming promises fill us with appreciation and hope. In the bible book of the 145th Psalm, it tells us in verses 15 and 16,

**“All eyes look hopefully to you, You give them their food in a season. You open your hand and satisfy the desire of every living thing”.**

In this symposium, we will consider the past, present, and future fulfillment of several bible prophecies of peace that are found in the book of Isaiah. Jehovah promises to provide an abundance of both literal food and spiritual food. When the Israelite's loyally served Jehovah, they experienced the blessings foretold at Isaiah 49:10.

Today, Jehovah's servants are experiencing the fulfillment of Isaiah 65 verses 13 and 14. There you'll find it to say,

**“Therefore, this is what the Sovereign lord Jehovah says. Look, my servants will eat, but you will go hungry, look, my servants will drink, but you will go thirsty, look, my servants will rejoice, but you will suffer shame, look, my servants will shout joyfully because of the good condition of the heart, but you will cry out because of the pain of heart. And you will wail, because of a broken spirit”.**

Although we may at times experience literal hunger, we enjoy an abundance of satisfying spiritual food. In the future, Jehovah will completely eliminate literal hunger.

As you watch the following video, think about the blessings we enjoy now and the ones we will enjoy in the future.

Through Isaiah, Jehovah promised to feed his servants, physically and spiritually. Today, Jehovah invites us to a banquet, that is spiritually nourishing. Bible-based videos and publications that, draw us close to God, and satisfy our hunger for truth.

In the new world, abundant healthy food will be more than a promise, it will be a reality. There will be an abundance of grain on the earth, on the top of the mountains it will overflow.

What a blessing it is to be among Jehovah's people. Spiritual provisions flow to us like an ever broadening and ever deepening river. There's not a grain of salt missing, not a slice of bread or a pat of butter.

There is way too much to eat at one meal, we have to come to Jehovah's table several times a week to keep our spiritual fibre intact and energy strong for the work we engage in, the kingdom preaching.

We have an abundance of nourishing food, bible-based publications, recordings and videos, meetings and conventions. Website material. Jehovah has not deviated from his promise.

Note this one Psalm 72:16,

**“There will be an abundance of grain on the earth, on the top of the mountains it will overflow. His fruit will flourish as in Lebanon, and then the city's people will blossom like the vegetation of the earth”.**

And then again, Isaiah 30 verse 23

**“And he will give the rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the bread that the ground produces will be abundant, and rich. In that day your livestock will graze in spacious pastures”.**

Jehovah has placed everything we need on the table. We must wilfully come to the table and sit down and eat. He doesn't make us come, like some mothers may have to demand a reluctant child to come to the house from playing and eat a meal. Be sure to thank Jehovah for the spiritual food he provides.

Psalm 100 verses 2 and 3 remind us,

**“Serve Jehovah with rejoicing, come into his presence with joyful shouting. Know that Jehovah is God”.**

He is the one who made us, and we belong to him. We are his people and the sheep of his pasture”. Show your appreciation, how? By studying diligently, and applying what you learn. If you lack sufficient material things now, take delight in meditating on future kingdom blessings. Jehovah will surely fulfill his promises just as he has always done. Isaiah 55:10 and 11 remind us,

**“For just as the rain and the snow pour down from heaven and do not return there until they saturate the earth, making it produce and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so my word that goes out of my mouth will be, it will not return to me without resolve, but it will certainly accomplish whatever is my delight and it will have sure success in what I send it to do”.**

Brother Ronald Kurzen, a helper to the teaching committee will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Take Delight in God's Promises of Peace. They will Build Houses and Plant Vineyards”.***

If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. This familiar saying might be true with human promises but is certainly not true with promises from Jehovah. They always come true. Just before his death at the age of 110, Joshua reminded the Israelite's why Jehovah's promises

can always be trusted. He said,

**“Not one word out of all the good promises that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed, they have all come true for you”.**

Among all of Jehovah's good promises, are the heartwarming restoration promises given to the Jews returning from exile in Babylon. Since the land of Judah had lain desolate for 70 years, the Jews wouldn't have expected brand new homes waiting for them to occupy or fields ready for them to harvest. There would be much work for them to do once they arrived. There were many unknowns about their future which could have caused some to worry or be anxious. Some family heads might have wondered, where will we live? How will I feed my family and keep them safe? Jehovah calmed their hearts with the reassuring promises recorded at Isaiah 65:21-22. Let's read these together, that's Isaiah 65 verses 21 and 22. And there it reads,

**“They will build houses and live in them, and they will plant vineyards and eat their fruitage, they will not build for someone else to inhabit, nor will they plant for others to eat, for the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and the work of their hands, My chosen ones will enjoy to the full”.**

These promises must have strengthened the Jews. Now, Jehovah didn't say that they might build and live in their own homes, and they might enjoy the fruitage from their own vineyards, no, He told his precious chosen ones that they will enjoy these promises to the full. Even though they hadn't been told every detail and there were many unknowns regarding their future, they knew their God Jehovah. They knew that his promises were for their good and that they would all come true. And those promises did come true.

Knowing that God fulfilled all of His promises in the past, strengthens our trust and confidence that all of His promises for the future, like the ones that we read in Isaiah 65 will all come true for our everlasting good.

What a joy it will be to build, and then live in our own home never having to worry that we will lose it because of a natural disaster or economic collapse. Sadly though, many of our Brothers and Sisters today do suffer the harsh realities of living in this old system of things.

For example, a Sister in Poland named Gabriela experienced great loss when her home was nearly destroyed by a flood. How did she maintain her joy? Notice what she said.

*“I don't want to talk about what I lost, those are just material things, rather, I want to tell you how much I gained. This experience reassured me that being a part of the Christian congregation is a unique privilege as well as a source of joy and happiness”.*

So, although she went through some very difficult times, what did she gain? Joy and happiness. What about a single Sister from Puerto Rico named Anneal. She endured a very difficult test back in 2017 when hurricane Maria destroyed her home. As a result of that storm she lost her job. Notice what she recalled.

*“During those difficult days, I felt anxious, but, I learned to trust in Jehovah through prayer and not let anxiety paralyze me”. She also said, “Following the direction of the organization, helped me to remain calm. I saw Jehovah's hand in the spiritual encouragement I received as well as the material assistance provided by the Brotherhood. Jehovah gave me much more than I could even ask for and my faith was greatly strengthened”.*

So, she received assistance from Jehovah, from his organization, and she was greatly strengthened. What about you? Are you suffering some sort of storm in your life? Perhaps from a natural disaster or maybe a figurative one caused by a health issue, a family problem, or some injustice? During such times, it's normal to experience feelings of anxiety, worry about our future, the safety of our family, but don't allow such feelings to paralyze you.

Like Gabrielle and Anneal, keep doing what you can and continue trusting in Jehovah. Also, continue to trust in our loving Brotherhood. Our Brothers and Sisters are true friends who are ready to show love in our time of distress. They will quickly come to our aid by providing practical assistance and relief provisions. They will help us rebuild our home, rebuild our life. They will build us up, stabilize us with words of encouragement.

When we put our complete trust in Jehovah and his promises, we receive the best protection possible. Note what the Psalmist wrote at Psalm 91 verses 1 and 2. Psalm 91:1-2 says,

**“Anyone dwelling in the secret place of the Most High will lodge under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to Jehovah, you are my refuge and my stronghold, my God in whom I trust”.**

What a beautiful reminder of protection from Jehovah, but, what is the secret place of the Most High. Well, it's a figurative place of spiritual security and protection. Those who dwell or lodge with God as his personal guests and remain there are safe from anything or anyone that threatens their faith and their love for God.

We can be sure that Jehovah will never abandon those who trust in him, not now, not ever.

As you watch the following video, envision the secure future that lies ahead when we will enjoy complete security.

Do you long for a home of your own? Jehovah promised the returning exiles that they would build and enjoy comfortable dwellings. Jehovah likewise cares for us, whether we lose our home, or we are taken from it. Above all, true worship provides spiritual security that is found nowhere else.

The spiritual home we have now, reminds us that Jehovah will give us a physical place to call home in the new world. “They will build houses and live in them”.

What a beautiful video. It helps us imagine what we will experience in the near future when all of God's promises become a reality on a paradise earth. When we truly are safe, cared for in every way, physically, spiritually, and emotionally.

Would you like to read another comforting promise from Jehovah? It's found in Isaiah chapter 65 and verse 23, and there it says,

**“They will not toil for nothing, nor will they bear children for distress, because they are the offspring made up of those blessed by Jehovah, and their descendants with them”.**

This must have brought great comfort to the Jews, and how comforting it is for us today. In the new world, all families will experience Jehovah's blessing and enjoy the results of their hard work. In the meantime, if you have lost your home or possessions, or if you experience loss in the future, keep focusing on Jehovah's good promises. Strong faith can help you to weather any storm, literal or figurative. Trust that Jehovah will hear and respond to your needs, even anticipating them,

He promises to open his hand and satisfy the proper desire of every living thing. That promise includes you and your family. Continue to take delight in all of God's promises knowing that not one word out of all the good promises that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed, they will all come true for you.

Brother Leonard Myers, a helper to the writing committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

**“Take Delight in God's Promises of Peace, The Wolf and the Lamb will Feed Together”.**

As we continue our consideration of the promises of peace in Isaiah's prophecies, I'd like you to imagine an Israelite living in Babylon. Now, he's just learned that Jews can return to Jerusalem and help to rebuild the temple. So he must decide if he and his family will leave Babylon to make the long trip to his homeland.

What might he consider? Well, after 70 years, the land must have changed. Fields would be overgrown with weeds, wolves, leopards, lions and bears must freely walk in the fields. Snakes make their home there, so he might ask himself, will my domestic animals be killed by predators? Will my small children be bitten by snakes? And what about the danger of fierce men attacking us on the journey home?

Well, any such fears could be dispelled by considering the prophecy at Isaiah chapter 11 verses 6 through 9. Let's read that together, Isaiah chapter 11, and notice this promise of peace starting in verse 6.

**“The wolf will reside for a while with the lamb, and with the young goat the leopard will lie down, and the calf and the lion and the fattened animal will all be together, and a little boy will lead them, the cow and the bear will feed together, and their young will lie down together. The lion will eat straw like the bull. The nursing child will play over the layer of a cobra, and a wean child would put his hand over the den of a poisonous snake. They will not cause any harm or any ruin in all my holy mountain because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea”.**

What a beautiful promise of peace. Jews wouldn't need to fear wild animals or fierce men on their journey home or in their restored land. With these poetic words, Jehovah assured the exiles that they and their livestock would be safe. He would bless them with peace. And did you notice according to verse 7, the lion would symbolically eat straw, illustrating that lions wouldn't kill the Jews cattle.

Faithful ones would have nothing to fear from animal or human predators. Do we see this prophecy being fulfilled in our day? Not with the literal animals but we do see a spiritual fulfillment. Notice again the end of verse 9. It says,

**“The earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah”.**

Now, does the knowledge of Jehovah change the behaviour of animals? No, but the knowledge of God does change people. In our day, the knowledge of Jehovah helps people who are violent to transform their personality and become peaceable.

In harmony with Colossians chapter 3 verse 10, these ones have clothed themselves with a new personality. They've stripped off animalistic, violent tendencies, and transformed their lives in harmony with what the bible teaches. They get along peaceably with others. Perhaps you know someone who made such changes, or perhaps you made these changes leaving behind a violent way of life. Let me share with you such an experience.

A man named Jose was trained in the martial arts and in the use of weapons. He'd broken the law so many times that he was brought to trial on 22 counts and sentenced to 20 years in prison. He was so violent that even fellow inmates were afraid of him and he was kept in a high security cell.

For seven years his fleshly Sister, who was one of Jehovah's witnesses, visited him. But he always rejected the bible's message. In time though he accepted one of our publications and a bible study was started. Right away he made tremendous changes in his conduct. One week later he gave a personal witness to 200 prisoners, and the following week to 600 more. He even received permission to visit the inmates in other prison blocks.

Well, due to the remarkable change in his behaviour his sentence was reduced to 15 years, however, after serving just 10 years, he was released from prison. Jose was eventually baptized as one of Jehovah's witnesses.

Truly a case of the wolf residing with the lamb. And what about the future fulfillment of Isaiah chapter 11 verses 6 through 9? In the earthly paradise that God has promised, there will be delightful peace among humans, and between humans and animals. Don't you long for that time?

As you watch the following video, notice the peace we enjoy with fellow believers now, and just imagine the peace that we'll enjoy in paradise.

How would you feel during a long journey where you might meet wild animals and criminals along the road? Jehovah assured the returning exiles that they would return in safety, and

dwell in peace. In the spiritual paradise we enjoy right now, people who were once violent have learned to be humble, loving and peaceable.

Imagine the peace that will reign in God's new world. Where we can wander this beautiful globe, explore every corner, and admire the handiwork of the true God, with no fear.

**“They will do no harm, nor cause any ruin in all my holy mountain says Jehovah”,  
Isaiah 65:25.**

As the video showed, people who were once violent, have learned to be humble, loving, and peaceable. And how did you feel when you saw scenes in the video of humans so close to wild animals? Jehovah's promise of peace among humans and peace between humans and animals is thrilling. Please notice what Isaiah further wrote about this piece at Isaiah chapter 65. Please turn there with me, Isaiah 65. Now, these are words similar to those we read earlier at Isaiah chapter 11. Isaiah 65 verse 25.

**“The wolf and the lamb will feed together. The lion will eat straw, just like the bull, and the serpent's food will be dust. They will do no harm, nor cause any ruin, in all my holy mountain, says Jehovah”.**

Skilled artists in the art department at world headquarters beautifully illustrate such scenes and the images can be found in our publications, but, what Isaiah describes is no artist rendition. This will be real. Think, how you'll feel when you're not afraid of wild animals, and the animals aren't afraid of you.

As we look forward to that future promise of peace, what can we do now to "Pursue Peace"? One thing is to contribute to the peace of our spiritual paradise, the secure spiritually prosperous environment in which we worship Jehovah. Jesus stated at Matthew chapter 5 verse 9,

**“Happy are the peacemakers”.**

A peacemaker is skilled at restoring peace among Brothers when peace is disturbed, but more importantly, a peacemaker strives to avoid disturbing peace in the first place. Does peacemaker describe you? Are you contributing to our spiritual paradise in that way?

Something else we can do as we await the future fulfillment of the wolf and the lamb feeding together is to meditate on what it will be like to help resurrected ones who were violent to become peaceable. Imagine studying with a resurrected one who had a violent background? Perhaps experiencing a violent death because of a fierce personality?

How will you reason with the person from God's word to help him see the need to be a peacemaker? What examples of such transformations will you share? And how will you explain the prophecies of peace at Isaiah chapter 11 verses 6 through 9, and chapter 65 verse 25?

We encourage all of you to think deeply about how this promise of peace was fulfilled for the

ancient Jews, how the promise is being fulfilled today, and what life on earth will be like when it's fulfilled in the future.

May all of us take delight in the peaceful promise of the wolf and the lamb feeding together.

Brother James Mance, a helper to the writing committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Take Delight in God's Promises of Peace, No Resident will say, I Am Sick”.***

Jehovah is the great healer. Only he can make the promise “No resident will say I am sick” Why can we be confident that Jehovah is going to keep his promise to bring an end to all sickness. We find assurance in the words of Isaiah chapter 35, verses 5 and 6. Please open your bibles to that scripture. Here we read a promise of healing that Jehovah made to the nation of Israel. This promise gives us hope, because it was actually fulfilled on a small scale more than 2 500 years ago.

Isaiah chapter 35 verses 5 and 6 reads,

**“At that time, the eyes of the blind will be opened, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped, at that time the lame will leap like the deer, and the tongue of the speechless will shout for joy. For waters will burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert plain”.**

Isaiah recorded this promise 125 years before the Babylonian army destroyed Jerusalem. It was fulfilled after Jehovah freed the Israelite's from Babylonian captivity in 537 B.C.E. and restored them to their homeland in Israel, but you may ask, were the blind, deaf, lame, and speechless really healed at that time?

To answer, we need to apply a basic principle. Jehovah restores what was lost.

During the 70 years of exile, Jehovah did not punish the Israelite's by striking them with physical blindness, deafness, lameness, and loss of speech, therefore, their restoration would not require the healing of their physical disabilities, however, these afflictions are a good description of the self-inflicted spiritual sickness that had caused the nation to fall into apostasy and lose Jehovah's favour.

Jehovah saw their repentant attitude and their desire to restore true worship in Jerusalem. He healed their spiritual sickness by forgiving their sins and restoring them to his favour, in other words, they came to their spiritual senses. They regained their spiritual vision and their ability to hear, obey, and speak Jehovah's word. No longer spiritually lame, they were energized to carry on Jehovah's pure worship.

Similarly today, we are eyewitnesses, yes, we are the beneficiaries of a worldwide spiritual healing program. Jehovah heals us spiritually by freeing us from false religious teachings and unclean practices. He has brought us into a spiritual paradise where our spiritual strength is renewed day by day. In a spiritual sense, the blind are learning to see, and the deaf are

learning to hear. But, is spiritual healing the only part of the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise? No. Please open your bibles to Isaiah chapter 33 and verse 24. As we read this verse, pay attention to the latter part because it contains the key to understanding why physical healing is included in God's promise, no resident will say I am sick. Isaiah chapter 33 verse 24 says,

**“And no resident will say I am sick. The people dwelling in the land will be pardoned for their error”.**

Did you notice that the end of sickness is related to our being pardoned for our errors or sins? Clearly that ties the fulfillment to a spiritual healing, however, our imperfect sinful condition is also the reason that we get physically sick, therefore, in the new world, on the basis of the healing power of Jesus ransom sacrifice, we will experience a healing of our physical sicknesses. Jehovah's promise that no resident will say I am sick will come true in the complete sense.

As you watch the following video, think about the spiritual blessings we enjoy now, and imagine what our lives will be like in the future when all our physical ailments will be healed.

Clear instruction from Jehovah draws us close to him, and maintains spiritual health. While false teachings hold many in the grip of spiritual darkness, Jehovah offers true freedom. The spiritual health we enjoy now reminds us that perfect physical and mental health await us in paradise.

Imagine waking every day feeling clean, healthy, happy, and full of the joy of life. Jehovah promises, no resident will say I am sick.

How refreshing and heartwarming to think of the global healing that lies ahead. We are confident that this is going to happen, why? Because we have already experienced how Jehovah has healed us spiritually. Keep in mind the powerful statement from the video. The spiritual health we enjoy now reminds us that perfect physical and mental health await us in paradise

We also learned from the video that clear instruction from Jehovah draws us close to him and helps us to maintain our spiritual health today. What a blessing it is to be taught by Jehovah. We can show our appreciation for this spiritual healing by thanking Jehovah in prayer. Psalm 40 verse 5 mentions another way we can thank the great healer for all he has done and will do for us. Let's read it, Psalm 40 and verse 5 says,

**“How many things you have done O' Jehovah my God. Your wonderful works and your thoughts toward us. None can compare to you. If I were to try to tell, and speak of them, they would be too numerous to recount”.**

Our gratitude to Jehovah will move us to tell others about Jehovah's wonderful works. To speak of the many things he has done, and, we will never run out of good things to say about our God.

Those who respond favourably will come to know Jehovah as their great healer and enjoy his

friendship forever. Granted, today, many of us are dealing with serious health challenges but, we do what we can to share with others this good news about healing and we take delight in Jehovah's promises which cannot fail.

When Jesus was on earth, no sickness was beyond his ability to heal. Whether it was physical, mental, or emotional, in the new world, such healing will take place on a much grander scale and the cures will be permanent.

Many of the great crowd will go through the great tribulation with serious debilitating illnesses. Our publications have said that it seems reasonable to expect that shortly after the destruction of Satan's system of things, miracles like those that Jesus performed while on earth will no doubt take place on a global scale. That will allow all survivors of the great tribulation to have a satisfying share in transforming this earth into a beautiful paradise, and by the end of Jesus thousand-year reign, they will reach the very fullness of perfect human life.

As we enjoy the rich blessings of our spiritual paradise now, let's keep in mind that these spiritual blessings are evidence that all the promises of the great healer will come true. We will forever take delight in the complete fulfillment of Jehovah's promise that no resident will say I am sick.

Brother Garrett Lush, a member of the governing body, will now present the final talk of this symposium,

***“Take Delight in God's Promises of Peace, He will Swallow Up Death Forever”.***

How wonderful and impressive to realize that Jehovah promises to raise people from the dead and to end death permanently. I invite you to read with me that comforting promise found at Isaiah chapter 25. Regarding our God Jehovah, Isaiah 25, 7 and 8 says,

**“He will do away with the shroud that is enveloping all the peoples and the covering that is woven over all the nations. He will swallow up death forever, and the sovereign lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces”.**

The Watchtower of September 15, 2014 page 25 said, *“Fittingly, the bible refers to inherited sin and death as “the shroud that is enveloping all the peoples, and the covering that is woven over all the nations”.*

*“This suffocating covering or shroud, this intricate whip work of condemnation entraps all people”,*

But how do we know that Jehovah can resurrect the dead? Because he already brought his people back to life figuratively in the past.

In 537, before our common era, Jehovah in effect raised the nation of Israel from the dead restoring the people who were held captive in Babylon for 70 years to their homeland and re-establishing pure worship. In 1919, Jehovah freed his modern-day people from Babylon the

Great, the world empire of false religion, revitalizing them for renewed activity. Isaiah 26:19 prophesied this,

**“Your dead will live, my corpses will rise up. Awake, and shout joyfully, your residence in the dust, for your dew is as the dew of the morning, and the earth will let those powerless in death come to life”.**

When were God's people held captive by Babylon the Great? That spiritual captivity lasted from the second century of our common era to 1919 when anointed Christians were gathered into the restored congregation. God's people were tested and refined during the years following the establishment of God's kingdom in the heavens in 1914.

Then in 1919, Jesus appointed the faithful and discreet slave over God's cleansed people to give them spiritual food at the proper time. This was the year that God's people started to return to their God-given spiritual estate. It was also the time when they were released from symbolic captivity to Babylon the Great.

How happy we can be though that after God's people experienced centuries of spiritual oppression, we are living in the time when those having insight, will shine brightly, and many will cleanse themselves, as they will be refined. We as God's people not only experience the spiritual restoration and the spiritual paradise, but will see the fulfillment of Isaiah 25:8 when God swallows up death forever. Yes, Jehovah will end death forever. What a thrilling promise of peace.

Who of us has not lost a loved one to some disease, perhaps even from Covid-19 or an accident, or a disaster. God here promises that death will be no more, which suggests that the children who might be born then will not have to face the prospect of growing up and then getting old, ending in death.

In addition to Isaiah's prophecy, Revelation 21:4 clearly states a similar thought. There we read that

**“Death will be no more”.**

As you watch the following video, think about what Jehovah has already done to show his love for us and what He will do for us in the future.

Jehovah fulfilled his word to the exiles. He restored that ruined nation as if bringing it back to life. In 1919, Jehovah did something similar, he released his modern day people from spiritual captivity, and energized them to preach. Just as Jehovah raised his people from figurative death, so will he reverse the effects of literal death. Indeed, God will swallow up death forever. Imagine living longer than any tree,

**“Because death will be no more”.**

How we delight in the many things Jehovah gives us. Today, we are privileged to be among the only group of people who worship Jehovah in the elevated way that He approves as

prophesied in Isaiah chapter 2 verse 2. And think about the overwhelming joy we will feel when Jehovah resurrects our loved ones. Thank Jehovah for our precious resurrection hope. First Thessalonians chapter 4 verse 13 says,

**“Moreover Brothers, we do not want you to be ignorant about those who are sleeping in death, so that you may not sorrow as the rest do who have no hope”.**

Meditate on it to strengthen your faith and courage. Why is it important for us to do so? Because the threat of death is a powerful weapon. Those under Satan's control use it to force people to betray their friends, or to give up their convictions, but, that threat is powerless against us. We know that if our enemies kill us, Jehovah will restore us to life. We are convinced that nothing they can do can sever our attachment to Jehovah.

What remarkable wisdom Jehovah has shown by giving us the resurrection hope. By means of it, He disarms Satan of one of his most effective weapons, and, at the same time arms us with unbreakable courage.

Remember that death is temporary and that the life Jehovah offers each of us will last forever.

In this symposium, we have learned how Jehovah fulfilled his promises in the past, how he is fulfilling them today, and how he will fulfill them in the future. As we have seen, God's promises of peace include, One, nutritious spiritual and physical food for all. Two, Adequate housing and satisfying work. Three, Freedom from the risk of violence. Four, Perfect physical health, and Five, the elimination of death.

With Jehovah as our God and best friend, we will delight in the abundance of peace forever.

Thank you Brothers. Few things bring more joy to our heart than meditating on what Jehovah is doing for us now, and what he will do in the near future. We have so many rich blessings to look forward to. How fitting it is that we keep our focus on pleasing our loving heavenly father. Thus, we invite you to sing song number 35 entitled,

***“Make sure of the more important things”,***

Song number 35.

## **FRIDAY AFTERNOON PART TWO**

We are overjoyed that you are among the millions around the world who are viewing this convention. An infirm bible student named Joyce, who lives in southeast Asia, expressed her appreciation for these arrangements by saying, “With the convention being streamed online, I don't have to miss a single talk. I can watch the program with the rest of the Brotherhood worldwide. I am so thankful to Jehovah for this arrangement.

Perhaps you can relate to her expressions.

Thank you for the generous donations you have made online at [donate.jw.org](http://donate.jw.org) and by other means which help make these streaming services possible.

During these critical last days, many families lack the affection that Jehovah designed us to give and receive, however, God's word contains principles that when followed, lead to peace. We're sure you will enjoy the fine talks and dramatizations in this next symposium.

Brother Joel Dellinger, a helper to the service committee will deliver the first talk,

***“Follow the road map to family peace, show love and respect”.***

Family peace is precious. It's even as the bible proverb says, “Better is a piece of dry bread where there is peace than a house full of feasting along with quarrelling”.

But what exactly is family peace? Someone might say, as long as we're not arguing, our family's at peace. But is that real peace? We might think of two countries that were fighting, but have now agreed to a ceasefire. Does the cease-fire mean that they've become real friends who love one another? No, we know that genuine peace takes more work. That's true in the family as well. Our heavenly father knows that the most satisfying family piece involves more than an absence of arguing. It involves a family's well-being and unity. Is such peace in a family today really possible?

Although none of us have a perfect family, the answer is yes. While it requires work, perhaps breaking bad habits that disrupt peace, and adopting new ones that promote it, those efforts are worth it.

In this symposium, we'll see how bible principles can guide families to peace, just as a road map guides travellers to a beautiful destination. In each of the talks, we invite you husbands, fathers, wives, mothers, children, teenagers, to be the traveller who studies the map and then goes in the right direction.

The focus of our first talk is showing love and respect. Why would you say these two qualities are so important to family peace? Well, it's simple. Because family members who love and respect one another feel secure and appreciated. As a result, our relationships are warm, close, and peaceful. Of course, showing love and respect can be a challenge these days. In the following dramatization notice why.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Irene,

You look so handsome. Those came out so nice.

Sorry Olivia, are you okay?

Yeah, it's okay Sue.

I'm so sorry.

No worries.

Um, I'm all moved in. That was the last box. Dad, is that a wedding photo. Let me see. Look at here, oh yeah.

Olivia, I know this is all new, baby, be patient.

Can I cut in?

Yeah sure. Thanks.

What's wrong?

Where's the desk?

We had to get rid of it. This one's better for everyone.

You mean, it's better for him,

For Max. What are you saying?

What do you care?

Don't talk to me like that! Get back here.

Hey Olivia, what do you think about the desk? Come here sweetie, come here. So you, never forget that I love you. I hope you like it.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Today, every family faces challenges of some sort, so let's consult our roadmap together in the bible at Romans chapter 12 and verse 10. Would you read it with me please, that's Romans chapter 12 and verse 10.

**“In Brotherly love, have tender affection for one another, in showing honour to one another, take the lead”.**

Now, what's the point? Regardless of the role we play in the family, each of us needs to treat our family members with love and respect. We need to take the lead or initiative to do so. To help us, let's consider four good habits that all of us should work to develop more fully. Habit number one. Regularly express tender affection. When conveyed with sincerity, expressions of affection are like sunshine and water to plants. They help everyone in the family grow and thrive. In the video we just watched, did you note how Olivia cherished her father's gift? That green desk, and his tender words he told her, so, you never forget that I love you.

We also saw warm affection as the newly blended family of Max and Irene looked at wedding photos.

That was encouraging. Well, here's a question, how are we doing in expressing tender affection in our family? If that's not one of our strengths, we might relate to a husband who mustered up the courage to say, I love you to his wife. It brought her to tears, tears of joy, and she said this, I love you too, but this is the first time in 25 years you've said it like that.

Well, what's the point? We don't want to wait that long of course, but, even an awkward attempt at expressing affection in our family is an act of love, and it can do so much good. That's a habit we all want to cultivate.

Let's consider a second habit. Be kind in your actions, tone of voice, and choice of words. In the video, we recall Irene's reassurance to her daughter Olivia. She said, I know this is all new baby, be patient. Mom was kind in what she said, and how she said it. A little later though, Olivia was upset. While we know she was hurt, her speech and actions were not so kind were they.

During the pandemic, all of us have been under tremendous stress and likely, we didn't always treat others in our family as kindly as we would have liked. Well, that's in the past. But what can we all do now? We can pray to Jehovah to help us take the lead in showing kindness.

For example, every day, greeting one another kindly, every day, saying please and thank you, sharing little gifts, making time to talk, really listening. All of these are acts of kindness. That's a good habit we all want to cultivate.

What's habit number three? Be quick to apologize and forgive freely. In the video, Olivia's new stepsister Sue apologized after she bumped into Olivia with a box by mistake. That apology promoted peace.

When you and I realize we've hurt someone, even unintentionally, what should we do? We should make amends quickly.

A mother named Marina said this,

*"We try to set a good example for our children in forgiving others and not getting offended. When I am wrong, I apologize to my children. I want them to learn to do the same in their dealings with others".*

That's a good habit wouldn't you agree? Well, let's consider one more, a fourth habit.

Help your family members feel respected.

An article in the Awake magazine once made this insightful comment. Respect is in the eye of the beholder. What does that mean? Even if we think we're showing respect in the family, a good question to ask ourselves is, do my family members feel that I respect them? Is there

more I can do to help my mate, my children, or my parents feel loved and respected? Brothers and Sisters, when we fulfill our God-given role in the family by developing good habits, such as these, we show respect both for Jehovah and all of our family members. Now, let's think about Olivia and her mom. In the next video, note how peace can be restored by showing love and respect.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

It's okay mom, you didn't know, dad did that for her just before he died. Anything I can do to help?

Romans 12:10,

**“In showing honour to one another take the lead”.**

Olivia I made your favourite tonight. Thank you.

I wanted to tell you, I didn't handle that so well today. You had good reason to be upset about the desk.

Mom, you didn't know. It's just one of those things that dad did just for me. I know he's my stepdad now but, I just wish he would have checked first.

It wasn't Max, it was me. I wanted to surprise Max with a place for him to do his work.

So, he didn't make you get rid of the desk?

No,

I just thought you both didn't care. I will never ever stop caring about you.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What a beautiful outcome. The well-being and unity of the family were restored, the mom, Irene applied the principle at Romans 12 10. She took the lead or the initiative to talk kindly with her daughter. Though Olivia was upset, she too showed love and respect by being willing to listen to her mom. As a result, the misunderstanding was cleared up and Irene used the opportunity to reassure her precious daughter of her love saying, *“I will never, ever stop caring about you”* and how our hearts were touched to see their warm embrace.

When we take the lead in applying bible principles, we promote genuine family peace. So, may all of us be determined to keep showing our family that we truly love and respect them in word and action.

Now please, listen as Brother Robert Luccione, a helper to the publishing committee, considers the next talk of this symposium with the theme,

***“Follow the Roadmap to Family Peace, Improve Communication”***

Our previous talk reminded us that it's possible for a family to enjoy peace, but it takes work. Let's look at one more step that can help us stay on the road to peace, and that is good communication. A family promotes peace when all the family members communicate in an open, calm, and honest manner, but, how does communication help with peace?

Well, a pattern of good communication keeps a family close. It helps us to identify and address problems before these reach a point that they take peace away. Now, that may seem obvious, but isn't it true that we may find that between work and school and meetings and ministry and recreation and just life in general, that it's hard to find time to communicate as a family. Is that a challenge in your family?

In the following dramatization, notice what habits hinder family communication.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Hey Steve, Yeah, I'm sorry I was late to the meeting. I should have been there to help out with my assignment.

Yeah, we got delayed. We're late, let's go kids.

We're coming, Sorry.

Yeah, family's fine. Everybody's adjusting really well. Anyone see my glasses, anyone?

I mean, we might be a little out of sync, but, uh, I don't know. Every family has their issues right?

You going outside?

Hey, well thanks for understanding. All right, okay, take care. Alright, bye-bye.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Did you notice some habits that hinder family communication? In the case of this family, it seems like technology is stifling their communication, and they obviously have some things they need to communicate about. Punctuality, dress and grooming, but it's not happening.

Now, while the scenes of them all looking at their devices and ignoring one another may have been a bit humorous, did it remind you of your family at times? What a good reminder for us not to let the use of technology rob our family of our time and attention.

So, how can we develop habits that promote good communication? Let's consider the second bible principle of this symposium. Let's turn together please to Ephesians chapter 5, and let's read verses 15 and 16. Ephesians 5:15 and 16.

**“So, keep strict watch, that how you walk, is not as unwise, but as wise persons, making the best use of your time, because the days are wicked”.**

Now, let's look at two ways that this bible principle can help us. The first is by making time to

have meaningful communication. Did you notice that in verse 16 it says,

**“Making the best use of your time”.**

Now, the study note for this phrase indicates the need to buy out the time for important things from other pursuits, so how can this apply to family communication? Well, this could include having a plan or a routine for when we spend time together as a family each day, and during those times, we may choose to limit our use of technology so it does not interfere with communication.

Perhaps it's in the evening, or at a specific meal time. One Brother named Aaron stated, we have our evening meal together which allows us time to talk and hear what's important to each member of the family. He says, my wife and I have arranged our schedules so we take the boys to school and pick them up. This allows us to spend more time with them and then he says, my wife and I regularly take walks and freely talk about our concern.

What's the point? Well, they're making good use of their time, however, to do this, they had to buy that time out from other pursuits, but they have a plan, they have a routine. So, what plan or routine does your family have for meaningful communication each day? If you don't have one, can you start now?

Let's look at the second way that this bible principle can help us, and that is by determining when and how to deal with problems when they do arise.

You notice verse 15 in Ephesians chapter 5 says that we should walk as wise persons. That means we need to choose our paths carefully. Knowing when to go, when to stop, when to take another route.

Well how can that help us when problems arise? Well, a wise person generally knows when is, and when is not, a good time to address a problem. For example, we all can attest that when emotions are high, it's probably not the best time to bring up an issue.

One father states, sometimes we need to wait and let things cool. Often a nights rest with prayer make a big difference when we address the issue the next morning.

That's a wise person. A wise person also listens. James chapter 1 verse 19 reminds us to be

**“Quick to listen, but, slow to speak, and slow to anger”.**

So, thus we can go to Jehovah in prayer, and ask him to help us to really listen, to stay calm, to stay humble.

One Sister named Dawn states, *“When there are problems, the first thing I do is ask Jehovah in prayer to help us resolve the problem calmly”*. Then she says, *“then we talk with the family member privately, and really try to listen to their side of the issue”*. That's a wise person. A wise person will also consider the approach and the words that he or she uses, for example, rather than telling our family member that they have a problem, can we turn it around so that

it's something that we all need to work on together.

Do you reassure your family members that you really love them and you want to understand their side of the issue or the problem?

See now, doing this, we're not attacking the family member, but, rather showing that we're all in this together.

So, we see benefits of this bible principle in communication in our family, don't we. You notice the two points, number one, making the best use of our time, and number two, walking as wise persons.

Now communication will always be a work in progress but, it's worth the effort as it'll go a long way to bringing peace to your family.

Let's watch more of our dramatization and notice the benefits of developing habits that promote good communication.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

I don't know, what do you think,

We all have to work on it. I know I need to.

Why don't we approach it that way with the kids? Just be open with them. That sounds like a good idea, Okay, so uh Irene and I have been talking about communication in our family. We want to talk about our phones and other devices.

You're not talking about me are you?

You can't do that.

I know that we can all be more balanced but you can't take them away?

I haven't done anything bad.

I have responsibilities.

Hold on, you're always on your phone too.

That's true.

It's okay, let's just talk about it all right, Sue? Can you read Ephesians 5:15 and 16 for us please.

**“So, keep strict watch that how you walk is not as unwise, but as wise persons, making the best use of your time because the days are wicked”.**

So, how do you think we're doing with our phones and other devices?

It isn't that what you're doing on your devices is not wrong  
Exactly, but could it be taking time away from more important things, like talking to each other? And in that way, affecting even how we're talking to each other?

Yeah, I think it'd be smart to have some boundaries then.

Yeah, okay.

Okay,

Okay, let's talk about how we can do that.

Hey

Hey Olivia

Hey

Evidently I haven't figured out how to talk to her about her clothes yet. I need your help.

I got this one.

I know, but it's all about good spiritual judgment. Do you think that these trends reflect Jehovah's view of respectable dress? I know that you'll do the right thing. Hey, while we're all here, um, I know we all have different views on punctuality, but I really need your help so i can take care of some of my responsibilities. You think we can meet in the middle?

Yeah all right.

Great!

## **VIDEO ENDS**

Now, this symposium has been discussing four bible principles that can guide families to peace.

Brother Dellinger considered the first one in Romans chapter 12 verse 10, and in this part we considered Ephesians chapter 5 verses 15 and 16.

Now, did we see how this scripture helped our family? In the video, we saw that they knew down deep that they were not making the best use of their time so they made changes. They saw that they needed to set boundaries so they could improve their communication. We also saw how the family, the parents, acted as wise persons. How? Well, by determining when and how to address the problems that needed to be addressed, such as the use of technology, dress and grooming, and punctuality.

Can this bible principle help your family? Help my family, to improve communication? Would this be a good scripture to include in your next family worship? Now, it takes time to learn how

to communicate well as a family, but it is worth the effort, why? Well, if we strive to communicate each day, well then, communication will come more readily when there are problems, so be determined to look for ways to improve communication in your family. And by taking this initiative, and sticking with it, you will be following the road map to family peace.

Please listen now to Brother David Splain, a member of the governing body, as he considers the next talk of this symposium,

***“Follow the Roadmap to Family Peace, Work as a Team”.***

Jehovah intended married couples to work together. That's why Jesus used the expression we find in Matthew 19 and verse 6. Let's read this, from the bible. Matthew 19, I'll give you a moment, Matthew chapter 19, and we're going to read verse 6. Now, first of all, Jesus quotes from Genesis 2:24. He says, speaking of married couples, he says,

**“So that they are no longer two but one flesh”.**

Now, you remember Jehovah made that comment in the garden of Eden, but now Jesus adds something that isn't in Genesis, he says,

**“Therefore, what God has yoked, yoked together, let no man put apart”.**

When we think of a yoke, we may think of a team of horses, uh, plowing a field, or pulling a heavy wagon. If they pull together they can be a powerful force. The same is true when family members work together. Mom, Dad, you have excellent reasons to work together. When you work together, you contribute to the peace of the family. And think of the effect it has on the children. By working together, you're teaching that fine young son of yours how to be a caring husband and father, and your beautiful daughter, how to be a supportive wife and mother. But what happens when teammates begin pulling in opposite directions? Or when one puts on the brakes?

Let's watch a video. Now, here's the setup. For a long time a Sister raised her two children as a single parent and she did a great job of it, then, she married a very kind Brother. The family has a new head. Let's see how well the Sister is adapting to her new role.

**VIDEO STARTS**

The last few weeks of family worship have been nice, right?

Yeah, all these things we ask and pray in Jesus name, amen,

Amen.

Okay, this week, we,

Are in chapter five.

Yeah, that's right, and, uh, last week, Gabriel, so

This week is Sue's turn...

That's right, its Sue's turn...

Okay, the point here is that when it comes to...

Honey, maybe an illustration would be better?

Um, okay,

It's like a bird,

Well hopefully I was able to clear that up for you a little bit Olivia.

Yeah, thank you.

Well, actually, Max, that's not true. We had an updated understanding in the recent Watchtower.

Thanks,

I think they went really well, right.

Um, actually,

Hey,  
Sue,

Maybe we can talk about it later.

Okay?

**VIDEO ENDS**

The Sister isn't a bad person, but we can ask, what's she teaching her daughter about the wife's role in the family, and what's her son learning about taking the lead as the man of the house. He hasn't had a man in his life for a long time.

Now there is one, it's safe to say that the kids will stand a better chance of having a successful marriage themselves, when they see their parents pulling together. A little later, we'll see how the husband handles the situation, and we Brothers are going to want to pay attention. This is a classic.

Family life is more pleasant when dad, mom, and the kids work together as a team. The family head is the captain. He needs to make sure that everyone knows what goals the family is working toward and, how each one can contribute toward achieving those goals.

When it's your family's turn to help clean the kingdom hall or a convention venue. For

example, don't leave the kids at home. They're part of the team. Don't go there with half the team. Let them experience the joy that comes from serving others. Let them work along with you. If you're assigned to clean the restrooms, don't complain about it, your fine example, your children will learn, that when there's work to be done, we just do it. We aren't picky about what we will and will not do. And we don't feel that some jobs are beneath us. Now, this is in line with Paul's counsel found at Philippians chapter 2 verses 3 and 4. Let's look that up. It's good exercise, Philippians chapter 2 verses 3 and 4. Now we're thinking about the family as a team here, it says,

**“Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you, as you will look out not only for your own interests but also for the interests of others.”**

When there's work to be done, someone has to do it. Do I think that I'm so special that someone else has to look after it? Some families volunteer to help with kingdom hall maintenance. When the kids are old enough, they can work on other projects, like working on an assembly hall. They have a ball.

All the friendships that you and your young people will forge can last a lifetime. And here's a bonus, when the young people go to a circuit assembly or a regional convention, they'll have good friends to associate with, both young and old. People they've been working with.

What about working around the house. Some parents feel that the children shouldn't have to help out at all because they have their school work to do. But, their school work is something they do for themselves. How are they contributing to the welfare of the family? How are they learning to serve others unselfishly? It's good for a child to feel that he has an important role in the household and that people are counting on him. Think what that does for his self-respect.

A father named Stephen said, “When nothing is expected of them, children learn that they're here to be served, and they grow up with a distorted view of what life will require of them”.

We might ask, will a young person with that attitude even be able to keep a job? When someone in the world lose their job, they may remain unemployed for a long time. They can't pay the bills yet, there are job opportunities all around them, but, they consider those jobs beneath them. And what's one of the most annoying traits an employee can have? Ask any boss. When the worker is asked to do something, he replies, “that's not my job”.

Teach your child that anything that needs to be done is his job if he's old enough and capable of doing it.

How early should parents start to assign chores to their children? Some experts have found that children who are three years old, or even younger, can be taught to help out. They can learn to pick up their toys, clean up spills, sort laundry. Older children can vacuum, wash the car, prepare a meal.

I'm happy to say that many young Brothers here at Bethel are excellent cooks, which is often

the result of fine parental training.

Do you remember the video where Caleb is taught to clean his room and Put Away his toys? That video was a game changer for many children. They want to be just like Caleb, and now, when you enter their room, you can find the bed.

When problems arise, attack the problem, not each other. It's not how can I win, but how can we win. You'll see an excellent example of that in the follow-up video, let's watch.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Hey, want some tea?

Sure. Oh, hey babe, you and me, we're a team right?

Yeah, of course.

When I read this, I thought about us,

“So that they are no longer two, but one flesh”.

I know before you had to shoulder everything yourself, for so long, and you did great. You've been raising two beautiful spiritual kids on your own, but now, you have me.

Yeah, I do. So, do you think sometimes we're not a team?

Well, it's just sometimes, during family worship,

I get excited and I jump in. I know, I'm just so used to doing it after all these years.

I know you're not trying to take over, and listen, I love the way you teach. I see how you can reach the kids in ways that I can't. Just let me guide it, and I'll make sure you can do that.

Thanks honey, thanks for your patience.

No, thank you for your patience. I'm a work in progress but, we make a great team. Why don't we look at what we're going to cover before our next family worship?

That sounds great.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Wasn't that a fine example of how to attack a problem, not your mate. No arguments, no raised voices, no accusations. The husband had empathy for his wife. He didn't question her motives. He realized that as a single parent, she'd been taking the lead for a long time. And notice how she responded to her husband's kind counsel. No doubt it's going to be easy for the kids to respect their stepfather, and they're going to learn how a husband and wife should treat each other, and how they should pull together. Sometime soon, you might want to consider these questions.

In what aspects of our marriage do we work well as a team? And then, How can we improve?

It pleases Jehovah when family members work together as a team. That promotes peace in the family, and our God, is a God of peace.

Now, Brother John Akron will consider the final talk of this symposium,

***“Follow the Roadmap to Family Peace, Worship Jehovah Together”.***

Jehovah wants your family to be happy and peaceful. But, Jehovah does more than simply say I hope you have a peaceful family life. He explains exactly how we can get our family there. I want you to imagine Jehovah laying out a map in front of you and saying, see these landmarks, look for them on the road to peace, and if you see them, you're going in the right direction.

So far in this symposium, we've passed the landmarks of show love and respect, improving communication, and working together as a team. The last landmark we'll consider in this symposium is worshipping together as a family. Worshipping together as a family. Worshipping together as a family promotes peace and brings his blessing. Even if not all in your family are worshippers of Jehovah, you can promote peace by maintaining a very good spiritual routine.

In the following dramatization, notice some common obstacles to worshipping Jehovah as a family.

**VIDEO STARTS**

Hi.

Hey babe.

So what's for family worship this week?

I think I got some good ideas.

Yeah.

Mm-hmm.

Thank you for reading that. Um, let's just go ahead and ask the question. We'll just do that. So, paragraph 13 and 14, How can we be generous. Anybody?

Now, the footnote that we just read really helps us to appreciate the definition of that quality. Without the definition, we're left to wonder exactly what it is, and how it connects to the other things that we've discussed this evening,

Gabe, can you go ahead and read the next one?

The bible contains many examples of submissive individuals.

So are there examples?

Sue?

Yeah.

That's right. When we talk about examples, where do we start? There's examples in the past, there's even examples presently, and we could even be examples. That's the power of them. Let's keep going.

That was a lot of reading.

I know right?

I want to enjoy family worship but, I feel like the things that we are covering are just really not what I need right now.

Yeah,

You know, I just don't know if this is what they need right now. We'll keep working on it.

**VIDEO ENDS**

I think we'd all agree that family worship was difficult to watch. It was uncomfortable for everyone.

Clearly Max and Irene had some obstacles they needed to overcome, to really worship Jehovah as a family.

To start and keep a good habit going requires determination and resolve. So that's where you need to start for your family. You need to resolve that you're going to worship Jehovah as a family. Notice the resolve in Joshua's words at Joshua chapter 24 and verse 15. That's Joshua chapter 24 and verse 15.

**“Now if it seems bad to you to serve Jehovah, choose for yourselves today whom you will serve, whether the gods that your forefathers served on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you are dwelling, but as for me and my household, we will serve Jehovah”.**

Yes, worship of Jehovah as a family needs to be at the very centre of your family life. Now, weekly family worship is not all that's involved in worshipping together as a family. Let's consider five ways we can worship Jehovah together as a family.

*One*, prayer. Parents, do not underestimate the impact that your prayers have on your children. When a child hears their parents pour out their hearts to Jehovah, that tells them that Jehovah is very real to their parents.

I can recall growing up, listening to my father's prayers. Now, when I was young, I thought his prayers were very long, but as I grew older, and really listened carefully to what he was

saying, I could see how much of a close relationship he had with Jehovah.

*Two*, discuss the daily text. It's an excellent habit, and a very spiritual way to start the day.

*Three*, attending meetings. Now, not just make sure our family is there at the meetings, but they're involved, engaged. And work hard to prepare, so that all family members can have a meaningful comment at the meetings.

*Four*, share in the ministry regularly as a family. Now sharing in the ministry together as a family draws us closer to our family members. When we hear them speak about the truth, we listen to their phone calls, or, we read their letters, we can feel their faith.

I loved going in the ministry with my mother and listened to her skilfully use the bible to answer questions.

*And five*. Have a consistent, enjoyable, and meaningful, family worship program.

Let's consider what that means. First of all, consistent. In the video, Max was trying to have the family worship consistently each week. Is your family worship consistent each week? Is your family worship enjoyable?

In the video, the kids were bored. They were looking at their phones, checking the time, and week after week a kind of a question and answer style led to the young people giving sort of one-word answers. It did not look enjoyable.

Now, would your family describe family worship as enjoyable? How about meaningful?

What Max was using for material was material that he thought was meaningful, but, did it look like it was meaningful to the family? Does your family worship use material that is meaningful to your family?

Now, after reviewing these five points, we don't want you to be discouraged if it's a struggle to maintain a good routine. Life in this system has many challenges, trials, and unexpected events, so stay positive, and when your good routine breaks down from time to time, consider what adjustments you can make to be successful, and get your spiritual routine back on track. Regularly ask Jehovah for his help and don't give up.

Now, as you watch the following dramatization, notice how Max and Irene and the family work together to make family worship successful.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

March 15 2014 Watchtower, Family worship, can you make it more enjoyable? The worship of Jehovah should not be boring. Address the needs of each family member.

Babe, what do our kids need? What's actually going on in their lives? Family worship needs to include that.

Maybe we need to pay more attention to what's going on with them. Talk to them, listen to them.

I'm going to send you a link to a great Watchtower article.

I can't wait to read it.

Max and I changed our approach.

We found out what mattered to our kids, like friends.

Adjusting to a blended family, dating, so we turned things around and used family worship to focus on what our kids really needed, and to prepare ourselves for possible future trials.

Good night y'all.

Good night.

Good night,

Good night. Um, family worship was, was cool.

It was.

I'm glad you liked it.

Thank you,

Good night y'all.

Night.

Good night.

Hey, guess what?

What?

What?

I applied to Bethel.

You did?

Yep.

That's really exciting! I'm proud of you.

Thanks.

Congratulations.

Thank you.

Hey, selfie time, everybody.

All right, on three, we're gonna say Bethel okay?

All right.

All right, one, two, three.

Bethel.

We've come a long way, and through it all, Jehovah has taught us to love, and he's given our family, peace.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

So, we can see that Max and Irene analyzed what was wrong with family worship and decided to change their approach. Let's examine how they did that and what it means for us.

What did they do to make their family worship more meaningful? Well Max and Irene had to ask themselves, what's going on in their kids lives? What topics could they discuss at family worship that would truly be useful to their kids? Did you smile when you saw Max almost drop the glass when his daughter talked about dating? But, what a difference their efforts to listen, and really understand what was happening with the kids made in the family worship.

How did Max and Irene make family worship more enjoyable? Did you see how the family was reacting at family worship now? What a difference. The kids were smiling, they looked engaged in the discussion and touched by what they were discussing.

So, do what you can to make sure that your family feels relaxed, and happy, and that your family worship reflects the kind of happy and joyful God that Jehovah is. Remember, your family will often remember more about how they felt during family worship than maybe the exact details of what they learned.

Keep worshipping Jehovah as a family. Make your family worship consistent, enjoyable, and meaningful. And work together to overcome obstacles. Just like Max and Irene and the kids all worked together to solve problems and create a very peaceful family life.

It was really beautiful to see how far they had come by applying bible principles. In review, this symposium has taught us that bible principles can be used as a road map to family peace. Work hard to show love and respect, to improve communication, to work together as a team, and to worship Jehovah together, and please, be patient with one another as you form habits that lead to peace.

With Jehovah's help, you and your family will enjoy peace that only He can provide.

Thank you Brothers, we benefited from thinking about how we can apply the bible principles you shared, and from the practical lessons in the dramatizations. All of us long to see true peace on earth. How will that be accomplished and how can we prove that we honour and support Jehovah's appointed king Christ Jesus?

Let's listen as Brother Mark Nemer, a helper to the teaching committee provides these answers and more in the talk,

***“Loyally Support the “Prince of Peace””.***

Imagine the scene. It's nighttime. You're in the garden of Gethsemane with your close friends and beloved teacher. Suddenly, you hear a crowd coming. They're being led by a man you know, Judas Iscariot. He approaches Jesus and kisses him on the cheek. He then steps aside as men move in to arrest Jesus.

Your emotions churn inside you. Your master and lord is being arrested. The son of God. How can this be happening? What do you do? Before you can even decide what to do, Peter draws his sword and chops off the ear of the slave of the high priest. Then Jesus says to Peter, “return your sword to its place, for those who take up the sword, will perish by the sword”.

And then, you watch the unbelievable, as Jesus heals the man's ear. Peter must have thought it was a great and noble thing to fight in behalf of the son of God, but Jesus didn't think so. With six words, *“Return your sword to its place”*,

Jesus taught his disciples an important lesson. This was not their fight, nor was it the time to fight.

So in this talk, we're going to focus our attention on an insidious way that any of us, like Peter, can become inadvertently involved in this world's conflicts without even realizing it. And we will talk about how we can avoid making that serious mistake.

But first, let's discuss why Jesus did not ask his father to send 12 legions of angels to help him when being arrested.

It has to do with Jesus name, so please, open your bible to Isaiah chapter 9 and let's read verse 6. Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. Now, we know Jesus has many titles, but in this verse we're going to focus on on just one, verse 6.

**“For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us, and the rulership will rest on his shoulder. His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace”.**

Why is Jesus called, "Prince of Peace"? Well, consider what Jehovah's angels declared to the shepherds in the field at Jesus birth. At Luke chapter 2 and verse 14, they said,

**“Glory in the heights above to God, and upon earth, peace among men of goodwill”.**

Well, how appropriate for the angels to announce at the birth of the destined "Prince of Peace" that there would be divine peace for those who have God's good will. But when will this become a reality? It didn't happen when Jesus was on earth, and we certainly don't see peace today. Instead of peace what do we see?

We see the nations that are locked in hostilities and aggression. In a competition for world dominance. We see global violence and bloodshed, but please, don't lose heart. Because we don't see peace now, does not mean it's not coming. Isaiah chapter 9 and verse 6. It's not just wishful thinking, it's a promise from almighty God, and Jehovah cannot lie. All his prophecies come true. In fact let's read the last portion of verse 7 in Isaiah chapter 9, the last verse the last portion of verse 7 it says,

**“The zeal of Jehovah of armies will do this”.**

What does that mean? It means that Jehovah does nothing in a half-hearted way. He's zealous to bring peace, and he will. We can be sure that whatever Jehovah promises, he will fully accomplish. So how will peace come to the earth? Did the "Prince of Peace" give us a clue? Yes he did, in fact the key to everlasting peace is on the lips of millions of people throughout the world. They know it by heart. But let's read it at Matthew chapter 6 and verse 9 and 10. Matthew chapter 6 and verse 9.

What a beautiful thought for us this is. Where everlasting peace is going to come through. It depends on the fulfillment of these verses, verse 9.

**“You must pray then this way, our Father in the heavens, let your name” the name Jehovah, “be sanctified”.**

The emphasis that we place on the name of God is not merely a matter of religious knowledge. Everyone must know God's name and treat it as something holy and respected. It has to be something sacred. It must be cleared of all the reproach that has been heaped upon it, in fact, the well-being of the entire universe and its inhabitants depends upon the sanctification of Jehovah's name. Now let's look at verse 10.

**“Let your kingdom come, let your will take place, as in heaven, also on earth”.**

God's kingdom, two words, but so important. God's kingdom is the most powerful government humanity will ever see. There is no nation or empire that can withstand the might of God's kingdom, and any nation who thinks they can block the coming of God's kingdom, is like an ant who plants itself firmly on the railroad track and with his hand raised defiantly shouts to the oncoming locomotive, stop, you can't run over me.

Well, God's heavenly government has the power to destroy all present-day violent regimes. They're like ants to Jehovah and he will eliminate their ability to wage war, format conflict, and to shed blood, so yes, Matthew 6 9-10 is that valuable and important for lasting peace. God's kingdom is the only road to lasting peace and in his role as king, Revelation chapter 19 and

verse 15 describes Jesus as striking the nations with an iron rod. Soon Jehovah will give the command to his son and he will destroy all the things that disrupt peace. God will be the terror that we have grown accustomed to living with day in and day out.

So what will happen next? This is what will happen. Psalm 37:10 and 11. Let's open our bibles here to Psalm 37:10 and 11, and just allow this prophecy to absorb and to thrill our minds and our hearts, and give us a hope for the future, verse 10, Psalm 37.

**“Just a little while longer and the wicked will be no more, a little while longer, you will look at where they were, and they will not be there”.**

Just a little while longer. Just like children saying to their parents going on a trip, “are we there yet”, and the parents say, “*just a little while longer*” and that brings comfort to them, and it's the same with us.

So imagine that this means you go into the streets, you're looking for a wicked person, you would not be able to find even one, the wicked will be no more, but the meek will possess the earth. That's what we're speaking about in verse 11. Let's read that,

**“But the meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace”.**

We love reading that men will be at peace. They will be at peace with themselves, with their neighbours, with their God. How does that sound to you? Meditate on that. Can you see yourself there, in a peaceful new world where the only news to tune into is regarding who's getting resurrected today, which new person will you be assigned to teach about Jehovah.

Can you imagine the joy of studying with a person not just from a different culture but from a different time period? Seeing things through their eyes as they come to love Jehovah as you do. Well soon the "Prince of Peace" will turn this world into one of sheer delight. No more borders, no more threats, no more worries, just an abundance of peace with your Brothers and Sisters. Do you want to be there? Me too, so how can we show our loyal support for the "Prince of Peace"? Please watch the following video and notice the different ways we can do this right now.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

I am no part of the world, but, is the world a part of me?

I'm pressured every day to get involved in political issues that affect me socially.

Environmentally.

And economically.

That pressure could rob me of my peace of mind.

And influence how I think. I could take sides in my heart even if I'm not aware of it.

But I know that Jehovah will care for all of mankind's concerns by means of his kingdom ruled, by his son Jesus Christ.

I show my support for him in my prayers, in how I think and feel, and by teaching others what the kingdom will do for mankind.

I know there are millions of Brothers and Sisters all over the world. Who loyally support the "Prince of Peace" just like me because I am

I am no part of the world.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

So, what takes away the peace in the country where you live, in your community, in your town, in your society, most likely, it's the hot button social issues.

Did you notice how our two Brothers and Sisters showed their loyal support for the "Prince of Peace"? What issues affected them? Unfair tax hikes, blatant injustice, a disregard of the environment, all things in themselves seem like noble causes worthy to get involved, How can they get away with this? It's not right. We should do something. Does that sound familiar? We may not have a literal sword in our hand, but we all have our Peter-like moments, and if we're not careful, issues that are close to our heart can charge our emotions and we can lose our spiritual balance. So, what can help us when we see things that are wrong?

Remember what the "Prince of Peace" said to Peter in that highly charged moment, "Return your sword to its place", in other words, this is not your fight. So what do we do? We do something far better than fight, we preach.

Each time that we share the kingdom news, we proclaim our support for Jesus rule. But, here's the thing. If we truly believe in the good news of the kingdom, we will not do anything that hinders our ability to tell it. Once again, it's so important, if we truly believe in the good news of the kingdom, we will not do anything that hinders our ability to tell it, why?

Well, let's find out. Let's open up to Peter's words himself. Peter, First Peter chapter 2 and verse 12. First Peter chapter 2 and verse 12. Peter helps us here with why we need to maintain our conduct properly. First Peter 2:12.

**“Maintain your conduct fine among the nations so that when they accuse you of being wrongdoers they may be eyewitnesses of your fine works, and as a result, glorify God in the day of his inspection”.**

So Peter had to learn this, but do we see the connection? Our actions and words are directly linked to Jehovah. When people see us, they see a people that worships Jehovah, and when people hear us, they hear a people that worship Jehovah.

Imagine how our freeness of speech, to speak about God's kingdom would be hindered if we were to voice a position for a political issue? And it can happen so easily, it can happen at work or at school, with relatives, and so forth.

Satan sets the trap masterfully. He's just waiting. If he could only make us chop off the ear of anything in this world that causes hurt and indignation in our heart. If he can hook our heartstrings by getting us emotionally charged, he can then step back and reel us in. The new world, our hope for true peace, it all starts to fade into the background. Don't give him that chance. Be determined to do what Titus chapter 3 and verse 1 and 2 tell us. Let's read that, Titus chapter 3, and verse 1 and 2. Here's the scriptural admonition.

**“Continue reminding them to be in subjection, and to be obedient to governments and authorities, to be ready for every good work, to speak injurious of no one. Not to be quarrelsome, but to be reasonable. Displaying all mildness, toward all men”.**

**“Be in subjection, and be obedient to governments and authorities”.**

Well now, let's break that down in practical terms. What does it mean? It means to obey the laws of the land and pay taxes. Not to speak negatively about the superior authorities, to be careful not to take sides on political issues, not even in our hearts.

Do you remember that expression from the video, “I'm not a part of the world, but is the world a part of me”. Of course, when we find ourselves between Caesar's law and God's law, we know what to do. We apply Acts chapter 5 and verse 29 and

**“Obey God as ruler rather than men”.**

We know that but like Jesus who healed the ear of the armed guard Malcus, we're determined to react with mildness when provoked by an injustice or cruelty. In this world.

In conclusion, we have the indescribable privilege to honour the "Prince of Peace", and how reassuring it is to know that Jesus understands our feelings, he understands our emotions. When we see things that we know are wrong, he knows these things hurt our heart. We just want to make things right, but remember, the critical lesson he taught his apostles in the garden of Gethsemane, “this is not your fight”, rather Jehovah, the “King of Eternity”, and Jesus, the "Prince of Peace", are telling us, this is our fight. Leave it in our hands.

Soon the prophecy at Isaiah chapter 9 verse 6 and 7 will be fulfilled completely. In the meantime, keep preaching about the kingdom, avoid saying or doing anything that suggests taking sides on a political issue. Don't allow yourself to chop off the ear of the injustices and the causes of conflict of this old world. Peter tried that but it didn't work. He learned a big lesson that day in the garden, and he never forgot it.

May we never forget it either. Now is the time to show your active and loyal support for the "Prince of Peace" as we echo Peter's words at Second Peter 3:14, and do our utmost to be found finally by Jehovah and the "Prince of Peace" spotless and unblemished and in peace.

Thank you Brother Newmar for strengthening our determination to give our undivided support to God's appointed king Christ Jesus.

This brings us to the final talk of today's session. Jesus promised to give his followers peace.

Why is the peace that Jesus gives far superior to any peace that this world promises, and how can we safeguard the gift of peace that Jesus has given us?

Please follow along as Brother Anthony Morris, a member of the governing body, delivers the talk,

***“Do not be misled by imitation peace”.***

Jesus taught us that Satan is the “Father of the lie”. We recall that he deceived Eve, a perfect woman. He lied about our precious Jehovah.

Now you're familiar, many of you, with Revelation chapter 12. I invite you to find that, Revelation chapter 12 and then this chapter, and verses 7 and 8, address the fact that the war broke out in heaven, but notice after they're kicked out of heaven. In verse 9 we read,

**“So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is” “misleading the entire inhabited earth, he was hurled down to the earth and his angels were hurled down with him”.**

Now, I read it that way specifically, but see what it doesn't say is in the middle part of verse 9.

**“Satan, who's trying to mislead the entire inhabited earth”.**

No, he “*is*” misleading the entire inhabited earth. That's crucial to understand, when we think about the theme of this talk, not to be misled by imitation peace, because as the ruler of the world, that's what he's out to do, is mislead. In fact, interesting point here, in Second Corinthians chapter 11.

To appreciate how he goes about misleading, or at least, it's addressed here, to serve as a good warning for us, and an interesting point with the revision of the New World Translation. For those of you in the truth before 2013 when it was revised, you'll remember this, but see verse 14. Second Corinthians chapter 11, and no wonder,

**“For Satan himself keeps disguising himself as an angel of light”.**

Now the New World Translation used to say before the revision,

**“Transforms himself into an angel of light”.**

Well the very English word metamorphosis, like for a caterpillar transforming into a beautiful butterfly, that's where it comes from the Greek language, and that word was not in verse 14. No, because Satan can't transform himself into an angel of light, so it's an improved translation, but he does disguise. He's a masquerader, and he does that with the subject of peace.

His world offers a sort of peace, but it's imitation peace. Now Jesus is distinguished though with the peace that he gives and if you'll follow along here in John, in chapter 14, he himself

explains it to us, and we treasure the gospel accounts, verse 27,

**“I leave you peace, I give you my peace. I do not give it to you the way the world gives it. Do not let your hearts be troubled, nor let them shrink out of fear”.**

So Jesus gives us his peace, see, and the peace that Jesus gives us, that it's this inner calm, once you know the truth and Jesus gives us the peace, we we have this confidence that he loves us, Jehovah loves us, we enjoy a good peaceful relationship with them, and a good conscience. And we look forward to the kingdom removing all war and death.

Now, point to make here, Satan wants us to trade the peace that Jesus gives for his imitation piece, that he has advertised in the world.

Now in this talk, we will consider three forms of imitation peace and why the peace that Jesus gives is superior.

Now the first one has to do with material things, how they'll not bring true peace. And to help us with that, turn to Matthew chapter 4, and we'll be referring to this chapter throughout this particular talk, about not being misled by imitation peace, and this one connected with material things, how they don't bring true peace, in the example Jesus sets forth here, so Matthew chapter 4,

**“Then Jesus was led by the spirit up into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil, after he had fasted for 40 days and 40 nights, he felt hungry, and the tempter approached and said to him, if you are a son of God tell these stones to become loaves of bread, but he answered, it is written, man must live not on bread alone, but on every word that comes from Jehovah's mouth”.**

Isn't that's a beautiful rebuttal. See, Jesus refused to trade his peace for material things, and in this case, bread, even though he was hungry. So serving Jehovah was more important to him than material things.

And in the world, they have this thinking about, well, you need a certain amount of money to retire, and they're constantly focused on material things, not Jesus. See, superior peace from Jehovah God. So it's only temporary anyway, the material benefits that people seek and pursue throughout their lives.

Now, we can enjoy true contentment because Jehovah God's going to care for us. We know that many have personal experiences to prove that. Now, in the following video, see what a Brother learned about the so-called peace the world promises.

As a family, we were doing very well spiritually. We did family worship, preaching, and going to the meetings together. After some time, we began to encounter financial problems. At times we did not even have money to buy food for each day. Many people in our area were going to South Africa to provide basic needs for their families, so I decided to go as well. Leaving behind my wife to take care of our seven children.

This affected me spiritually because I did not know the language, I was unable to preach, and I did not benefit from the meetings.

Being so far from my family caused me to neglect my responsibility as a family head. As a result, my family grew weak spiritually and we all missed each other very much.

I realized that I had made a wrong decision going abroad. My conscience started to trouble me greatly, then I remembered the example of Barrack found at Jeremiah chapter 45 verse 5.

Barrack may have wanted to pursue material riches as I had. When he was helped, he returned. I decided then to put Jehovah in first place instead of searching for material things. So I started to make changes to go home and help my family spiritually. When I left South Africa and reached the border of Malawi, after leaving my family for about six months, I felt great happiness in my heart and I am still happy till now.

Studying the bible has helped me. We still encounter financial problems, but I remember that in Satan's world there is no way we can go and have no problems. Now, I serve as an elder, my family is progressing spiritually, and this makes me very happy because my relationship with Jehovah is strong.

Yes, he learned a hard lesson. He goes to South Africa, meetings are interrupted, no field service, and then he remembers Barack, secretary for Jeremiah, and he returns to be with his family, putting the kingdom first, and we appreciate him being truthful and sharing that experience.

That's imitation peace going after material things.

Now this next is quite interesting so pay close attention because there may be some listening that need this counsel.

Satan's world says that we can ignore bible standards, and we might need to ignore some of them to gain peace of mind. Here's two examples that we're going to analyze in this talk.

A person may reason that marrying an unbeliever, or obtaining an unscriptural divorce, will make life easier, and they start reasoning, do this. I just want to get married, and he's an unbeliever but, he's a nice person. Things like that go on with the treacherous heart.

Again we go to the example of our lord and master Jesus. We're going to read verses 5 through 7 of Matthew 4.

**“Then the Devil took him along into the Holy City, and he stationed him on the battlement of the temple and said to him, if you are a son of God, throw yourself down, for it is written, He will give his angels a command concerning you, and they will carry you on their hands so that you may not strike your foot against a stone. Jesus said to him, Again it is written, you must not put Jehovah God to the test”.**

See Jesus made that very clear, he was going to be obedient to his father and wasn't going to

worry about being testy with such an experience as the Devil proposed there, so obedience.

See Jesus twice in the moment, we'll read another one, it is written, he sticks with Jehovah's thinking and he refused to disobey Jehovah. Now, here's the question, why is the peace that Jesus gives superior to the pursuit of unscriptural solutions to our problems?

Let that sink in. Why is the peace that Jesus gives superior to the pursuit of unscriptural solutions to our problems? For example, marrying an unbeliever. That will likely bring, and it has happened, time after time, bring that person greater pain than the longing they felt when they were single.

I've personally seen that all too many times in various congregations I had the privilege to serve in. You see, the other one is on scriptural divorce. It often leads to immoral conduct. It certainly leads to a troubled conscience, emotional damage, and of course a loss of privileges.

Now this is very important to keep in mind. While it's true, uh, two imperfect individuals married to each other, well there's going to be difficulties, there's going to be challenges, and but see, stop and think about this, when you're having difficulties, don't forget that marriage is a sacred arrangement.

The world totally has forgotten that, so Jehovah will strengthen both to make a success. Got to keep that in mind, Jehovah will strengthen and help, so that you can succeed, because this is his sacred arrangement. And the devil has been attacking the family arrangement all through the last days of this system, and he's intensifying it as he gets closer to being thrown into the abyss.

Now, in the following video, notice the results of pursuing imitation peace.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Newly married life came with a lot of unexpected challenges. You dream about the way your marriage will go, but then the reality is quite different. All we ever did was argue or we wouldn't speak to one another.

We never ever went to the elders. We just didn't want to bother him. We just felt, you know, we needed to figure it out ourselves. We decided, if the house sold, that we would would separate.

The separation wasn't a good thing because in some respects, it made things worse.

It did have an impact on the boys. They started acting out, they got into some trouble with the police one time.

And there was a loneliness because you've gotten married, and now you don't have that, and you're by yourself and the same old routine went on where you're cooking and cleaning, and doing laundry, and working,

I felt sick to my stomach. I had a hard time getting up every morning and facing the world. At that point I felt that I needed to have the elders help out a little bit.

I did pray for Jehovah's help to direct me and kept wondering why Jehovah wasn't really answering my prayers, but I kind of realized now that it was because we were separated.

The expectations of the separation were not at all what I was thinking. I reflected on the marriage vows. One of the things I thought about was a Sister in our congregation, he was married to an unbeliever and then she learned the truth and he was so violent. He would beat her, he would burn her books, he would burn her clothes. He did not allow her children to attend the meetings and I thought about the problems that Daryl and I had and I thought, well Daryl's a kind person, he's never done that, and I thought, you know, this is something that we need to, really work on. We need to really put forth the effort to start applying bible principles, to put Jehovah first in our life, so that we can bring our marriage back into union with Jehovah.

I realized that it wasn't what I wanted, it was what Jehovah wanted.

There was just no other choice. Jehovah wasn't going to bless us unless we got back together.

When we got back together, our marriage was still a work in progress. You can't have a perfect marriage in this world but you can sure make it better when you put Jehovah first.

We enjoyed feelings towards each other. I felt closer to Debbie. Debbie and I have been married now 48 years. Separation does not make anything better at all.

If you even have an inkling of love for one another, you want to work on that, and you want to make it bloom so that Jehovah can bless it. The blessings have been endless. Our children are all doing fantastic in the truth. Jehovah said "Taste and see that it is good", so we've got to do that.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

We really appreciated this couple sharing the experience with the Brotherhood. He learned, you know, they're always arguing, and that's all they did was argue, argue, argue. It affected their children. They decided to separate, finally have peace. I don't have to be around her or I don't have to be around him, well then he realized his relationship with Jehovah was being interfered with here, and he went to the elders, his prayers were affected. Things he noticed. He was honest about that.

And our precious Sister was so nice to honestly explain, she said, what she learned was this is not about me, it's about Jehovah. When you finally come to that realization, Jehovah will strengthen you to enjoy peace with your marriage partner.

Now, the next one, I never tire of speaking about this particular couple of verses, or reading about it, or hearing another Brother give a talk about it, see, here's what's coming soon, turn with me to First Thessalonians chapter 5, and many of you are going, oh yeah, I know what

he's going to read about, and this is one of the prophecies that is yet to be fulfilled, so it's just invigorating to know that soon, here's what's going to happen. First Thessalonians chapter 5, verse 2 and 3.

**“For you yourselves know very well that “Jehovah's Day” is coming, exactly as a thief in the night. Whenever it is that they are saying, ““Peace and Security””, then sudden destruction is to be instantly on them, just like birth pains on a pregnant woman, and they will by no means escape”.**

Yes, see “*Jehovah's Day*”. This has to do with the daily, I'll break the great tribulation, Babylon the great, uh is destroyed and then Armageddon finishes it off. In this context, that's “Jehovah's Day”, and what happens before that is this proclamation

**“Peace and Security”.**

Uh, will religious leaders be involved? Well, they're part of Satan's system, that's very possible, we'll have to wait and see. Will it be one announcement or a series of announcements, that we don't know, but this is coming, and those that are staying close to Jehovah, enjoying the peace from him and his son Jesus will not be deceived by this imitation proclamation of peace, imitation peace, and again, back in Matthew chapter four, we're going to see how Jesus handled this type of test from the Devil and we learn from it, here in verses 8 through 11, Matthew chapter 4.

**“Again the devil took him” and verse 8 “took him along to an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory, and he said to him, “all these things, I will give you, if you fall down and do an act of worship to me”, then Jesus said to him without hesitation, “go away Satan, for it is written, it is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service”. Then the Devil left him and look, angels came and began to minister to him”.**

See, right away, third time, “it is written”. Jesus was having nothing to do with this offer of the kingdoms, this imitation piece. You'll have all the glory and rule, and it's always boggled my mind that this one, who knew Jesus in his pre-human existence, would have the audacity to try to get him to bow down, worship him. Shows you, he's obviously insane.

Now, he wouldn't allow it either when they tried to make him an earthly king. Jesus wasn't having any part of that. Uh, they were thinking, he can bring peace, but there's no peace except by Jehovah's way, and the peace from God's kingdom is so superior to anything they could try to come up with, their imitation peace.

Here's why. Think about this, Jesus will remove the Devil. Jesus will remove human rulership. Jesus will remove sin, so, the earth's peace will never again be disturbed. And I appreciate very much that he's going to get rid of all problems, and that includes undoing all causes of pain, and not just physical pain, emotional pain as well. Wonderful to look forward to, that time, with that beautiful peace from our precious father Jehovah and his son Jesus. Now, in the following video, we will see what convinced this Sister not to believe the world's promises of peace.

My father always taught me that we needed God in our life in order for there to be peace and he always wanted to know, can Christians go to war? How is this consistent with the gospel of Jesus Christ? But, the pastor could never give us an answer and so, I thought I'd have to look to politics to find it. A lot of peace movements were being formed at that time, so I joined one of them. We decided where the protest marches would be, which pamphlets we would use, but after the protests were over, everyone was so excited and they all started applauding and cheering for the leaders. I thought, that's not what I wanted. I don't want to honour people, I want to have world peace, and that still hasn't happened yet.

Then I started to feel very alone, and it made me feel unsafe in this world. With no peace in sight, I thought, what is the purpose of life?

While visiting friends for coffee, I saw a man I'd never met before. My friends told me he wanted to talk to us about the bible, so I asked him, sir, what do you think, can Christians join the military? And the man said no, that's not allowed because the bible says you should love your enemy. It made me think about what my father always said, that we need God to bring peace.

Then a really nice lady came to my door and she had an orange book in her hand, and it said, True Peace and Security. After reading it, I thought, this is it. This is the organization that truly wants peace, so I went to those involved in the peace movement. I told them that I believe that God will change this world into a beautiful earth where there'll be true peace. They all looked at me like I had lost my mind. I was so happy with my new life. I felt like I was part of a family who truly cared about one another and really wanted peace with each other.

Isaiah 14 verse 7 had a major impact on my life because there God promises a calm and peaceful world.

So, wasn't that nice how she learned. She looked to politics and protests for world peace. Obviously she was sincere, but she learned that's all imitation peace. True "Peace and Security" comes from Jehovah God.

So, wrapping it up with these three different types of imitation piece that we've emphasized, we want to encourage you in these last minutes to safeguard the peace that Jesus has given you. In John chapter 14 you know this, but, I want you to really focus on a particular point in verse 6.

**“Jesus said to him, I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me”.**

Now, isn't that beautiful. I particularly want to emphasize, Jesus is the truth. We can trust all of his promises, he is the truth. He's going to give us peace. Already has, and to a greater extent, the future.

Yes, our master is the truth, and he gave the early Christians that peace. The things that they were able to deal with is just mind-boggling. As we read the apostle Paul's experiences, in Peter's, and others, the persecution they endured, and they did it the enduring with joy. It's

amazing. There can only be a supernatural provision of peace. And just to remember, Jesus will likewise give you the peace you need now to keep doing Jehovah's will, and to make him happy.

So Brothers please, safeguard the gift of peace that Jesus has given you. Now Satan uses this world to offer you promises of imitation peace, do not be misled, no, rather let the peace of the Christ rule in your hearts and show yourselves thankful yes, through his son, Jehovah will bless us all with peace forever.

Thank you Brother Morris for strengthening our trust in Jesus promise to give us peace now, and during the events that will shortly take place.

The second session of our convention has truly helped us to see how Jehovah blesses us with peace. What can we look forward to in the next session? The scripture theme will be from 2 Peter 3:14,

***“Be found spotless and unblemished and in peace”.***

The program will begin with a symposium that will help prepare us to share the good news of peace at every opportunity.

Young ones can look forward to a special talk just for them given by a member of the governing body.

We'll also see how Brothers and Sisters are maintaining their peace even when suffering from illness, economic problems, natural disasters, and other difficulties.

And of course our next session includes the baptism talk, after which those who have been approved will be baptized locally. We have much to look forward to.

To conclude today's session let's sing song number 112 entitled,

***“Jehovah God of Peace”.***

Again that's song number 112.

After the song concludes you may have your own closing prayer.

### **Saturday Morning Part 1**

This session and the next we will enjoy the talks and videos under the Saturday heading on your program. The scripture theme for these two sessions is taken from second Peter 3:14 where we are admonished to be found spotless, and unblemished, and in peace.

These sessions will highlight what we can individually do to "Pursue Peace" with others. To begin please join in sing song number 58.

## ***“Searching for friends of peace”***

That song number 58.

As Jehovah's people, we are proud to witness about the God of Peace and to Proclaim his kingdom.

How can we give an effective Witness and help interested ones to progress? Our first Symposium for this session will address these questions.

Brother Kenneth Bodeen, a helper to the teaching committee will deliver the first talk of the symposium,

### ***“Be ready to share the Good News of Peace, Maintain your Zeal”.***

This Symposium is about sharing the Good News of Peace. What a privilege it is to help humble people find peace with Jehovah. At Ephesians 6:15, and describing a Christian's complete suit of armour, it mentions our feet. Now, back at that time, think of Roman soldiers, Paul knew that often they marched for hundreds of miles on Roman highways crisscrossing the empire, so in Ephesians 6:15 he said this.

### **“Hand having your feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace”.**

Yes, ready to share the Good News of Peace on every suitable occasion. In this symposium, we'll discuss five ways to remain ready to preach and teach.

We'd first like to discuss why it's important to maintain your zeal. Now as an analogy, zeal has often been linked to fire. We even used expression, don't we, “He has a fiery Zeal for his beliefs”. Oh, what does a fiery zeal indicate?

Please find Romans 1:14 and 15, and here it does not actually use the word zeal, but the sense of the word is evident. You see we're on fire, we're stoked up, we are ready. Did you find it, Romans 1:14 and 15.

### **“Both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to wise and to senseless ones, I am a debtor; so I am eager to declare the good news also to you there in Rome”.**

Zealous evangelizers are eager to declare the Good News, they're on fire. They want others to find peace with Jehovah. But is there something that can dampen that flame, something that could even extinguish the eager desire, the readiness to find those who, even unknowingly yearn for peace. Yes, it can be difficult to remain eager with fiery zeal when we face such problems as an unresponsive territory, criticism or outright opposition to the work, and then, there are the pressures of daily life. Those issues can also be likened to a fire, to destructive fires, like the wildfires that have plagued the western part of the United States year after year. Those problems can threaten our Zeal and enthusiasm. So what can we do?

Well, there is an English expression that originates with firefighters, the expression is to Fight

Fire With Fire.

In the path of a raging wildfire, one technique is to ignite a controlled fire. That controlled fire consumes combustible materials. So when the wildfire advances to that point, there's no fuel left and the wildfire goes out. Fight Fire with Fire. Keep your zeal for the ministry burning brightly.

And now, please find First Timothy 4:16. If our zeal fades, the flame smolders, we might miss out on opportunities to help others to gain life, a life of peace with God. Look at First Timothy 4:16 with me, it says,

**“Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching”.**

You see the flame, the temperature, “Pay attention to your zeal in teaching”, it says.

**“Persevere in these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you”.**

Yes, share the Good News of Peace with zeal.

Now, in the following video, note how a couple realized that the flame had gone out. They still had some glowing embers left but, they now find a way to fan the coals and regain their fiery zeal.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

I don't remember when our service day became so, well routine. Our zeal wasn't what it used to be. And we were finally starting to notice.

Not everyone wants to listen. We just didn't want to be the reason.

It didn't take much research to find great ideas and set a few simple goals, like working with those who encourage us.

With Ryota and Ami, we're always talking about how we can reach the heart.

We got back to basics, be friendly, listen, let the conversation progress naturally. Try to share an appealing scriptural thought, and keep trying.

Our zeal can attract an honest person to the truth.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

In the video, what wildfires or problems did the couple face that uh, suck the oxygen out of their Ministry?

Well, the four we mentioned earlier, it seems the couple's zeal was waning because of seemingly unresponsive territory. And, as tired as the husband looked in that first scene, the pressures of daily life might have been having a toll on him. So how did they come to realize

they needed to Fight Fire With Fire?

Do you remember their kitchen table talk? The husband mused that not everyone wants to listen but then he added, we just didn't want to be the reason, you see, the reason for them not listening. They decided to Fight Fire with Fire. They reignited their own controlled fire of zeal to counteract the problems they were succumbing to. Well, what were some of the techniques they used?

The first was to pray to Jehovah. Could it be the husband borrowed the words of Romans 12:11 in his prayer? Yes, he may well have asked Jehovah to help him as a couple to be a glow with the spirit.

Remember he said earlier, I don't remember when our routine service day became, so well routine. Fight the Wildfire by again, becoming a glow with the spirit. Ensure that any lack of response is not due to our lacklustre.

Well, what else did you notice they did to rekindle their zeal? They did some research, looking for suggestions to invigorate their ministry. Yes, and regular Bible study helps us to remember why we endure in the disciple making work. For example, review Jesus attitude toward the ministry. The apostles bold witnessing despite fiery opposition. The disposition of Paul, Aquila and Priscilla, Stephen and other Bible characters. These can infuse us with similar zeal.

Next, keep your ministry fresh. Oh, what does that mean? Instead of having a number of phone calls that go unanswered, which is similar to having no one at home when in the door-to-door work, change the time of day for witnessing when more people are home. Participate in various forms of the ministry.

You know, ironically the pandemic more or less forced some of us who were staunch door-to-door witnesses to branch out. We tried phone witnessing and letter writing. And now we have a variety of preaching activities, and this can keep us more fully engaged and enthused.

And did you notice with the couple in the video set as a goal? Periodically, they decided in advance to share in the ministry with someone specific. And then they determined to talk about encouraging subjects when in between calls, whether in phone witnessing or in the public ministry.

Jehovah values our work in the ministry regardless of the response we receive. Hebrews 6:10, you familiar with that? Of course you are, but it does not say Jehovah does not forget the number of return visits you make. It does not say he does not forget how many Bible studies you conduct, no, it says he does not forget your work, your effort, and the love you showed for his name.

Our Zeal for the ministry demonstrates that we have a deep love for Jehovah and Jesus. If, like the couple on the video, you detect that you're routine of service is becoming, well, very routine, then Fight Fire With Fire. Maintain that fiery zeal. Be ready to share the Good News of Peace.

Brother Robert Ciranko, a helper of the writing committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Be Ready to Share the Good News of Peace. Prepare well”.***

What would you think, and how would you feel, if I showed up to give this talk, but had done nothing to prepare what to say to you. I had not bothered to study the outline I was given, could not remember the theme, had no idea what the main points are, and would have to guess at what scriptures to use to support them. And then, as I spoke, I would ramble incoherently and make a very bad impression. I know how I would feel. I would be in a nervous wreck, and you would wonder why I did not think enough of you to put all the time and effort that was necessary into preparing the talk so that you could get the most benefit from it.

Can you see where I'm going with this? Could the same things be said if you engaged in the ministry without first preparing what to say? You did not review the sample conversations that have been provided, could not think of how to start a conversation, and did not know what scripture to share?

How nervous would you be and what would the householder think of you? It would likely be a very short, uncomfortable conversation. And the other person may not care to have you call again.

We should take some time to prepare well before we preach. Why? Because we have the best message ever, the Good News of Peace to share with people and we should do our best so that they will want to listen to what we have to say.

Jesus helped his disciples to prepare for the ministry. Luke chapter 10 reports that before sending out 70 disciples to preach, he shared with them a pleasant way to greet each householder, told them what to talk about, the kingdom of God, and he told them how to respond to the varied reactions they would get in their territory.

As a result, because the disciples were fully prepared for the ministry, they enjoyed some thrilling experiences.

When we are prepared, we are more poised, enthusiastic, and can truly enjoy the ministry. As you watch the following video, notice the good results of preparing well.

**VIDEO STARTS**

We'd made some good changes but we weren't done. I asked Yuri what she planned to talk about. That started the usual scramble and we got it, the sample conversation, that'll do, but for that to work, I had to remember the scripture.

We were both a little forgetful that morning. Yeah, we needed to prepare better.

We'd been relying on our experience and not enough on Jehovah. So, first we prepared our hearts, then we prepared our minds, and found new ways to use our preaching tools.

Even a little preparation for initial calls and return visits went a long way.

### VIDEO ENDS

The husband said, yeah, we needed to prepare better. Have you ever thought that about your ministry? Like the couple in the video, we can first prepare our heart and our mind and then see how best to use our preaching tools. Our goal should be the same as that of the Apostle Paul at First Corinthians 9 verse 23. He wrote that he wanted to,

**“do all things for the sake of the Good News in order to share it with others”.**

So, let's think about some specific things we can do to prepare well beginning with what we can see on the initial call, whether that is done in person or over the telephone.

Each issue of the Christian Life and Ministry meeting workbook provides us with sample conversations, gives us some helpful ideas, of course you may modify the samples or use something entirely different. Perhaps a subject from a previous month or a different scripture would have wider appeal in your territory.

Your opening words may be the most important part of the presentation so think it through. If the introduction does not arouse interest, the other person may terminate the conversation before we can give a witness. We will be more effective if we carefully prepare the first sentence or two that we will say after giving a customary greeting.

We might say, many people are concerned about, or, I would like to get your opinion on, or say something else. Then, pick a topic that is of local interest and ask a well-worded viewpoint question that will draw the person into the conversation.

Now, what about preparing for return visits. That actually begins on the initial call by leaving a question for the person to think about until you call again. That is how the sample, initial calls, and return visits are set up in the meeting workbook. By leaving a thought-provoking question at the end of every visit we can keep the chain of conversations going as long as possible.

We can illustrate it this way.

Imagine a freight train with an engine at the front, a caboose at the rear, and many cars in between. What keeps all those cars moving together down the train track? There is a device called a coupler at the back of each train car that latches onto the coupler at the front of the car behind it. By being coupled, or linked together, the cars all run as a unit along the track. So the question that we leave with a householder at the end of one visit, is what we can latch onto at the beginning of our next visit, so that we can keep the train of thought going from one conversation to the next.

For example, on the initial call you could ask, why is there so much suffering in the world? After discussing that, raise the question, how does God feel about our suffering? But don't answer the question until your next visit.

After answering that question on the first return visit, leave the person with this question.

What will God do to end our suffering? This will be discussed on your next visit.

It is also important to have an objective in mind for each return visit. Before making the call, think about what you want to accomplish on that call. If you raise a question the last time, your objective will surely include answering that question from the Bible. Of course, the ultimate objective is to try to start a Bible study in the Enjoy Life Forever brochure.

Now, what about preparing for the Bible studies that we conduct? Even if we know the material very well, we should prepare for each study session with our student in mind. That means, thinking about and anticipating the views and needs of that individual. What points might he struggle to understand or accept. It also means getting familiar with the lesson to be covered in our interactive Bible course. Read the lesson carefully, look up the read scriptures to see how they apply. Watch the videos that will be shown during the lesson and review the items in the explore section so that you will know which of those will be especially helpful to your student. Then you will be well prepared to conduct the study.

Since it is God who makes the seed of truth grow in a person's heart, we should ask for Jehovah's blessing on our preparation for the study so that we can best help the student spiritually. And we will be more effective in our ministry if we stay up to date with the latest material and features found on [jw.org](http://jw.org) and in JW Library. So learn how to navigate the website and the app.

Two very helpful features on the website are Bible questions answered under the “Bible Teachings Tab” and “Frequently Asked Questions” under the “About Us” tab. They can also be found on the app under article series.

The Apostle Paul described himself at First Corinthians 3:10 as a skilled master builder. That is because he was engaging in a spiritual construction work to build Christian disciples. And we are doing the same sort of work when we engage in the ministry. But to build effectively, we must learn to use our tools well. We especially need to develop skill in using our principal tool, God's word, as well as learn how to make effective use of the publications in our teaching toolbox.

A builder who prepares before starting to work avoids mistakes and frustration. Remember what the Brother said at the end of the video. “Even a little preparation goes a long way”. And that is what will help you to do your best in the ministry, just as Paul recommended at Second Timothy 2 verse 15. Please follow along in your Bible if you will, it's Second Timothy 2 verse 15.

**“Do your utmost to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright”.**

Then you will experience great joy in the spiritual building work that is taking place now because you will be ready and well prepared to share the Good News of Peace.

Brother Anthony Morris, a member of the Governing Body, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Be Ready to Share the Good News of Peace. Take the Initiative”.***

For this part of the Symposium, Share the Good News of Peace, we're going to discuss the need to take the initiative. Now, we're going to look at why we should take the initiative, how to take the initiative, and then concluding thought about who's helping in directing us in our preaching work.

Now, first of all, why take the initiative? Well, think about it, one thing about being Jehovah's Witnesses is that we're never off duty. We never stop being one of Jehovah's Witnesses, wherever we are, whatever we're doing, so it isn't just that when we're out in formal preaching work with congregation groups, we are one of Jehovah's Witnesses all the time. There's no such thing as being off duty when we're one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Now, to give you an idea of how significant this is with informal witnessing, let me tell you a statistic. A survey was taken some years ago, and you'll be surprised possibly, one group of over 200 baptized Witnesses. Now notice over 40 percent had been contacted by informal witnessing.

Isn't that amazing? So, the door-to-doors crucial. Of course, during COVID, that's been inhibited. Letter writing has its place, the phone witnessing, but the point is, there's other times where we can do some witnessing informally.

Now, let's examine how to do it. And the best example of how to do informal witnessing is of course Christ Jesus. And there's an account all of us are familiar with in the Bible book of John, so please find John chapter 4, and we're going to take a look at how Jesus took the initiative, and then imitate him, do just as he did, now, notice here in John chapter 4 we get the context that they've been travelling through Samaria and then verse 6 will read,

**“In fact, Jacob’s well was there. Now Jesus, tired out as he was from the journey, was sitting at the well. It was about the sixth hour”.**

Now, that's interesting is it not, see. Jesus was tired. He was a perfect man, but human, and his journey tired him out, and he's there about noon, sitting at the well, and I'll notice what happens and verse 7,

**“A woman of Sa·mar'i·a came to draw water. Jesus said to her: “Give me a drink”.**

Real simple, give me a drink. Well, what do we learn from this? As you notice, Jesus was tired, we get tired because of being imperfect, if a perfect man gets tired out certainly we get tired. Sometimes you may feel, well, you know, maybe I could witness to this person, take the initiative, but, I just don't feel like it. I'm tired.

Not with Jesus, see, to imitate Jesus, even in the case that you're tired, you're thinking of others and you want to take the opportunity to start a conversation. That's the initial goal. Now, notice something else here that we learn in the 9th verse of John chapter 4.

**“So the Sa·mar'i·tan woman said to him: “How is it that you, despite being a Jew, ask**

**me for a drink even though I am a Sa-mar'i-tan woman"?**

And then we learn more here with prejudice.

**“(For Jews have no dealings with Sa-mar'i-tans.)”.**

And it went both ways. That's the way the prejudice was, no dealings, and on top of that, she's a woman and women were not treated very nice during that period in man's history. So, she's a Samaritan, she's a woman and Jesus asks her for a drink. He starts a conversation with her.

Now, these are the things we learn with this. He didn't make any assumptions about her and obviously knew she was a woman and a Samaritan, travelling through Samaria at that time. And he didn't refuse to speak to her because of that. So, the lesson for us there is, don't judge people by what you see, uh, based on their culture, the colour of their skin. This world is filled with judges. We're Jehovah's Witnesses, we don't do that. We leave the judging to Jehovah and Jesus Christ. And don't judge whether you think they'll converse with you. That's wrong. Jesus didn't do that and he set that perfect example for us.

Go ahead, and then, if you're a little nervous about it, then we beg Jehovah for his spirit to help us, to give us the courage to witness about his beautiful name and purposes. Now, he also teaches us something else interesting here, and this is where taking the initiative, you start a conversation, uh, you don't rush into things. Now notice, we've read verse 9, and then they had this conversation take place through these following verses here. We get to verse 24 where he mentions God's a spirit and must worship him with spirit and truth, and now, here's what happens after they had this fine conversation after simply asking for a drink. Notice verse 25,

**“The woman said to him: “I know that Mes-si'ah is coming, who is called Christ. Whenever that one comes, he will declare all things to us openly”.**

She spoke out of her heart. Now notice verse 26.

**“Jesus said to her, I am he, the one speaking to you”.**

My, what a moment. And she's blessed with having the Messiah himself speak to her. However, give it some thought, what if Jesus said, rather than say, give me a drink, started off with, I am the Messiah, give me a drink.

We don't know because Jesus had Jehovah's spirit and Heavenly wisdom and he entered the conversation first. So that's what we want to keep in mind and try to do ourselves. They have a conversation. It might just be speaking from your heart and trying to engage the person. For example, you could be in the doctor's office waiting room. So you speak, from your heart, and you notice the person is looking at you. “Boy, I look forward to the day when I'll never be sick again”. Well, they could look at you and say, well this guy's crazy or, they could say, well that would be nice, or, what makes you believe that's going to happen for you? Either way, you're starting, taking the initiative to start a conversation, and leave the rest in Jehovah. He's the

one that gets the credit for the results.

Now, next we have a video here. Now, as you watch the following video, notice how a Sister finds an effective way to witness informally.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

They seemed nice.

I knew what Yuri was thinking.

I wanted to start a conversation but I didn't want to bother them either, and when an opportunity came, I just froze.

Then, I was in a rush to give a witness, and it felt forced.

It helped to hear that we've all been there. Our past experiences were similar. Whenever we didn't put pressure on ourselves and just looked for something in common to talk about, we could usually find a moment when we could say something about the Bible.

She was curious why we were dressed up. Turns out that she'd never talked to Jehovah's Witnesses before.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

So we appreciated how she took the initiative. Of course, you see the contrast there that one point she froze, so it is stressful, there's no doubt about it. We're only human, uh, but then she rushed into things, running after with the track. See, give us some thought. Try to have the conversation, then let the spirit move it, and that would be imitating Jesus. Then this can move to getting into the spiritual purpose of initiating the conversation. So good example. Give it a try Brothers and Sisters, and let Jehovah bless your efforts.

Now to conclude, I think to want to share this beautiful thought. When it comes to this work we're engaging in and sharing the Good News of Peace by taking the initiative. Never forget this, and you, you, know it, but it's a good reminder. Revelation chapter 14 and here in the Revelation, familiar to most of you listening, in verse 6, let's read it.

**“And I saw another angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare to those who dwell on the earth, to every nation and tribe and tongue and people ”.**

Now, this is profound. Obviously a angel flying in mid heaven, the footnote helps us, it's overhead where the birds fly you know. See, another angel in midheaven, that's how close they are. And this is something you want to meditate on. Uh, Personally, when I was in the travelling work, sometimes I'd be working with one of the Brothers or one of the Sisters and they had opposition, and some of the territories we'd work. And and I could tell their feeling the stress, and I knew it was the reaction of some of these householders. So, what I used to enjoy doing, and they appreciated after they realized what I was doing, we'd be walking along, and then I just stopped, and I'd look up, and I'd say, you see him? And they're like

who? He ran up there, above the trees. And they'd look at me, and like, our circuit overseers lost it. But, I said, see, and would tell them about Revelation 14:6.

When we're in the preaching work, whether it's informal, are out there formally door-to-door, the angels are the real reapers. At least one is nearby. What a profound thought. They are the real harvesters. They are the ones directing us to the rightly disposed people. Don't ever forget that. When it comes to being ready to share the Good News of Peace, you go ahead, take the initiative to start conversations. You'll have valuable opportunities to share the Good News of peace.

Brother Gary Breaux, a helper to the service committee will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Be Ready to Share the Good News of Peace, Follow up on Interest”.***

To encourage us to promptly follow up on interests that we find in the field ministry, Paul likens our work to a plant that grows from a little seed. Now, what's vital for a planted seed to grow? One authority says, “Of all the factors that determine seed germination, water is the first and most important”. And another reference says, “Until seeds have sprouted, keep the seed bed moist, never allowing it to dry out”.

So, what will happen to a seed that is not watered? Nothing! It will lay dormant. See, regular watering is vital for a seed to sprout, to take root, and in fact continue to grow.

Now, with these facts in mind, Paul's words at First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 6 shows that more is required than simply planting a “Seed of Truth”. Let's note his words. It's in First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 6. it says,

**“I planted, Apollos watered, but God kept making it grow”.**

Though all credit goes to Jehovah God for making the spiritual seed grow but, but, he allows us to have a role in the process. Did you notice the important role Apollos played? He did the watering. In a regular way, he helped keep the spiritual soil of the individual moist, never allowing it to dry out. Many people who show interest in the Kingdom message today are searching for the truth about God. In order to teach them progressively, we must return again and again. This requires good preparation and organization on our part. By promptly making return visits, we demonstrate a sincere concern for the individual, wanting to help them grow spiritually, and develop a relationship with Jehovah. In the following video, notice how a Sister follows up on interest shown.

**VIDEO STARTS**

Ami left a great question for her next visit.

Return Visit! Mrs Iwata, I told her I'd visit this morning, I just didn't schedule the time. I could at least stop by on the way back.

Missed her again. If didn't try something different, I was just going to keep missing her.

First, I wanted her to know I hadn't forgotten her.

Dear Mrs. Iwata, I hope you're doing well. I promise to come by early next week. By the way, your flowers are so beautiful.

Then I made a plan for my service day.

Following through is just too important to leave to chance.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

As you plan your share in the ministry, follow the good example of the Sister in the video and schedule time to make regular return visits. Doing so is just as important as other aspects of our ministry. These regular visits with interested people are vital links in the chain leading to a Bible study.

In our ministry, we often complement the householder for the beautiful flowers or the plants in their yard, just like the Sister did in the video, but how did they get that way? Well, the householder probably watered them on set days or even used an automatic sprinkler timer to schedule regular watering cycles.

See, to have healthy and vibrant plants, watering cannot be left to chance. Well, how can we apply that to our ministry? Before leaving a person that has shown interest, endeavour to set the proper time to water. The water of truth will come on. Perhaps ask, *“On what day or hour would you like for me to return to continue our discussion or to answer the question?”* See, this consideration really dignifies the person allowing them to share in setting the appointment. It's important that we be willing to water an interested person at the most convenient time for them. Then, just like setting a timer, put that appointment where you'll remember it.

The Sister in the video put it in her electronic calendar so she could be reminded later. If you promise someone that you'll return, then keep your promise. Remember Jesus simple statement regarded in Matthew 5:37?

**“Just let your word yes mean yes”.**

If they're truly interested, they may go to great efforts to keep the appointment. How disappointed they would be if we didn't show up. Following through is just too important to leave to chance. Because of the busy lives that people have today, it may be hard to find the person at home again even if you set an appointment, so it's a good idea to try and obtain his contact information. Maybe his phone number.

Some publishers anticipate this challenge and simply ask, do you text? By simply texting, you may be able to keep in touch and cultivate the interest further. And if you can't get his contact information and the person isn't home at the agreed upon time, you might leave a brief note just as the Sister did in the video and this will assure the householder that you haven't forgotten them.

The disciple making work requires patience and persistence. In this regard, note what Ecclesiastes 11:6 says, Ecclesiastes 11:6, it says,

**“Sow your seed in the morning and do not let your hand rest until the evening, for you do not know which will have success, whether this one or that one, or whether they will both do well”.**

When it comes to planting literal seed, we don't know when and where it will sprout. Many factors are beyond our control. Something similar can be said to the disciple making work. We need to be patient and positive because we don't know who will respond.

Lastly and of utmost importance, even if the return visitor is brief, share a scriptural thought. The spiritual content of our conversation is what makes our visit different from many others that they may have. See they have neighbours, friends, workmates, or relatives that check in on them. But for them to grow spiritually, the water of truth from God's word must be dispensed. To convey just a brief scriptural thought may provide just enough to keep their spiritual soil moist.

The work involved in following up interest is a very important assignment that Jehovah has given to each of us. With this in mind, let's return to Paul's illustration and see how Jehovah views us. It's, uh, back at First Corinthians chapter 3 and verse 9. It says,

**“For we are God's fellow workers, You are God's field under cultivation, God's building”.**

It's an honour to be one of God's fellow workers, enabling us to show our love for him and for our neighbours. It brings us great joy to share the Good News of Peace by following up on interest shown. And we can be assured, those who respond favourably, will forever appreciate our diligent efforts when they recall how we promptly followed up when they showed interest.

Brother William Malenfone, a helper to the teaching committee, will now present the final talk of this symposium,

**“Be Ready to Share the Good News of Peace, Help Students Grow to Maturity”.**

Basic Bible teachings are wonderful. Usually, it's the fundamental doctrines of the Bible, basic teachings that draw people to the truth. However, learning basic Bible teachings is just the beginning of knowledge about Jehovah. At Hebrews chapter 6 and verse 1 the Apostle Paul exhorts all students of God's word to progress beyond basic teachings. This is what is stated at Hebrews 6:1.

**“Therefore, now that we have moved beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity”.**

Isn't that what we want to achieve with our Bible students, to help them move beyond the primary doctrine and progress to Christian maturity? It comes about in degrees as students

acquire an increased level of knowledge and appreciation for the truth.

Bible students must learn to love God and his standards and appreciate that all of his ways and requirements are expressions of his love for us. When Bible students experience the good that comes from obeying Jehovah and following his ways, their love for him will deepen. As you watch the following video, please note how a Sister helps her student to make progress toward maturity.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Mrs. Iwata was doing great. We were already on lesson 10. I really hope she comes to a meeting soon. We talked about Hebrews 10, 24 and 25, and watch the video. Did I miss something? I guess I did. I was too focused on our progress with the lessons instead of her progress and what she needed.

Mr Iwata said going to meetings would dishonour the family. He wanted her to quit the study. She didn't want to quit, but whenever she tried to talk about it they argued.

We showed her where to look for help and made time during our studies to talk about it more. We all pray for Jehovah to bless her efforts. We did our best to share the Good News of peace and Jehovah did the rest.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

As we saw, the student took an important step toward Christian maturity when she began to attend meetings. As you study with your student lesson 7 to 11 of the *“Enjoy Life Forever”* book, please be sure to highlight Jehovah's appealing qualities that are set forth in those lessons. For example, lesson seven of the Enjoyed Life Forever book describes Jehovah's loving ways. We want to help our students to understand that Jehovah really does love them as individuals and wants them to achieve everlasting life.

The Apostle John highlights Jehovah's love at first John 4:9, by pointing out that Jehovah sent Jesus to earth to take our place in death and thus pay for our inherited sins and our personal sins. Yes, out of love, Jehovah provided a way for us to enjoy an approved standing with him. This is one of Jehovah's loving ways.

Lesson eight shows us how to become Jehovah's friend. This is likely something that most people have never even thought of. Can you imagine the privilege of becoming God's friend? Help your students to see how their obedience and exclusive devotion to Jehovah pave the way to friendship with him.

Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6 tells us specifically what Jehovah wants us to do. Proverbs chapter 3 verses 5 and 6 says,

**“Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways, take notice of him, and he will make your path straight”.**

We show our trust in Jehovah by doing what he tells us to do and thereby we become his friends. Jehovah takes good care of his friends and he is always loyal to them.

Lesson 9 highlights the power of Prayer. Teach your Bible students how to pray to Jehovah. In addition, to prayer, regular Bible reading is also necessary to make spiritual progress. Psalm, the first Psalm verses 2 and 3 encourages Bible reading. Let's look it up together. That's Psalm, the first Psalm and we're going to read verses 2 and 3. It's speaking about a man of God who takes delight in God's word, it says,

**“But his delight is in the law of Jehovah”**

Where the law of Jehovah is found in the Bible and it says,

**“And he reads his law in an undertone day and night, he will be like a tree planted by streams of water, a tree that produces fruit in its season, the foliage of which does not wither, and everything he does will succeed”.**

Yes, everything he does as a Christian, leading a Christian life will succeed. Reading God's word and then putting it into practice brings Jehovah's blessing. Now, if you have a student who feels limited in his learning ability, perhaps due to a lack of education, please encourage him to go to Jehovah in prayer and persist in asking him for help to understand his word. James chapter 1 and verse 5 assures us that Jehovah is ready and willing to help those who keep on asking him for help.

Lesson 10 gives this direction. As soon as possible, invite Bible students to attend congregation meetings. What your student hears and observes at Christian meetings can touch his heart and will help him to progress.

So when you show your student the video, *“What happens at a Kingdom Hall”*, that would be a good time to warmly invite him to attend meetings. Also, be sure to invite a variety of publishers to accompany you on the study. In that way, your student will get acquainted with others in the congregation and he will likely feel more at home when he attends our meetings.

Lesson 11. In this lesson we are encouraged to teach our students how to do personal study using [jw.org](http://jw.org) and JW Library. Show your student how to use these tools. If you feel a bit unsure about teaching someone to make use of their electronic device for research, don't hesitate to ask for help from the congregation. There are many who will be delighted to assist you. The blessings that we receive when we teach someone the truth is described by the Apostle John at 3rd John verse 4, where it states,

**“No greater joy do I have than this, that I should hear that my children go on walking in the truth”.**

Yes, John is speaking of his spiritual children. That same joy can be ours.

What has this Symposium brought to our attention? It has helped us to see how we can maintain our Zeal for the preaching work. It has instructed us to prepare well, to share the truth with others. It showed us how to take the initiative to give an informal witness, to follow up on interest, and to help Bible students grow to maturity.

If we do the best we can in the ministry, whether people respond or not, we will enjoy the peace that comes from knowing that we are pleasing Jehovah. Hebrews 13:15 and 16. tells us how to bring pleasure to Jehovah God and that's certainly something we want to do. That's Hebrews 13:15 and 16, it reads,

**“Through him”,**

That is through Jesus,

**“Let us always offer to God a sacrifice of praise that is the fruit of our lips, that make public declaration to his name. Moreover, do not forget to do good and to share what you have with others for God is well pleased with such sacrifices.**

Your readiness to share the Good News of Peace with others is just such a sacrifice and you can rest assured that Jehovah is thoroughly pleased with your loving and faithful service to him.

Thank you Brothers for helping us to be ready to share the Good News of Peace effectively at every opportunity. Jehovah's organization continues to grow, and there is plenty of work to do. Young people in particular have many opportunities to expand their service.

How can a career and full-time service lead to rich blessings now and in the future? What are some common obstacles to pursuing full-time service? and how can they be overcome? We encourage young ones to give special attention to the next talk.

Brother Mark Sanderson, a member of the Governing Body, will develop the theme,

***“Young People Choose a Path that Leads to Peace”.***

An 18 year old Brother was trying to decide what he wanted to do after high school. He was raised in the truth and in his heart he wanted to be a pioneer but, he also had a scholarship to go to university and some other grants and he had been accepted to attend. He had many questions. How was he going to support himself and much pressure from his teachers and counsellors to go to university.

What decision would he make? Well, maybe many of you young ones who are listening to this talk right now are facing that same decision, or maybe you will be in a year or two. What path will you take? Well now, here's what we know. Jehovah wants you to have not just a good life, not just an average life, He wants you to have an awesome, wonderful life, both now during your youth, but really for your entire life. That's why the Bible says in Ecclesiastes chapter 11 and verse 9,

**“Rejoice young man, while you were young and let your heart be glad in the days of your youth”.**

Well, many young people have found real joy and peace by choosing a career in the full-time service. But now, when we say full-time service, what are we talking about?

Well, full-time service is not just one thing. It actually includes many things. It includes pioneering, maybe in your home congregation or maybe in another area, maybe in another city, state, province, even in another country. It might mean assisting with theocratic construction projects, maybe building kingdom halls or assembly halls, or, or, building remote translation offices, or even working at building at Bethel facilities. And, it also could mean submitting an application for Bethel service and becoming a Bethelite, really, there are so many wonderful opportunities that are available for you young ones in full-time service. But now, here's a question. What challenges could prevent you from starting or continuing on the path of full-time service? And more importantly, how can you overcome those challenges?

Well, let's talk about three obstacles. Here's the first one it's financial concerns. How am I going to support myself? Well, let's look at something that Jesus said in Matthew chapter 6 and verse 33. Matthew 6 :33 Jesus said,

**“Keep on then seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you”.**

Well now, okay, it says all these other things, what other things? What is Jesus talking about here? Well, to find out, why don't we go back up to verse 25, and let's read a little bit more of what Jesus was talking about when he said those famous words. Verse 25.

**“On this account I say to you, stop being anxious about your lives as to what you will eat or what you will drink or about your bodies as to what you will wear. Does not life mean more than food? And the body than clothing”?**

Now, after identifying, now we know what Jesus is talking about. He's talking about our necessities, food, shelter, clothing. But now look at the illustrations Jesus goes on to give. Now, beginning here in verse 26.

**“Observe intently the birds of heavens, they do not sow seed or reap or gather into storehouses yet, your heavenly father feeds them. Are you not worth more than they are? Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his lifespan? Also, why are you anxious about clothing, take a lesson from the Lilies of the Field. How they grow, they do not toil, nor do they spin, but I tell you that not even Solomon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. Now, if this is how God clothes the vegetation of the field that's here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much rather clothe you. You with little faith, so never be anxious and say, what are we to eat, or, what are we to drink, or, what are we to wear, for all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. Your heavenly father knows that you need all these things”.**

Well, do you get the sense of this? Jesus was trying to reason that just as Jehovah provides for all of his creation, He can provide for you too. We just need to develop our faith that Jehovah will provide the things we need. If we put his service first.

Well, does that mean that Jehovah is just going to drop into our lap everything that we need? Well no. Jehovah expects that we're going to use the things that he's given us to be able to support ourselves. So, it's very wise when you're young to plan ahead so that you can obtain

the skills you need to be able to support yourself.

Now, in some lands, it may be that as you're growing up you can learn a trade from your father, or from your mother, or maybe even from another relative. In other lands, you might be able, while you're still in high school to take some vocational courses that would help you to learn a skill or learn a trade. But here's the point. We need to plan. So ask yourself, what abilities and skills do I have that I could use to support myself.

A Sister named Kelly had a very clear goal in mind of becoming a pioneer, so what did she do? Well this is what she says, "I had to choose something that would allow me to support myself in my ministry".

Kelly enrolled in a vocational program in her High School and that helped her to achieve her primary goal. Here's what she said, "The full-time ministry was what I wanted to do, everything else was secondary".

Well, how does Kelly feel now about the decision that she made? She says, "*I feel my decision was the best one that I could have made*".

You young Brothers and Sisters, you can overcome that challenge just by planning ahead and making sure that you have practical skills you can use to support yourself.

Here's the second obstacle. Pressure from others. My relatives want me to focus on making money. Well, if that's the case, explain your spiritual goals in a calm respectful way. Colossians chapter 4 and verse 6 says,

**"Let your words always be gracious, seasoned with salt".**

Well, we all know when we eat food with no salt, it doesn't taste very good, does it? You put a little salt on it, now it becomes delicious. So make sure that when you speak to your relatives you put a little salt on those words so that you can reason with them and help them to see the wisdom of the decision that you want to make.

Well, it could be your relatives will not agree with you. But let's look at something that Jesus said here at Luke chapter 7 and verse 35. Jesus said,

**"All the same, wisdom is proved righteous".**

Or now, if you look at the footnote, it says,

**"Or is vindicated by all its children".**

Well now, what's the point? Well, sometimes when people make a decision, we're not sure if it was the right one or not, but when the decision works out, well, when it leads to success, when, when people see how happy you are and how successful you are, the joy, the satisfaction you have, well, then what happens? Well maybe your relatives will see that your decision has been vindicated. It's been proved righteous by the way things have turned out.

Here's obstacle number three. Unexpected challenges. I thought it was going to be easier than this. Well, those unexpected challenges can be many. It could be just trying to get used to newer roommates, dealing with personality challenges, or even just coping with homesickness.

Here's the point, don't give up. Notice what James said here in James chapter 1, James chapter 1 and verse 4. Now you notice, uh, as you look at verse 2, James is talking about trials, and he's talking about how trials can have a positive effect on us, but now look what he says in verse 4.

**“But let endurance complete its work so that you may be complete, and sound, in all respects. Not lacking in anything”.**

What's James trying to say, what's his point? We'll, have you ever heard the expression, no pain no gain? Well, if you want to reach a certain fitness goal or if you want to be very good at playing a certain sport, no doubt you're going to have some achy muscles, and no doubt you're going to have some hurt pride along the way too. Maybe you won't be very good when you first start. But, what do you do. If you want to become good? If you want to reach your goal, you can't give up. You have to keep trying.

Well, the same could be said about reaching our spiritual goals. You see, James mentions that trials often reveal our weaknesses. Maybe it's some aspect of our personality that needs improvement, or maybe it's something in our relationship with Jehovah. Maybe we need greater faith. Maybe we need greater trust. If we endure, even during periods of trial, and we refuse to give up, we become stronger. We become stronger in our spirituality and our relationship with Jehovah, our love for him, our faith in him, our trust in him just continues to grow.

As James says there in verse 4, we become complete, or sound, in all respects. Not lacking in anything. So, when those trials come, and they will come, don't look for a quick way out. Endure, keep going, don't give up. Seek advice from Brothers and Sisters who have successfully coped with similar challenges and you too will be successful. In the following video, notice how some full-time servants have found real peace despite those three obstacles, financial concerns, pressure from others and unexpected challenges.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

I pray to Jehovah, if it is your will, I'd be happy to enter Pioneer service. But I had to work really hard to provide for the needs of my family, because my father had died when he was 45 years old.

The Elder I talked to gave me advice not to be picky on what kind of job I would have. He reminded me of Matthew 6:33 and told me not to be overly anxious. Because of our good communication within the family, we were able to find solutions. My other siblings realized that they also shared responsibility in providing for the needs of the family.

After one year of pioneering I was encouraged to apply for Bethel service, and now I am in Bethel. I feel that Jehovah really cares for me, loves me, and appreciates all my efforts.

Because they love me, my cousins pressured me to choose a secular career. If I went against their wishes, it would hurt them and put a strain on our relationship. I was really anxious, I wanted to show my trust in Jehovah by pioneering and give him an opportunity to show me that I can be happy in his service.

I try to express my appreciation for my cousins by what I said and did, and showed them love. They realized that I have changed for the better. I show more concern for others now. Now they understand that we have been learning good things and that we have a happier and more meaningful life.

I wanted to try serving where the need was great. When I first arrived, I thought it was so cool being there. I had expected the poverty but, when I saw it, it hit home more than what I had expected, so then I started to feel really homesick, but, my Brothers and Sisters. I'd go to the Kingdom Hall and they were able to cope with the challenges that they were facing because they had Jehovah in their life. So, their example really helped me to see that my circumstances don't need to change for my attitude to change.

Proverbs 15:15 stood out to me about having a cheerful heart and being able to have a continual feast no matter what my circumstances are. And I found an article about that scripture and so from there I decided to ask myself, how can I use my situation and what I'm learning to help others?

And I got to start helping with foreign language group there. That whole experience just made my love for people grow so much and definitely changed my life.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Some of your non-witness family members might offer you secular or financial advice. We know they mean well and they feel that they're giving you the best advice because they love you. But, young Brothers and Sisters, we are convinced that the blessings of full-time service far outweigh any challenges that might go along with it. Just think of the experiences that we heard in, the in the video. Harley's choices allowed him to go to Bethel and helped him to feel that Jehovah really loved him.

Anjil's choices took courage, but those choices helped them to be more concerned about other people and helped his relatives to see that he had made a good decision.

And Carly did not give up when the trials came, instead, she learned to love other people even more, and became a more powerful strong Christian.

Brothers and Sisters, why are we so convinced that full-time service will lead you young ones to a Wonderful Life? Well, it's because that's the decision that so many of us made when we were young.

Do you remember that 18 year old young Brother who is trying to decide which path to take? Well, that was me some years ago. I'm so glad that with the help of Jehovah and my parents and other mature friends in the congregation, I made the decision just like so many other Brothers and Sisters around the world, to turn down that scholarship, to give up University

and go directly into the full-time service.

That is a decision that I have never regretted. That is a decision that I will never regret. Young people, Jehovah loves you, He wants you to have a wonderful, awesome life. Choose the path of full-time service if you can. You will never regret it. It will put you on a path that leads to joy and peace with our marvellous wonderful God Jehovah.

Thank you Brother Sanderson for the warm encouragement to pursue full-time service from an early age.

Now, we invite all to join in singing song number 135,

**“Jehovah's warm appeal, be wise my son”.**

That song number 135.

### **Saturday Morning Part 2**

Have you applied to the school for kingdom evangelizer but not been invited. Or have you wanted to apply but wondered if the time was right. You are not alone. Because of the pandemic, classes are still suspended. But if you are a pioneer between the ages of 23 and 65 and would like to attend a future class of SKE, please contact your congregation secretary and fill out the online application so that it can be considered when classes resume. As a reminder, your application is active for one year, therefore, you must apply each year that you desire to be considered.

Additionally, we are pleased to inform you that graduates of the Ministerial Training School, or the Bible School for Single Brothers, who are still single and in full-time service, may now apply for the school for Kingdom Evangelizer's.

Is it possible to maintain our peace when dealing with intense trials and pressures? How does Jehovah care for our needs when we are in distress? The following video will introduce us to Brothers and Sisters who have been blessed by Jehovah with peace. The theme is,

***“How our Brothers are Enjoying Peace Despite Opposition, Illness, Economic Problems, and Natural Disasters”.***

#### **VIDEO STARTS**

As long as we live in Satan's world, all of us will face situations that can rob us of our peace. Regaining that peace can be difficult, but not impossible. In this video, we will hear from three Sisters and two couples who will speak candidly about their trials and how they struggle to cope with them.

But in spite of what they have endured, please take note of their smiles, their joy and what they did to regain or maintain their peace. And take special note of how Jehovah helped them. The Governing Body knows that many of you are suffering circumstances, not unlike the ones

we will hear about, and they trust that the examples in this video will help each of you to maintain your peace as you endure various trials...

Brothers and Sisters all over the world are facing natural disasters, economic collapse, illness, persecution. Despite all that they keep joy and peace.

I can learn a lot from them. My name is Antoinette. I live here in Las Vegas Nevada with my super mom and my trouble-making Sister. Family and friends have always been important to me. As a child, I lived with my mom and dad and I was very close to my dad's side of the family. He was very loving, unified, and fun.

I was pretty happy, um, but already I was starting to feel the effects of my cancer. We just didn't know what it was really. One day I, I was okay, and then next day I started feeling bad. You know...

In my childhood I played an unusual game. I would catch insects, put them in a jar, and then bring them home. Then, I would get books, such as a criminal procedural code, open them up, and start judging one of the bugs.

I would play the role of investigator and judge at the same time. I was born into a family where everyone, starting with my grandparents, was either wearing an officer's uniform or a judge's robe. That's why I had this strong sense of justice. But in 1989, my mother was in a tragic car accident and she got severe, she got severe burns on her face, hands, and body, and then my father, at seeing my mom's condition, decided to leave us. And it was at that moment, I guess, that my world my ideals, they crumbled...

As I as a little kid, I always wanted, like one big happy family. Once we moved to New York for my treatment. I no longer had that big family bond anymore. What I was feeling back then in New York was just sadness, never really peace...

Here in California, we're used to fires. But when I got the call to evacuate that morning, I never knew by that evening the whole town of Paradise would be gone. Just before the fire, we had the needs of the congregation where they instructed us of what to do in the case of a disaster.

I had the truck full of gas, I had my Go Bag ready, and I had a map of where I was going. I was ready.

The Brothers, also in their instructions said to obey the traffic instructors. The instructor told us to turn right and I didn't want to turn right but they said obey him so, I turned right, though I thought it'd be really bad.

The smoke got darker and darker and finally it got black. You couldn't see anything...

My mom always told me I've always been a caregiver, ever since I was a little girl. It was just part of who I was. I don't like to see people suffer, it's um, very difficult for me.

I remember, I remember when I started first started working as a nurse. I would always cry. I cried literally, I cried every day that I had to go to work. Not only was I overwhelmed being a new nurse but also, um, I was battling my depression...

In 2017 I was the treasurer for a prestigious bank in Nicaragua. And I was the father of a one-year-old son. We were very happy. But then I lost my job, so I said, I have the experience and Jehovah will help me find another job, something similar. And I kept looking for jobs, but doors kept closing. I felt very tense. It made me feel very useless, like um, I can't even provide for my family. It was something very difficult for me...

These dear Brothers and Sisters face serious challenges. They may have had moments when they felt like Job when he said, "I loathe my life". That is not an unusual human emotion. Sometimes, things in life don't work out as we had hoped and it can hurt us deeply. Does this mean that we are helpless victims of our circumstances? Not at all. Please pay close attention, and take note of why we can say that Margaret, Felix, Miguel, Nikki, and Antoinette are not helpless victims, to the contrary, they are conquerors. As you watch and listen, look for specific actions they took to maintain their peace, and please, give thoughtful attention to ways that you can imitate their faith...

Growing up, I wondered why does the Supreme judge, God allow injustice and suffering. And inside of me, I had this need to restore justice. It was such a burning desire within me, and with that in mind, I moved to Russia to stay with my Sister.

She started to study the bible and was overflowing with the truth. We talked for hours, till late into the night. So, that's when my special relationship with Jehovah began. That's when I, I got a taste of what it's like to have a caring father. It had been a while since I was able to feel that..

My baptism day was very exciting. The spiritual family I inherited was very vast. Um, I, you can instantly feel the love...

I got baptized and it seemed like miracles happened, one after the other. We had a great life and then the persecution started with Brother Christensen. And then, there was a ripple effect of arrest, one after the other. Then it was our turn. In June of 2018, a huge group of armed men came to us, to our home. They represented the ideals of my childhood, but now, these people, this judicial system, became the source of injustice to me. I was sitting in a cage the same way my bugs used to be in a jar.

I guess I felt like they did. In your head, at that moment, when you hear the verdict that you'll stay in prison, it's like you've been knocked unconscious. You've been hit in the head with something and there's just a ringing sound in your ears. And so, I was taken away in handcuffs. Of course, I wasn't in the best mood. But then, the doors of the elevator opened up and in front of us, a lot of Brothers and Sisters, clapping their hands as hard as they could, and some were crying, but not crying because they felt sorry for me, they cried because they loved us and because they were proud of us.

That's what always happens when you're just about to lose all your strength, Jehovah does

that something for you that gives you a second wind and so the applause, the love, the tears, the shouts, *“hang in there, everything will be okay”*, they, they gave me a second wind and with renewed strength I could run the next part of the race.

One of the guards was so surprised that he said, *“now that's some support you've got”*, yeah...

Without friends I would be very lonely. I would constantly be focusing on my illness. The day I met Marissa was at a convention. She's a really great friend, spiritual friend. When she takes me to my hospital appointments, we would eat out. I think food is just the common language between everyone, you know, when you talk about food, you know like, ah yes, we have something to talk about.

You know, I would be excited once she take me to my hospital appointment. She always makes me laugh, you know, she always has helped me have a good time no matter what. Again, friends, uh, really help encourage me...

Proverbs 17:17 says,

**“A true friend shows love at all times, and is a Brother, who is born for times of distress”.**

And I have seen this come true in my life. When I lost my job at the bank well, I felt very depressed, troubled, tense, and I have a good friend that I can talk to, and when I told him how I was feeling, he told me, look Miguel, don't look for the same line of work. Maybe what you need to do is make a change in your life. Why don't you find some simple work outside of an office for a time, that can help you to keep your eye simple and allow you to provide for your family.

I watched my wife make bread for our family and one day I told her, *“I'm gonna make that bread, but not for our family, I'm gonna make it to sale”*.

So, she told me no, are you crazy.

It was a big change right, from having a position at a bank and handling a lot of money, to selling on the street.

So I told her look, I'm gonna put this hat on, and I put like a chef's head on and I told her, “I'll be back in less than an hour whether I sell or not”. and that's what happened. And to her surprise, I came back without any bread. So, when I got ready to leave the second time to sell, she said “okay go, but uh, leave the hat here”.

I also started to iron clothes for people in their homes, and it looks strange because normally where we live, that type of work is done by a woman. But for a man to go and iron clothes at someone's home, you don't see that. But I didn't want to just sit back with my arms crossed and see what happened, no, I had to put my my hands to work to earn a living for my family.

So, I would preach one day and the next day I would iron clothes, the next day I would

preach, and the day after that I would go out and sell bread. So my mind was always occupied on doing something, either for the Kingdom, or my family. And that helped me a lot...

I was feeling so sad. I really needed Jehovah's help to figure out what was going on with me, and I remember the 2009 article about depression came out, and I realized, okay Jehovah, you're telling me this is what I have, so, now that I realized I have this, I got gotta figure out how I can manage it. So, I changed my eating habits, I started exercising a lot more. I realized that exercising and eating healthy really, really, did help.

Also, I made a journal and I made different sections of the different aspects of my depression that I dealt with. Each section I would put scriptures. I would put articles and the illustrations. The pictures, they speak, they speak a lot without saying anything. Jehovah hears us. Jehovah cares...

After some time in prison, they transferred me to a different cell, and in it were inmates who followed the orders of the investigators. They did everything they could to other inmates to make life unbearable. Why did they do this, to break a person. So that they would start to collaborate with the investigators, confess to everything, and then be able to get transferred to another area.

Psalm 37:3

### **“Trust in Jehovah and do what is good”**

I said, Jehovah, please help me to stay loyal to you. Please help me. My prayers were really simple, actually like two words, Jehovah help. Jehovah help. Jehovah help. Despite how they treated me, when I dealt with others, I tried to treat them with kindness. These people, they made life uncomfortable, unbearable, but when they were treated kindly, they started to soften. They began to treat me differently.

When I was being transferred out of that cell, the inmate that ran the area called me over to him and said, come sit beside me. And I sat down, then he said, “if anybody in this prison touches you, tell him that I'll come looking for him”, then he said, “get his things” he told the other prisoners.

The cell doors opened and the guards saw a crowd of inmates grabbing my things and putting them out into the hallway. I left the cell without having to carry a thing. The guard quietly closed the door, and before the inmates returned to their cells, they even said goodbye, hugged me, and said hang in there, you're gonna be okay. They went into the cell and the guard closed the door and asked me, boy, how long have you been in there? I said three weeks. He said, well normally people leave this cell beaten up and they're thrown out by the other inmates. They have to carry their own things and that's if the other inmates haven't thrown their stuff out the door. He couldn't believe what had just happened. That's Jehovah...

Exercising, changing my diet, the publications, journaling, that was my lifeline. That really, actually helped me for a long time. But it came to a point where it stopped working as effectively.

I remember getting dressed for the meeting, and I was fine getting dressed for the meeting, about to walk out the door, but I couldn't. There was this overwhelming fear that came over me, an overwhelming sadness that came over me and I just lost it. I just started crying. I couldn't get myself together. It was bad. It got really bad. My depression got really bad.

So it was very difficult for me to approach the Brothers to ask them for help but at that time, I knew that if I didn't, that something bad would happen. So I decided, you know what, I'm asked for a shepherding call with my Brothers because I never talked about my depression with with the elders at all. This was my first time speaking with them. And there was one Brother, one of the elders who also battled depression and he suggested, have you thought about seeking medical help?

Seeking professional help was something I never wanted to do. I thought that I didn't need to do it, um, but sometimes there comes a point where you need additional help and what you're doing is not enough.

In this world, it makes you feel like it's a bad thing. That depression is a dirty word, or seeking medical help is something that you don't do. But, I realized also that seeking medical help was part of my being able to worship Jehovah effectively. That's me doing my part. Not everyone needs to take that step but for me, this is what I need to do. And I'm glad I did it because the fact that I never think I've ever felt this good in my life..

About a year later we were released but my wife and I understood that they could put me back in prison again. So we needed to use the time until then to the full, in the best way possible. So what did we do? Psalm 119:165,

**“Abundant peace belongs to those who love your law”.**

We had family worship, read the bible, and pray together. That's how I spent my four months of freedom. Then, I was put into prison for three years...

When they told me about my cancer being gone, I was really happy, I was ecstatic. I was like finally I'm gonna get to do normal things as a kid my age should be able to do. I don't need to be afraid or anxious anymore. Unfortunately, I did relapse again, and uh, basically right now, my present condition is there's nothing really more to do. They're just waiting to let nature take its course. Basically um, and that's it.

In harmony with Ephesians chapter 4 verse 26, I had to let myself process the news and let myself be sad, angry, um, let yourself feel those feelings. Do not try to repress them but, you can control your thoughts and your actions. Pretty much my whole life uh, it has revolved around my illness, but I learned how to shift focus. I just don't focus on myself all the time. I focus on others, they're trials that are different, but just as hard.

You read the stories on jw.org in the newsroom. The Russian Brothers and Sisters, I pray for them constantly because they're going through a very tough time...

There is definitely more happiness in giving than receiving, and in our situation, this proved

true. I would say this, this really helps to relieve your pain. If you focus on yourself, your pain gets worse.

When you focus on others and on their problems, your pain lessens, diminishes.

Hello,

Hello.

Antoinette. Uh, I was so, when I was told that we would talk with each other, this was something very special for me.. The same for me too. Uh, when the Brothers told me as well about meeting you, I was really excited.

Thank you for your prayers on behalf of the Brothers in Russia. They are precious. We can learn so much from you.

Oh, thank you, um, it's really, uh, nice for you to say that. We both been through very hard, uh, many hardships. I'm sure prison was super hard.

You know, in prison, us Brothers had a saying, *"if you ask how much worse can it get, you won't have to wait long to find out"*, or in other words, when you think how much worse can it get, for sure something worse is bound to happen, and when we received our sentence, we thought, well, that's it. That's the worst that could happen, and then of course it got worse.

Upon arrival at the prison we were beaten up and for hours. We were humiliated. We thought how much worse can it get, then the next day we were told, you're going to the punishment cell. We thought well, how much worse can I get?...

At first it started with one floor, then I went to another floor, and then, the whole entire hospital. Every floor had COVID patients. That was some of the hardest nursing that I've ever done in my life. In all my years of nursing.

And we lost a lot of good nurses that were right in the trenches with me, that were in there doing their best. We lost a lot of good people. Even though I was on medication to help me, it still didn't take the depression away. You're like, what's the point. I can't save anyone. I can't help anyone. It was devastating. It truly, truly, was devastating.

Have you ever felt as Felix did? When he asked how much worse can it get? Nevertheless, a spiritual person can see each new challenge as an opportunity to rely on Jehovah. As we watch the concluding part of this video, please take note of how Jehovah strengthened these Brothers and Sisters and deepened their friendship with him. Think about your own circumstances and the ways that Jehovah has helped you through trials and have full confidence that he will continue to do so...

And then I decided that I was going to stop asking how worse it could get. I asked Jehovah for endurance. Enjoy for that day. Just for that day..

And at those times I just cried to Jehovah. Talked to Jehovah about how I'm feeling, and just asked for his peace to help me to deal...

I've talked to Jehovah very intimately and personally, but never like I have when I was so alone there. I realized that I was going to die. I asked Jehovah. If he saw enough good in me, if he would just resurrect me, that I'd love to be in his new world and see my husband again, and my children, and I thanked him so much for the life that I had. And I felt such at peace that it, that I never felt before, and then I just knew it was Jehovah getting me out.

The obedience, just doing what we were told. It came from Jehovah and it was so simple that gave him something to bless and it may have saved my life. I just never wanted to be a burden on people but, the Brothers and Sisters have come from all over the country to work from this house, the other houses. all of them. They made me feel wanted and they made me feel loved. To feel like Jehovah cared enough to give attention to you. I just felt so unworthy, and hear all these people, are here taking care of me and you just look at them and then you think, I'm part of this organization. I gotta do better. I gotta be like them and make other people happy...

When I'm able to help people who are battling depression, I feel like Jehovah's using me in that way and it makes me happy that I can be of use to Jehovah. It's good to feel, it's, it's so nice to feel good again, to feel happy again, to be able to smile to be able to to take enjoyment in the small things. You know, in Jehovah's creation, and you know, just be happy that I'm alive, so yeah, yeah...

Now I have a stable job, I work at a hardware store, man, I feel at peace. The adversities have made me stronger and overall I have a much closer relationship with Jehovah. But I'm still making bread and at home, yeah, I'm the one who irons the clothes...

After a while, I found out that I was being deported. I remember getting off the train, they took me through the back door, but my wife Jenny was standing at the main entrance. She was on the phone, she couldn't see me. She was looking at the main entrance, and I threw my bag down. As I ran to her, she could see from the corner of her eyes someone was running. She was a little confused, even scared.

And there I was, hugging the person I loved the most. It was one of the most beautiful days of my life.

Hi,

Hello, when I heard that you were praying for us, and for the Brothers and Sisters in Russia, it really encouraged me and Felix. It's such an example for me personally. We mentioned in our prayer yesterday, Felix was saying that you are a great example of how we need to genuinely care for our Brothers and Sisters. We love you very much.

My cancer is incurable, but, um, I know the cure is in the new system, so, that's the cure.

I like to imagine when that time happens, what will I be doing? *“Obviously, I'm going to be*

*jumping for joy because I'm going to be rid of my cancer. I'm going to enjoy food that we never really got to enjoy. I'm going to have so many animals. I'm going to make a house. I'm going to learn how to make a house, um,"*

Peace in this world is not the absence of illness, danger, persecution, or economic problems. Peace in this world is listening to Jehovah's guidance, praying to Jehovah constantly, meditating on Jehovah's word and his promises. Peace in this world is also having good friends by our side, and having a good sense of humour..

What I've learned from all of this is peace isn't from what's outside, from what's going on, or what you're experiencing. I've learned that peace is on the inside and that that comes from Jehovah...

These examples we've just seen are of ordinary people with feelings like ours yet, they felt peace, even when confronting serious trials. How did they do it?

When Miguel lost his job, he kept his focus on serving Jehovah and he was not too proud to do humble work to provide for his family.

Margaret was prepared for a natural disaster, and throughout her ordeal, she prayed to Jehovah.

While struggling with depression, Nikki did research using our publications and asked for help from the elders.

Even when facing brutal persecution, Felix showed kindness to his persecutors. He knew that the way he responded would reflect Christian qualities.

And dear Antoinette, despite her diagnosis, focuses not on herself but on helping others. As she said, the cure for her, as it is for all of us, is God's kingdom.

If you are experiencing trials, focus on what you can control. Help others, be grateful, and rely on Jehovah and his organization. If you are not experiencing serious trials, do what you can to prepare for them, by building yourself up spiritually. Do not be anxious. Fear of what might happen is often worse than the trial itself. Trust in Jehovah, and be assured that He will never abandon His friends.

The dear Brothers and Sisters whom we've just listened to are doing well spiritually. We thank them for participating in these interviews. We'd also like to thank all our Brothers and Sisters working in the medical field who have gone the extra mile during this pandemic. James 5:11 reads,

**“Look! We consider happy those who have endured. You have heard of the endurance of Job and have seen the outcome Jehovah gave, that Jehovah is very tender in affection and merciful”**

The blessings we receive by enduring trials can strengthen us for the future and help us to

become the kind of person that Jehovah wants us to be. The inner peace and joy we experience is a gift from Jehovah.

As these Brothers and Sisters from around the world have reminded us, we need never doubt that our wonderful heavenly father will bless all those who continue loving him.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

We thank all of the Sisters and Brothers who were interviewed for their sincere comments and for allowing us to benefit and learn from their experiences. Those candid interviews show that we can remain at peace even when enduring severe trials. Jehovah always supports and cares for us his loyal servants.

The time has now come for the baptism discourse. We encourage all baptism candidates to pay particular attention. How does walking in Jehovah's way bring peace? How can we stay on the road to everlasting life?

Please listen carefully as Brother William Turner, a helper to the service committee, delivers the talk,

### ***“Go on Walking in the Way of Peace”.***

We cannot express to you baptism candidates around the world how much of a privilege it is for us to share in this occasion with you. You are following through on the most important decision you've ever made, to make it known publicly, that you have dedicated your life to God.

We know your situations vary. Some of you candidates were raised knowing about Jehovah, but you had to develop your own personal relationship with him. Others of you may be taking this step after learning about Jehovah more recently. But whatever your circumstances, likely it was a journey, a figurative road you had to travel to get to this point. In fact, the bible also compares true worship to a road, a path, or a walkway that has to be travelled.

In Acts chapter 9 verse 2, as the first century Christian congregation was being established, Jesus disciples used the term, “The Way” to designate their newly established form of worship. They understood that as baptized Christians, they were walking on a new path and every aspect of their lives was involved. And that's going to be the case for you as well. In fact, note how the bible describes this. Turn with me please to the book of Ephesians and note what is stated in Ephesians chapter 4 and we'll read verses 22 through 24. There it says,

**“You were taught to Put Away the old personality that conforms to your former course of conduct and that is being corrupted according to its deceptive desires, and you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude and should put on the new personality that was created according to God's will, in true, righteousness, and loyalty”.**

So like the first century Christians, you have come to know the truth about Jehovah. And the things you've learned has led you to become baptism candidates.

Like all of God's people, you've done, as verse 22 states,

**“To put away the old personality”,**

but, there in verse 23,

**“We must also continue to be made new in our dominant mental attitude”.**

This involves our thoughts, what we allow our mind to dwell on.

Now, you know the footnote for that verse indicates this term could also be rendered as, *“The force actuating our mind (or literally translate, it to) The spirit of your mind”*.

In the English language, perhaps you've heard someone say that they are “in good spirits”, or, you've heard someone described as being “mean-spirited”. Well, that's a description of one's dominant mental attitude, one's thoughts and motivations. It's what moves us to act the way that we do. Our goal as baptized servants of Jehovah is to gain a dominant mental attitude that aligns, and is in harmony with, God's thoughts.

Now that won't always be easy. It takes time and a lot of effort. Those who walk in the way of peace often encounter trials. And to stay on that road, we must be willing to make sacrifices.

Like some of those first century Christians, we may have to endure direct persecution. But if we continue to walk in Jehovah's way, we're going to be happy, and Jehovah is going to bless us.

In Luke chapter 1 verse 79 he assures us that he will

**“Guide our feet in the way of peace”.**

That's a comforting thought isn't it. So, we're excited, we're excited that you baptism candidates have undertaken this journey. And know that you have some eight and a half million other witnesses on this road with you. And today, it is our honour and privilege to welcome you, to welcome you to Jehovah's way of peace and the road leading off into life.

As we go through our discussion today, we're going to answer three questions. First, why is it important that we do not give up on walking in Jehovah's way of peace? Second, how does walking in Jehovah's way, bring us peace? And third, what can we do to continue walking in Jehovah's way of peace?

Well let's address our first question. Why is it important that we do not give up in walking in Jehovah's way of peace?

Now, to answer that, let's turn please to Second Corinthians chapter 4 and we'll note Second Corinthians chapter 4 verses 16 through 18. There it reads,

**“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, 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. 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”.**

Do you see why we can't give up? It's because being one of Jehovah's witnesses requires that we remain active and persevere in the way of peace.

You dear candidates have not given up in your efforts to please Jehovah and to qualify to become part of his people, and why is that? It's because of your love for him. And you know that any trials and obstacles you face now are momentary and light when compared to an eternity in God's new world.

Today, you will enter into a special relationship with Jehovah God. So don't let anyone or anything jeopardize that relationship. Let it be something that you cherish because that relationship is everlasting. So, keep walking in Jehovah's way of peace. Focus on what it means to have him as a friend, to have him guiding your steps. If you don't give up, then despite any trials you face, you will continue to enjoy Jehovah's blessings. And we're confident that you can do so. But, to highlight how this can be done at this time we're pleased to introduce Sister Indira Alfonso.

Sister Alfonso was baptized in 2006 and now serves with her husband as Bethel family members in Warwick.

Sister Alfonso, can you tell us a little about your journey, how you became associated with Jehovah's witnesses.

*“Yes, I was born in Cuba. My mom and I moved to the United States when I was nine. Even though I was young, I felt it was important to look for God. So whenever we moved, I would visit the local churches in the area, even getting baptized in a number of them. When I was 11, my mom let me move in with my aunt who was one of Jehovah's witnesses. And from there she asked my mom if I could study with a pioneer Sister from her congregation and my mom agreed.”*

Well, nice to see that even at a young age you had a spiritual need. So, during this time leading up to your baptism as one of Jehovah's witnesses did you encounter any trials that threatened to make you give up?

*“Yes. I did I made changes very quickly. I stopped celebrating holidays, stopped praying to idols, but these changes were very strange to my mom, just difficult for her to understand. She really was afraid I was being brainwashed. So after studying for several months, she had me moved back in with her, which meant the end of my studies, and no more attending meetings”.*

*“It wasn't long before my association was affecting my speech and my behaviour I found myself easily influenced, to even celebrate my birthday again. I could feel I was moving*

*further away from Jehovah instead of closer to him”.*

I'm sorry to hear that Sister Alfonso. So, what helped you not to give up and to go on walking in the way of peace?

*“What helped me was the scripture in Matthew 10:37 where Jesus said,*

**“Whoever has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me”.**

*I realized that a peaceful relationship with Jehovah might mean no peace with my family, but I knew that if I were to ever gain my mom, I had to walk with Jehovah the right way and not give up. So one night I prayed to him crying for forgiveness and asking for his help. And to my surprise, a few days later, without any explanation, my mom had me move back in with my aunt. So, I resume my bible studies and a year later at the age of 15, I got baptized”.*

Jehovah clearly heard and answered your prayer. Since then, have you seen continued evidence of Jehovah's guidance?

*“A good friend helped me to adjust the way I was communicating with my mom. So, one day I called her and expressed to her how much I truly appreciate and love her. I didn't want us to be distant anymore. I explained to her that my love for her had never changed, but my love for Jehovah had come first. So that conversation was a turning point for us. Now, we have had many positive discussions and she's much more understanding of my decision. Seeing Jehovah's guidance in my life makes me determined to continue walking in his way of peace”.*

Thank you so much Sister Alfonso. We appreciate your faithful example and comments.

Well let's address our second point. How does walking in Jehovah's way bring us peace? And to answer this, we're going to compare the path or journey you've taken on the road to life, with a literal road or walkway. And in making this comparison, we find a number of similarities.

First, both roads have boundaries, a purpose, and a destination. Let's start with that first one boundaries.

On a literal road, we may see yield, or do not enter signs, guard rails on the side of the road, or lines on the road to help us stay in our lane. Well, those are boundaries, and those boundaries are there for our protection because if we step outside of them we risk getting hurt or lost.

It would be great if we could tell you that as you continue on the road to life after your baptism, we would love to say that the rest of your journey is smooth sailing. You'll have nothing but safe travels. But the reality is that you will face challenges and test of your faith.

The devil will make sure of it. He will make sure that you are confronted with temptations. He wants to do whatever he can to damage your special relationship with Jehovah. But we're confident that you can succeed. You can be successful and avoid danger if you remain within the boundaries of Jehovah's way of peace.

Now, how do you stay within those boundaries? By continuing to learn about Jehovah's laws and principles, and obeying them. That obedience will not only protect you, but it will give you inner peace, peace that comes from having a clean conscience.

The next similarity between a literal road and being on the road to life that we'll discuss, is having a purpose. Uh, when we travel on a literal road, our plan usually is not to get on the road and just stand still, to become stationary, or watch other people or vehicles go by. No, we're there for a reason. The purpose of the road is to enable movement. To help us get from one place to another.

Well in a similar sense, being on Jehovah's way of peace, allows you to move forward, to make continual spiritual progress. And of course, there are many ways that we can make spiritual advancement. One important way that all Christians can do so, is in cultivating spiritual qualities. This is so pleasing to Jehovah. Consider with me, for example, Galatians chapter 6 verse 10. Notice what's mentioned here Galatians chapter 6, verse 10. It says,

**“So, then, as long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith”.**

Let us work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith. So, one way to advance spiritually is to look for ways to do good things for others. Both inside and outside the congregation.

This pandemic has afforded us many opportunities to do this. We've been able to call and check on others, and distribute food, or supplies, when needed. And think of what our Brothers have done time and again to assist others during natural disasters. So take a minute and think about your local area.

How can you work what is good toward all? Are there ones that need assistance getting food or running errands? Is there someone who could use a good word of encouragement, to cheer them up?

Do we know individuals who have lost loved ones in death, with whom we could share words of comfort or maybe simply provide a listening ear? You see, by displaying spiritual qualities, qualities such as kindness, compassion, hospitality, generosity, see, you're going to feel deeply rewarded for doing these things. and you're pleasing Jehovah because you will show that your purpose for being on the road to life is not just to save yourself, but to help others.

Now, there was a third similarity between being on a literal road and being on the road to life. In both cases we have a destination that we want to reach. Travelling on a literal path will eventually take you to your destination. And as a witness of Jehovah, our journey, our walk on this figurative road will lead us to our destination, the goal of enjoying a peaceful friendship with God forever.

Now, although we long for that time in God's new world, even now we can experience the blessings and inner peace that come from a life of service to Jehovah. We now have the privilege to speak with Sister Gloria Herd. Sister Herd has been baptized for over 70 years

and has enjoyed a rich spiritual life in special full-time service with her husband, Brother Samuel Heard of the Governing Body.

Sister Herd, you've had many rich spiritual blessings, and we know that you've encountered challenges along the way. But as you've carried out these assignments through the years, walking in Jehovah's way of peace, how have you managed to enjoy greater inner peace.

*"I learned Brother Turner, that if Jehovah gives you an assignment, He will give he will give you what you need to fulfill it. We learned, and really benefited from the travelling overseers and their wives. It was such a privilege to serve along with these faithful Brothers and Sisters. And several of them had served me and my family when I was very young, so to see their faithfulness, to see their happiness, and to see that they really had inner peace really benefited me. I learned from that and I wanted to follow the example".*

That help from others can be so valuable. How else have you managed.?

*"I've enjoyed inner peace too from praying to Jehovah a lot. Many times we had very little money or no money, but we never missed a meal, and we never missed any theocratic event. We learned that having money, having no money is not an obstacle to Jehovah. He heard our prayers, He answered them, and it was as if the blessing sometime just fell out of heaven".*

Prayer can be so powerful. Thank you for sharing that. But now, how has walking in Jehovah's way of peace help you to have peace with others?

*"I worked and lived with many Sisters and they all had different personalities, so, I learned that I had to apply Romans 12:18 where it says,*

***"As far as it depends [upon me], be peaceable with all men [and woman]".***

*So, I learned that I have to adjust my personality sometimes to keep peace. This happened very often, but one time, we moved in with a Sister on Tuesday morning and something I said upset her very much. She got very angry. Well, I decided not to pursue the issue because I had to live with her for a week. And I just decided to let her see by my conduct, that I could never have meant what she thought. So, as the week went by, the days went by, the tension lessened and by Monday when we left, we were the best of friends and she gave me a big hug and nothing more was said about the subject".*

Well it sounds like you handled that beautifully, Sister Herd. Your spiritual qualities were evident. Well, finally, how has walking in Jehovah's way of peace helped you have peace with God?

*"Well, when you see Jehovah act in your behalf over and over and over again, it makes you feel that you have his approval. Now that Sam and I are in our senior years, we feel He has given us the desire of our heart by allowing us to serve at Bethel, which had been our goal for many years. And I know that as long as I stay faithful to Jehovah, He will continue to grant me inner peace".*

And we have that confidence as well, thank you so much Sister Herd, we deeply appreciate your comments and your encouraging expressions.

Well, let's now address our final point. What can we do to continue walking in Jehovah's way of peace? Well, let's go back to our illustration of the road. On a literal road, travellers may need to make adjustments in response to changing road conditions or bad weather. Similarly, as you go on walking in the way of peace, you will need to readjust your actions and thinking from time to time.

Recently, a circuit overseer shared an interesting point regarding our thoughts and attitudes on matters. He said that they could either serve as a prison or a passport. A prison in that our thoughts and actions can confine or restrict us, or a passport in that they can take us where we need to be. Well, right now we need to be, and stay, on this road to life. So, we want to make sure that any needed adjustments are made in our thoughts and our actions, so that we're not confined or restricted in making spiritual progress.

Well, what might be some areas that we'll need to make adjustments. Notice please Paul's words in 2nd Corinthians chapter 13, and we'll read 2nd Corinthians chapter 13 verse 11. Paul says,

**“Finally, Brothers, continue to rejoice, to be readjusted, to be comforted, to think in agreement, to live peaceably; and the God of love and of peace will be with you.”**

Did you notice three areas in this verse where Paul states we can make adjustments? First he says, “Continue to rejoice”. We can lose our peace and joy if we become overwhelmed by the anxieties of life. So in order to rejoice, can you make it a goal to focus on things that bring joy rather than sadness?

So, if you're not feeling well, or coping with chronic pain, you can focus on God's promise,

**“When no one will say I am sick”.**

If you're facing beliefs for or opposition for your beliefs, focus on the fact that we're part of a Brotherhood, a Brotherhood that supports and prays for us, and arrangements are in place to keep us spiritually strong.

If you're discouraged by world events, you can rejoice in the fact that you have a hope for the future. And we know how this all ends. We know that better times are ahead. The point is, don't let negative thoughts restrict or limit your progress. Instead, make the needed adjustments so that you can move forward and continue to rejoice.

Note another area for readjustment Paul mentions in verse 11. There he says,

**“Continue to think in agreement”.**

There were members of the congregation back in the first century that were promoting apostate ideas. Others were introducing controversial ideas that were not directly unscriptural,

but they were divisive. This resulted in bickering and arguments over words, really creating a spiritually unhealthy atmosphere.

Well, what's going to help us to continue to think in agreement? Remember Paul's words, at Second Timothy 2:23.

**“Reject foolish and ignorant debates, knowing that they produce fights”.**

Of course we react strongly when facing issues that clearly violate Jehovah's moral laws, but, if no scriptural principle is being violated, we're wise to abstain from promoting our personal opinions. We want to do all we can to avoid starting, or being drawn into disagreements, that can disrupt the peace of the congregation.

Now back in verse 11, a third area where we can make adjustments is,

**“Continue to live peaceably”.**

Did you notice from the interview with our Sisters, what they both did when challenged, when faced with a challenge that threatened their peace? They took the matter to Jehovah in prayer. They reflected on scriptures found in God's word. And then they looked to see how they could apply those verses in their particular situation.

It helped them to not only have inner peace, but peace with others as well. So let your spiritual qualities shine through. Continue to work on keeping peace, showing the qualities of being loving and generous toward all, but especially with our close family members whether they are witnesses or not.

Well, we want to conclude by reminding you baptism candidates that today marks a significant milestone in your journey in your relationship with Jehovah. So take the time to appreciate what this day means for you. We're so proud of all of you. You will never regret the decision you have made to dedicate your life to Jehovah. But keep in mind that after today, and beyond, the journey is not yet over. Really, it's just the beginning. So we encourage you to do all you can to stay on the road to life. Keep in mind the points we consider today. First, do not give up on walking in Jehovah's way of peace. Your life depends on it. Allow Jehovah to guide your steps.

Second, stay within the boundaries on the road to life. Remember, you're walking with a purpose, and that will lead you to your destination, peaceful friendship with Jehovah forever. And finally, keep making any needed adjustments in your thoughts, your attitude, and actions, so that you can maintain peace with Jehovah, and peace with others. If you continue to do these things not only will you have peace, but as the last part of Second Corinthians 13:11 says,

**“The God of love and of peace will be with you”.**

May you always remember that promise which Jehovah makes to those who go on walking in the way of peace.

Thank you Brother Turner. Similar to last year, the arrangements for baptism will vary in each location. Each local congregation's elders have made suitable provisions in accord with local circumstances for candidates to be baptized after the conclusion of this session.

We thank Jehovah for the timely spiritual food we enjoyed during this session of the convention. Our next session will show us how to avoid common pitfalls to pursuing peace. It will highlight specific activities that peacemakers excel at. We will also enjoy part one of the feature bible drama. But now, let's sing together the closing song for this session, song number 54.

***"This is the way".***

After the song, you may have your own concluding prayer.

That's song number 54.

### **SATURDAY AFTERNON - PART ONE**

We extend a warm welcome to one and all.

In this session, which corresponds to the Saturday afternoon portion of the program, we will learn what we individually can do to "Pursue Peace" with others. We will begin with a music video presentation.

The video will encourage us to welcome others into our peaceful worldwide brotherhood. Please this enjoy.

Please join in singing song number 29 entitled,

***"Living up to our name",***

Song number 29.

At times our imperfections can disrupt our peace, and that of others. During the next symposium, we will consider things we must avoid in order to cultivate peaceful relationships.

Please give your attention to Brother Harold Corcoran, a helper to the publishing committee as he develops the theme,

***"Put Away" "Peace Wreckers" inappropriate boasting"***

What comes to your mind when you hear the expression, ""Put Away"". You may think of related expressions such as, cast aside, dispose of, discard, get rid of. What did we have to "Put Away" to become a Christian? The bible, in the book of Ephesians chapter 4 and verse 22 provides the answer. That's Ephesians 4:22.

**"You were taught to "Put Away" the old personality that conforms to your former**

**course of conduct and that is being corrupted according to its deceptive desires”.**

So, we had to "Put Away" the old personality. But, it's one thing to put it away, it's something else to keep it away. And that's why, in the very next verse, verse 23, Paul encourages us to do this.

**“And you should continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude”,**

That's so important. To keep it away. Because the old personality has traits that can become "Peace Wreckers". This symposium will consider five "Peace Wreckers" that we should "Put Away", and keep away.

Each talk will include the following main points.

Number one: It will define the peace wrecker.

Number two: It will explain how it wrecks peace and,

Number three: We will consider how to put it away.

What is the very first one we're going to talk about? It is inappropriate boasting. What is inappropriate boasting?

Basically, it self praise. And the bible condemns self praise. Notice Proverbs chapter 27 and verse 2.

**“Let someone else praise you, and not your own mouth; Others, and not your own lips”.**

Self-praise is an evidence of pride and that causes one to elevate himself above others. Some might develop an unhealthy pride about their accomplishments, even in the ministry. It happened in the first century.

Paul had to write the Corinthian congregation about the dissensions that they were having. The lack of peace they were experiencing. Why, well some of the congregation were puffed up in pride about themselves, or other men such as Paul, Apollos, Cephas. They were giving too much attention to themselves and to other men.

Well, how could that happen today? Well, let's imagine a group of brothers talking and one in the group says,

“With Jehovah's help, and with diligent prayer and effort, I finally got a bible study”.

But, right away, another one in the group proudly declares,

“I have four bible studies, two are attending meetings, and one will soon be baptized”.

Could such a statement be a peace wrecker? How does inappropriate boasting wreck peace? Well ,it's not wrong to take pleasure in our work and to thank Jehovah for the success that we

may have, but inappropriate boasting about our accomplishments can stir up competition, envy, and rivalry. We must remember that self-promotion does not originate with our heavenly father the God of peace.

Where does it originate? First John 2:16 says,

**“...the showy display of one’s means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world”.**

And would you not agree that the world is filled with self-praise? Even on their social media we see this. Some of the material that people post on their social media is designed to make the one appear very important. And it is a showy display of their accomplishments, material possessions, or their expensive vacations that they enjoyed. In other words, it's all about, look at me.

Well we want to avoid getting caught up in the world spirit of self-promotion that wrecks peace. To illustrate just how devastating the "Peace Wreckers" inappropriate boasting can be, let's briefly consider the bible character Haman.

He was a proud and haughty man and he boasted a lot. Esther chapter 5 tells us that he was boasting with his family and friends about his wealth, his many sons, how the king had promoted him to a high station, he was above all the other servants, and that he'd had a special meal or banquet with the king and queen. But Haman was hateful, and arrogant, and he was plotting to kill Jehovah's faithful servant Mordecai.

But his scheme, and his attitudes were exposed. And what happened? The very stake that Haman had built to hang Mordecai on, he was hung on. And it reminds us doesn't it. At Isaiah chapter 29 and verse 20 the bible says the,

**“Boaster will come to his finish”,**

So, because of the devastating effects that improper boasting can have on ourselves and others, we do not even want to give the impression of boasting.

In the following dramatization, notice how a sister's action are misunderstood as boasting.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

(During a congregation meeting)

"Put Away" from yourselves every kind of malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech, as well as everything injurious.

Did anyone start the day thinking, I believe I'll show malicious bitterness to my brother today. Of course not. And yet, the potential is there isn't it. But genuine affection fights "Peace Wreckers" and affection grows when we really know our brothers and sisters well. We remember their joys, and pain, their selfless zeal, how they came to love Jehovah, and what they endure.

(Just after meeting)

I'll get back as soon as I can. Love you. Bye, oh no.

Haley, love?

So sorry, gotta run.

Okay, I'll ring you about this week.

Thanks, love you both. See you.

The afternoon better

(Meeting over)

Nan, hello.

Hello Haley darling. I'm so so sorry.

It's not too bad. I got this.

Oh, how are you though?

Thank you. I'm so sorry. Poor thing.

Let me clear this up.

Oh, Nana,, it's Sunday today isn't it?

This one.

It's felt like such a long day, hasn't it?

It has felt like a long day.

Thanks.

Sleep well.

Hello everyone, Haley from DeNure Design here. Helping you to be effortlessly elegant.

I want to welcome my new followers, and thank everyone for subscribing to this channel. So, first up, I got this gorgeous earring and necklace set. And as you can see, the first disc I've done in this warm nude tone and that's great because it goes...

Can you believe her?

Haley's business feed?

But what makes this set is really special. It's giving you that understated elegant look.

If you haven't done so already, please hit the subscribe button below because as you know, when you look this good you feel great.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Was the sister in this video boasting inappropriately. No, she was a humble servant of Jehovah kindly and patiently helping her elderly relative. But do you recall her business website and the presentation she made about her jewelry products?

She said, *"When you look this good you feel great"*. Her Christian sister was upset and took those comments and her actions to be boastful. Well, this video reminds us to think about how our words and our actions may appear to others. So, now we're going to get to the question, how do we "Put Away" inappropriate boasting?

A key point that we must always remember to help us to do just that is recorded in the book of First Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 7. First Corinthians 4 :7,

**For who makes you different from another? Indeed, what do you have that you did not receive? If, in fact, you did receive it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?**

What's the point of this scripture? We do not want to boast about ourselves, but give all credit to Jehovah, for the good that we can do. Now, some people are proud about their good looks, their popularity, their wealth, their position, their physical strength, musical ability, but remember, King David of ancient Israel had all of those assets but throughout his entire life he never became a bossful person. He remained humbled. Why?

In Psalm 113 5-8, David gave all credit to Jehovah. He said, in his case, Jehovah swooped down and took this lowly one, and raised him up to sit with nobles. And on every occasion that he had, David would always say, *"Praise Jehovah, boast about his holy name"*. Well, we like David, should boast in Jehovah. The apostle Paul encourages us to do that at first Corinthians 1:31.

**"The one who boasts, let him boast in Jehovah."**

What does that mean? It means that we boast in the privilege of knowing the true God and of being able to be used by him to accomplish his will. Now, another way that we can "Put Away", in proper boasting is to not talk about ourselves, but to acknowledge the good, and the fine qualities that our fellow workers have.

Humble and modest people don't brag about what they do, but they turn their attention to their fellow workers and see how Jehovah is using them, and blessing them, and his service. And when we do that, that creates a very peaceful happy environment.

Well, may we continue to ""Put Away"" and "keep away" inappropriate boasting, and self-praise. How? By giving praise and thanks and honour to Jehovah for our accomplishments,

and by commending our fellow workers for all the good qualities they have, and how Jehovah is using them and his service. By doing so, we will preserve our precious possession of peace with Jehovah and with our brothers.

Brother Seth Hyatt a helper to the service committee will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Put Away Peace Wreckers - Envy”.***

What is envy? Do you know? It's important that we be able to identify the symptoms of envy. Why, because envy is an expression of hatred. It's an enemy of peace and if left unchecked it can result in spiritual death.

As described in the bible, envy has two symptoms. The first is probably more familiar. An envious person wants what someone else has, it's the second symptom that makes envy especially dangerous.

An envious person not only wants what someone else has, he doesn't want the other person to have it.

Here's an example, In the first century, Jewish religious leaders envied Jesus because Jesus was much appreciated by the common people. Jesus dealt with people, including lowly ones, in a way that dignified them. As a result, he was appreciated.

The religious leaders envied him. But rather than adjusting their own way of dealing with people, they attacked Jesus verbally in an effort to destroy his good reputation. They spread malicious slander. Not only did they want what Jesus had, they didn't want Jesus to have it.

No wonder envy is listed as one of the works of the flesh in Galatians chapter 5 verse 21. It's a dangerous quality that we need to avoid. How does envy disrupt peace? Envy undermines, damages, or even destroys relationships, in the family, and in the congregation.

Consider the example of, uh, Jacob and his twelve sons. Jacob had special affection for one of his sons, Joseph. As a result, Joseph's brothers became envious. How did the envy manifest itself? What was the fruitage?

Well, they dealt treacherously with Joseph selling him into slavery. And as if that weren't bad enough, they compounded their wrong by lying to Jacob, telling him that Joseph was dead. According to the bible account Jacob refused to be comforted. He mourned Joseph for years. What a terrible consequence of envy.

It's clear that envy allows no room for love, compassion, or kindness. Those qualities go out the window. And they're replaced by qualities such as hatred, strife, fits of anger. Can envy disrupt the peace of a congregation? Consider the examples of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram. They envied Moses and Aaron in the congregation of Israel.

How did that envy manifest itself? Well, they began to speak negatively, critically of Jehovah's representatives, even accusing Moses of playing the prince, and lifting himself up above the

others. They forgot that Jehovah had put Moses and Aaron in their positions of responsibility.

How did Jehovah react to that manifestation of envy? He destroyed those three men and all who supported them. For a time, the congregation was robbed of its peace. And the account certainly provides some insight into Jehovah's view of envy.

Now by this point, you're no doubt thinking, I would never want something so badly that I would damage someone else to get it. But we're all imperfect. We have a treacherous heart and envy is insidious.

In the following dramatization, notice how envy threatens to disrupt peace.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Really? Bad news?

She's a sweetie.

Reminds me, I want to speak to her about a necklace.  
You too

You don't think she's showing off?

No, everyone thinks she's "Miss Wonderful".

She's starting to agree.

Is this just about Haley?

Seems it's all about Haley

Your tea's getting cold.

And you're changing the subject.

No, but, but you've brought this up before. What is it? You're friends. You pioneered together.

Yeah, and that's why I'm concerned.

Concern is good, but, is there just a little bit of envy in there?

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What did you notice? Well, Emily is suffering from an onset of envy. Did you notice how she questioned Haley's motives and potentially called Haley's reputation into question? It could happen to any one of us. So how do we battle and conquer envy?

By cultivating two beautiful qualities, humility, and contentment.

Let's see what the bible has to say about humility. Turn with me please to Philippians chapter 2 and we're going to begin reading in verse 3. Philippians chapter 2 verse 3.

**“Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism...”**

What is egotism, well, it's having an exaggerated opinion of oneself. Do you think that the religious leaders in Jesus day, Joseph's brothers, Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, had this affliction? Did they have an exaggerated view of themselves?

Without question.

But, it's an affliction that could affect any one of us. What is the solution?

Well Paul continues,

**“...but with humility or lowliness of mind, consider others superior to you”.**

Or consider others as more important than yourself. Now that kind of mindset allows a person to do what's stated in verse 4,

**“As you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others”.**

A “Humble” person looks out for others. He doesn't feel that he deserves more than others.

“Contentment”. A content person is satisfied with what he has. He doesn't compare his privilege or his possession with another person's privilege or possession. He's content. Humility, Contentment.

With Jehovah's help we can cultivate these beautiful qualities. Qualities that leave no room for envy. And in doing so we promote peace, inner peace. Peace in our family and peace in the congregation. And you can be sure that Jehovah appreciates that.

Brother Gaius Glockentine, a helper to the publishing committee will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Put Away Peace Wreckers - Dishonesty”***

What comes to your mind when you hear the word dishonesty. Maybe you think of Satan, the father of the lie. Or does Ananias and his wife comes to your mind? They lost their lives because of lying. We do not want to imitate such ones. We avoid lying. Is that though as far as our honesty goes?

Our holy God Jehovah wants us to be holy as well, and that is why, He urged the ancient Israelite's not to deceive others as mentioned in Leviticus 19 verse 11. Does this not add some colour to honesty? This honesty includes, and please take note of this definition,

intentionally leading someone to a wrong conclusion. For example, by twisting the truth, or by providing only certain details, we endanger our peace with others.

Why can we say so? How does dishonesty wreck peace? Peace and a peaceful relationship are built on trust. Trusting someone makes you feel safe and secure, puts you at ease. There is no peace without trust. How do we develop trust? Trust is the result of spending time together, speaking the truth with one another. We trust people that act unselfishly, and do not use crooked speech as the bible puts it.

If someone deceived us only once or was dishonest in another way, we might start to question everything they say. One single act of dishonesty may be enough. It can ruin their reputation. As bad as this is, dishonesty has the potential to create even greater damage. Dishonesty can be compared with a highly contagious virus. Dishonesty breeds dishonesty.

People who have contact with deceitful, dishonoured person, are in danger of being infected. Dishonesty might not only wreck one relationship but multiple relationships, putting the unity and peace of the whole group at risk. This reminds us of the relationship between Laban and Jacob in the bible book of Genesis. Based on the agreement with Laban, Jacob worked hard for seven years in order to marry Laban's daughter Rachel. And despite this high price that Jacob had to pay, those years seemed for him just like a few days.

Sadly, instead of Rachel, he received the older daughter Leah as wife. So now, Leah was also part of the deception. What was the result after Jacob had found out that Laban tricked him. The trust was gone. The relationship had suffered to a great degree. Dishonesty wrecked the peace in those relationships. And so, the following seven years of work for Rachel were bitter, and Laban's dishonesty emboldened him to continue in his course. He unfairly changed Jacob's wages ten times. He deceived Jacob. Because of Laban's dishonesty, the peace, and the whole family was disrupted.

Let us now continue to watch the next segment of the dramatization. We left Emily and Celia sitting in a coffee shop. Please watch carefully and notice how Emily is tempted to alter the truth.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

You Pioneer together?

I know. And that's why I'm concerned.

Concern is good but is there just a little bit of envy in there?

I thought you would understand?

I think I understand your feelings,

Not about Haley.

I haven't seen all her posts, there's nothing immoral is there?

No.

Good, that's not like her. Now, if it's a case of her being more careful, how she comes across, that's another matter. Why don't you talk to her?

Maybe.

Emily, you are a beautiful, spiritual sister. You know for years I had a bad habit comparing myself to others. My own insecurity hurt me and my closest friends.

So, you don't think I shouldn't have spoken to Celia?

Oh I'm glad you've asked Celia about it, someone you trust. What did she say?

Well, she definitely understands how I feel.

Good.

About Haley's posts?

She hasn't seen everything she has out there,  
Hmm,

She did say that Haley needs to be more careful how she comes across.

What did she suggest?

I should tell her that she needs to stop but, I'm too worked up.

Look, if Celia agrees that Haley's doing something she shouldn't, you should talk to her. You'll find the right time.

Thanks for understanding. I'm Hungry. Can you say the prayer?

Sure.

Jehovah we would like to praise you for your generosity and kindness.....

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Did you notice how Emily just heard what she wanted to hear. In talking to her husband, Jake she painted an incomplete picture. She did not relate that Celia had no opinion about the social media posts of Haley. And contrary to what she told her husband, Celia did not encourage her to tell Haley to stop. Our brothers and sisters deserve the truth, but Emily didn't relate that did she. She was dishonest. Something that can have a damaging effect as we will see later.

Jehovah wants us to "Put Away" this peace wrecker dishonesty. He wants us to always be

truthful even in small matters. Therefore, how do we "Put Away" dishonesty? Let us please turn to Ephesians chapter 4. Here, the apostle Paul reminds us of a reason to be honest. This is Ephesians chapter 4, and we want to read verse 25.

**“Therefore, now that you have put away deceit, each one of you speak truth with his neighbour because we are members belonging to one another”.**

Did you notice why we "Put Away" deceit and speak truth with one another? Paul says,

**“Because we are members belonging to one another”,**

In other words, Paul reminds us of the fact that dishonesty affects others, our brothers, our relationship with them. So then, knowing this, how can we “Put Away” dishonesty?

The answer is, by considering the consequences of dishonesty, and honesty. This will help us to do the right thing. Now, what are the consequences of dishonesty? As we've seen in the case of Laban and Jacob, it will disrupt the peace with others, and since Jehovah hates dishonesty, it will also disrupt our peace with Jehovah.

On the other hand, what are the consequences of honesty?

While this dishonesty might seem in the moment to be the easier way out, in the long run honesty will enable us to have good friends. They want to enjoy peace as well and therefore they are also searching for someone they can trust. In this way, we are like body members belonging to one another. And even more importantly, we will enjoy a good conscience, peace with God. Let us therefore "Put Away" this peace wrecking dishonesty, by sticking to the truth, even in small things.

Dear brothers and sisters, Jehovah knows that for us imperfect humans, this is not always easy. Yet, He promises to help us and to bless every step we take to build trust and peace and not to break it.

Brother Patrick LaFranca, a helper to the personnel committee will now present the next talk of the symposium,

### ***"Put Away Peace Wreckers - Harmful Gossip"***

Do you gossip, no. Well, whenever we share any news about others, that is a form of gossip. Because we are interested in others, we might say, *“I'm really concerned about brother Smith's health”* or, *“Did you hear about sister Brown's experience in the ministry”*?

Is this type of gossip harmful? Generally not. Still, we need to be careful. At First Timothy 5:13 Paul spoke out against certain sisters who were gossipers and meddlers in other people's affairs. We do not need to know and share everything we know about what's happening in other people's lives.

What if for example brother Smith did not want others to know details about his health

problem? We need to respect the privacy of others, or, what if talking about sister Brown's experience turns into, Oh, you know, she always brags about her success in the ministry. When our talk about others turns negative, it can develop into slander. Slander is making deliberate false statements that damage another's reputation.

Let's now consider how harmful gossip wrecks peace.

If you have spread harmful gossip about someone and he hears about it, when you see him the next time, what will be the look on his face? Please read with me Proverbs 25:23.

**“The north wind brings a downpour, And a gossiping tongue brings an angry face”.**

The north wind in Palestine brought dark clouds and rain. Likewise, when the one you gossiped about catches wind of this, and he sees you, he will have a gloomy angry face. There will be a storm. And a chilled relationship. Now when that happens, you may feel very badly and apologize. But, you may have damaged his reputation in a way that may be difficult to undo.

Listen to this old Jewish story,

A man went about town slandering the town's wise man. Later, the malicious gossip realized he's wrong and went to the wise man and asked for his forgiveness. He offered to do whatever was needed to make amends. The wise man made one request. He told the gossip to take a feather pillow, cut it open, and scattered the feathers to the wind.

Well, the gossip was puzzled by this request but he did as instructed. Then he returned to the wise man.

“Am I now forgiven”, he asked?

“First, go and gather all the feathers”, the wise man responded.

“But how can I, the wind has already scattered them”.

The wise man replied, “It is as difficult to repair the damage done by your words as it is to recover the feathers”.

Yes, once spoken, hurtful words cannot be retrieved. Let's not scatter feathers in the wind. If we spread rumours, it can seriously disturb the peace of many in the congregation.

We find an example of this at Acts 21 verses 20 and 21. The older men of the Jerusalem congregation explained to Paul that some Jews had spread a rumour among Jewish Christians that he had been teaching an apostasy speaking against the law of Moses.

Of course, this was a twisting of the facts. Paul never spoke disrespectfully of the law. He even went to synagogues where he reasoned on the basis of the Hebrew scriptures.

Such stories could have led some newly converted Jewish Christians to think that Paul did not respect God's arrangements and this could have seriously disrupted the peace of the congregation. In the following dramatization, notice the effect that harmful gossip can have on the peace in a congregation.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Can you believe that? Especially as a pioneer.

What kind of example is she setting?

Has Emily stopped following her?

No not yet, but she probably will.

Alistair, what do you think?

About what?

Haley's posts on QuicPost?

Is is there a problem?

Emily's told me. They all just, look at me, my clothes, my hair, my makeup, and even Celia agrees with her.

Well, it's very easy to take things out of context on social media. I know that I've done that and realized later that I was wrong.

Yeah, that's a good point.

Listen, I don't want to pull you away but, if you have a minute, would you mind giving me a hand with these boxes?

Sure.

Thanks for your help.

No problem

Jake. Back in the hall, I know you were just expressing concern, but here's something to consider. This principle is one of my favorites. It's found in Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 17.

**“The first to state his case seems right, Until the other party comes and cross-examines him”.**

I'm not sure I understand.

It just means that sometimes we only hear one side of a story and until we personally hear both, it's best not to draw any conclusions. And even then, if it's something negative, we wouldn't want to spread it any more than we want something spread about ourselves.

I guess I didn't considered that. Thanks. I'm going to apologize to Harry and Marie and have Emily talk directly to Haley.

Good idea.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Did you notice what Jake said after the elder graciously helped him reason on Proverbs 18:17. He said, I had not considered that. Yes, Jake just did not stop and think before he said those negative things about Haley. So how can we "Put Away" harmful gossip before it begins. Let's read Proverbs 15:28.

**“The heart of the righteous one meditates before answering, But the mouth of the wicked blurts out bad things”.**

So, before we say bad things about others, we need to meditate. No, this does not mean a long drawn-out process. It just requires a little thought. What thoughts could have stopped Jake from repeating his wife's negative view of Haley's post? He could have asked himself, is what I am about to say true? Is it kind, loving? How will Harry and Marie view Haley if they hear those negative things about her?

Another principle that will help us to "Put Away" harmful gossip is the so-called golden rule as recorded at Luke 6 31. Jesus said,

**“just as you want men to do to you, do the same to them”.**

This means showing empathy. Putting ourselves in the place of the other person. Asking ourselves, how would I feel if someone said this about me?

One situation that may tempt us to engage in harmful gossip is when we believe we have been wronged by someone. Instead of applying the counsel at Matthew 5:23 and 24 and chapter 18 verse 15 to talk to the person privately, we could start talking about it to others who are not involved.

Imagine if after finally talking with the person you find out he actually did not wrong you at all? You will have made the situation much worse, but, whether we are right or wrong, engaging in hurtful speech will never improve a situation. Gossip requires a speaker and a listener. Is it wrong to listen to harmful gossip? Yes, note what Proverbs 17:4 says,

**“A wicked man pays attention to hurtful speech, And a deceptive man listens to a malicious tongue”.**

Think about that, in God's eyes, if we listen to hurtful malicious speech, we too bear a heavy responsibility. By listening to the gossip we are encouraging him to go on. So, what should

you do?

Without taking on an air of self-righteousness, you could simply say, let's change the subject or I don't really feel comfortable talking about this, after all, she is not here to defend herself. And if we find that a brother or sister likes to gossip, we may find it easier to avoid harmful gossip by stopping close association with that person. Proverbs 20 verse 19 frankly counsels,

**“...Do not associate with one who loves to gossip”.**

So dear friends, let's "Put Away" harmful gossip. Doing so we will maintain our precious peace and unity.

Brother Kenneth Cook, a member of the Governing Body will now present the final talk of this symposium,

**“*Put Away Peace Wreckers - Uncontrolled anger*”.**

Satan is the main peace wrecker. The scriptures tell us that he is driven by great anger. His anger is malicious and uncontrolled. Would any sound-minded God-fearing person allow himself to reflect Satan's vicious anger? Of course not. That is why, all true servants of God, are determined to “Put Away” uncontrolled anger.

But, apart from uncontrolled anger, is all anger bad? The bible does not condemn all anger, it teaches us that anger is wrong when it is uncontrolled or unjustified. At Ephesians 4:26 God's word tells us,

**“...Be wrathful, but do not sin”.**

At times, anger may simply be a strong feeling that comes into us because of being upset or annoyed by something that we see as being wrong. That in itself is not bad, but what makes anger bad is when it fills a person's heart, and he or she just loses control of it. When that happens it may cause a person to act without a sound mind. Those who continue to lash out in anger will not gain salvation. Galatians 5:20 lists fits of anger among the works of the flesh that will prevent a person from inheriting God's kingdom. There will be no place for such ones in God's new world.

A brief review of how uncontrolled anger wrecks peace for ourselves and others will highlight why this is so. Uncontrolled anger harms both the angry person as well as those around him. We read it, Proverbs 29:22 that an angry person “stirs up strife” adding that he “commits many transgressions” one of these many sins is abusive speech. We must work to show restraint when speaking with workmates, with strangers in the ministry, with our brothers and sisters in the congregation, and with our family members.

Bad feelings must be controlled. Abusive speech, ridicule, contempt, and hateful anger are wrong. Giving vent to such feelings can destroy precious friendships with other people, and with Jehovah. Don't be like a volcano that will not quiet down.

Just like an erupting volcano will harm those living around it, so too, a person who expresses intense anger will harm those living around him. He also damages himself. In what way? Acting on anger often leads to even more aggression. So then uncontrolled anger can also affect our own peace. It can cause us to do something that we will later regret. It can have a negative effect on our health.

Medical studies show that uncontrolled anger can cause high blood pressure and respiratory problems. It can also affect the liver and pancreas. And such anger can cause digestive problems. When a person becomes angry, he or she will not always think clearly. After a fit of rage, a person may become depressed. No wonder we read at Proverbs 14 and verse 30 that,

**“A calm heart gives life to the body”.**

The disastrous consequences of uncontrolled anger are illustrated in God's word by the actions of Simeon and Levi, sons of the patriarch Jacob. When they learned that their sister Dinah was violated by a man named Shechem, we read at Genesis 34 and verse 7 that

**“...they were offended and very angry”.**

Now they had a valid reason to be angry, but they took their anger too far. It was uncontrolled.

Simeon and Levi took vengeance on Shechem. Using deception they attacked and killed every male in Shechem city. Then, along with the other sons of Jacob, they plundered it and took the women and little children captive. Dinah's tragic experience must have grieved Jacob greatly yet, he condemned his son's uncontrolled anger.

Simeon and Levi tried to justify their actions but that was not the end of the matter because Jehovah was also displeased. For this reason, Jacob later foretold that the descendants of Simeon and Levi were to be scattered among the tribes of Israel. Their uncontrolled anger brought disfavour from God, and from their father Jacob. We're wise to pay attention to such scriptural accounts and "Put Away" uncontrolled anger and all of the harm that it brings. In the following dramatization, notice how a person might be tempted to give in to anger.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Yes, Nana.

Don't forget eggs dear,

No, no. I didn't forget.

Are you sure love?

No, I won't forget.

Okay.

Okay, love you, bye.

Haley, finally I've caught you. Do you have a minute.

Hi Emily, can we talk later? I'm really struggling this morning.

Do you know, it's just we've been so busy and I've been waiting for the right moment I really just like to address it,  
It's okay. What's up?

It's just that I've noticed your posts lately on Quickposts.

What about them?

Well, do you really think that's something that a pioneer should be posting?

What you talking about?

Some people might think you're bragging.

Some people, what people. It's a business account. I've got to show off my products.

No, I get that. It's just, I don't know. It could feel like you're drawing a little too much attention to yourself.

Who would think like that, you?

No, not just me. Celia felt the same.

You spoke to Celia about this?

I didn't want to upset you, Jake said that I needed,

Jake, So everyone thinks my posts are inappropriate?

Not everyone Haley, that's not what I'm saying at all.

You are such ... Wow, I cant believe you. Who else have you spoken to? You are just such a gossip!

I'm not gossiping. I was trying to...

You are.

I'm just trying to help you, if you would just listen to me.

You're so jealous.

Oh yeah, listen to this.

And I expected more from you.

Haley. What are you talking about? Gossiping about my posts. Are you that lonely that you've got nothing better to do?

Haley, wait please.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Were you left feeling a bit tense. If so, you know what uncontrolled anger can lead to. Now that we've defined uncontrolled anger and considered what it can lead to, the next question is, how can we "Put Away" uncontrolled anger?

First, we need to recognize the danger of uncontrolled anger. Proverbs 25:28 states that,

**“As a city broken through, without a wall, is the man who cannot control his temper”.**

Strong city walls were vital in ancient times. Without them, a city would quickly fall to invaders. Likewise, so will those who cannot control their temper. By losing control, they make themselves vulnerable to the invasion of wrong thoughts, thoughts that can cause them to hurt themselves and others. Uncontrolled anger can do just that.

Next, after recognizing the danger, we must pause and then deal with the anger before it causes us to do something that we will regret. When anger grows within us, we're wise to recall what happened with Simeon and Levi. We might also recall what happened in the video dramatization that we just viewed. You see, in each case, pausing before reacting out of anger may have spared much pain and heartache. True, that is why we have this warning at Proverbs 17 and verse 14,

**“...Before the quarrel breaks out, take your leave”.**

With that in mind, each of us should ask himself, “Do I tend to jump to conclusions when I don't have all the facts. If so, can I take my leave and “Put Away” anger before it starts to build up. The inspired advice found that James chapter 1 and verse 19 will help us to do so, but only if we make a sincere and determined effort to apply what it says. Let's read that verse, James chapter 1 and verse 19. And here we find some simple steps to help us "Put Away" uncontrolled anger. It says,

**“Know this, my beloved brothers: Everyone must be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger”.**

If we ask Jehovah to help us with this, namely to be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, He will assist us to do so. He will help us to see the facts of a matter, show understanding, and then, "Put Away" uncontrolled anger.

A word of caution though. To succeed in doing our part, we must choose our associates

wisely. We could undermine all of our good work and Jehovah's help in controlling our anger, if we choose associates who are arrogant, opinionated, or quick to become angry.

Regarding someone who is disposed to rage, Proverbs chapter 22 verse 25 warns,

**“...never learn his ways...”**

Well, we've enjoyed another outstanding series of talks that should help us to keep awake, maintain fine conduct, and escape the judgment that will soon come in on this world. As this symposium has emphasized, we must do our utmost to continue to "Put Away Peace Wreckers" such as *inappropriate boasting, envy, dishonesty, harmful gossip, and uncontrolled anger*. If we have a problem with any of the peacemaking qualities that we have discussed in this symposium, seek Jehovah's help to change, and then work at it.

Our sincere efforts to "Pursue Peace" with our brothers and our sisters will influence how earnestly we are awaiting Jehovah's day and his promised new world. Yes, our genuine efforts will affect our hearts and will be noticed by our heavenly father. Then, in his great mercy, Jehovah will consider us to be as his word says, "Spotless and Unblemished" and in peace both with him and with our fellow worshippers.

Thank you brothers for helping us to strengthen our bond of unity.

Since the rebellion in Eden, peace among mankind as a whole has been lost. Despite this, Jehovah has given peace to those who trust in him. How has he done so in the past? And, how does this strengthen our faith in him today? We invite you to enjoy part one of the documentary,

**“Jehovah Guides us in the way of Peace”. (Part 1)**

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Peace must be sought above all.

Our military forces are committed to peace.

We have chosen peace.

Our wish, our prayer, is for peace.

We yearn for peace. We pray for peace.

For thousands of years humans have tried to find peace. Peace as individuals, peace as families, peace for the entire human race.

We want to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. We want to do the hard work now

so our children and our grandchildren can grow up in a peaceful world.

The future we want, opportunity and security for our families.

A rising standard of living. A sustainable peaceful planet for our kids.

All that is within our reach.

Yet, despite humans best efforts, peace has been elusive.

For millenniums, rulers and governments have tried to achieve peace through treaties, resolutions, summits, and ironically war. Our peace as humans is more fragile than ever. Man's efforts to bring about lasting peace have failed time and time again. This isn't surprising to us. Jeremiah 10:23 tells us,

**“...It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step”.**

Humans were simply not designed to rule themselves.

Good health, safety, overall well-being, these are becoming harder to find as we move further into what the bible refers to as “The Last Days”.

As long as human rule continues, disunity will continue.

It's true that global peace cannot be obtained by human efforts alone. But those who are close to God can find peace of mind right now. Isaiah 48 17-18 says,

**“17 “...I, Jehovah, am your God, The One teaching you to benefit yourself, The One guiding you in the way you should walk. 18 If only you would pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river...”.**

It's only Jehovah who has the ability to guide humans to real lasting peace.

He promises He will bring this about.

Until this happens, Jehovah continues to provide ways for us to experience peace now. How does he do that? By giving us the **“Peace of God that surpasses all understanding”**. We aren't the only ones whose “peace” has been challenged. God's word is filled with accounts of faithful servants whose peace was challenged by the dominating forces of their day. As we study and meditate on these accounts, the lessons we learn from them help us to trust in Jehovah as he guides us to peace.

Understanding how these accounts relate to Jehovah's purpose to bring peace by means of his Messianic Kingdom gives us confidence that his purpose never fails, and he will support and guide us on into the future.

One of Jehovah's prophets who learned this lesson firsthand was Jonah. Jonah lived in the 9th century BCE. Jehovah assigned Jonah to go to Nineveh, a city of the Assyrian empire. Based on what he knew about Nineveh, Jonah considered this to be an intimidating and threatening assignment.

The Assyrians are known as fierce warriors and Nineveh itself is later described as a city of bloodshed, so you can understand Jonah's trepidation when Jehovah asks him to proclaim a judgment message against this imposing city and its pagan inhabitants.

In an attempt to find peace, Jonah decides to go far away from Nineveh and boards a boat headed for Tashish.

Tashish is generally associated with modern-day Spain, so from Israel, this is the complete opposite direction of Nineveh. Jonah found anything but peace. Look, By the god's. Furl the sail.

Now, this was no ordinary storm. It was so severe that the ship was in danger being wrecked.

"Captain, we're taking on too much water".

The storm is from the gods, Baal. Eshmun.

The crew cried out to their gods but Jonah knew the true source of the storm. And now he accepts personal responsibility for the situation.

*"Lift me up, and throw me into the sea, and the sea will calm down for you, for I know this is because of me that this violent storm has come upon you".*

Can you imagine the courage it took for Jonah to make this request? He had no way of knowing if Jehovah would save him, but he did not want others to perish on his account. In his mercy, Jehovah spares Jonah's life.

How am I still alive? What will become of me?

When faced with a difficult assignment, Jonah got up to run away from Jehovah to Tashish. Jonah's conscience had to bother him. He had to be questioning his decision. He tried to take matters into his own hands, tried to find his own piece. Where does he find himself? In the belly of a fish, yet he calls to Jehovah in a moment of despair.

*"Oh Jehovah, out of the depths of the grave I cried to you for help. Please, hear my voice. What I have vowed, I will pay."*

Jonah could have reasoned that this was the end of his assignment as Jehovah's prophet. After all, he did disobey direction, so likely he was surprised to hear the word of Jehovah come to him a second time.

*"Jonah, get up go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim to her the message that I tell you".*

*"Yes, yes, thank you".*

At first Jonah trusted in himself and didn't understand that Jehovah would protect him from

the violent Assyrians, but after being given a second chance, what happens? Well, then he puts aside his human concerns and looks to Jehovah for protection.

*“In just 40 days more, Nineveh will be overthrown. Jehovah, the true God, has spoken. This city will be destroyed. Nineveh will be overthrown. The true God will overthrow Nineveh. The true God has spoken”.*

Eventually the king himself repents and orders everyone in Nineveh to do the same. Jonah learned a valuable lesson from this experience. By originally running away from Nineveh he chose to trust in himself rather than putting his trust in Jehovah.

*“Are you Jonah”? “I am”. “Mommy says you saved us”. “No, Jehovah saved you. I was just, I was just a messenger”.*

Jonah learned that without a doubt. Jehovah protects those who trust and obey him. If Jehovah asked you to do something, if he's asked me to do something, if he's leading us, he absolutely will guide us through it. Jonah's account proves this.

Although the Ninevites were spared because they repented, that's true, Assyria later returned to its evil, wicked ways. About a century after Jonah's judgment message, King Sennacherib of Assyria brought his armies against the cities of Judah, including the city he wanted most, Jerusalem.

King Hezekiah of Judah was an outstanding king who held fast to Jehovah. From the beginning of his reign, he proved to be zealous for true worship. Not only in Judah, but in all of Israel. Hezekiah had done so much to stand up for pure worship, yet now he is faced with the prospect of a siege against Jerusalem by Sennacherib's armies.

Hezekiah agrees to pay to Sennacherib tribute in return for peace. Yet, the armies continue their conquests as Sennacherib and his men besieged the strongly fortified city of Lakish. From here, Sennacherib sends a part of his army, as well as military chiefs to Jerusalem in an attempt to demand surrender. The spokesman for the group was the Raptureka who spoke Hebrew fluently. He loudly ridiculed Hezekiah and taunted Jehovah, boasting that Jehovah was no match against king Sennacherib.

Imagine what these soldiers must have been thinking. Sennacherib's armies were on a war path taking city after city. To Hezekiah, this was a defining moment. He had to decide if he would trust in himself, or trust in Jehovah.

*“My brothers, we must remember that Jehovah is fully able to rescue us just as he has in times past”.*

God's word...

*“King Hezekiah, will you not even now face the facts? We are trapped. The Assyrians are at our gate, and you cling to the belief that nothing bad will happen! You will destroy everything you so hope to preserve. The temple, Jerusalem, our very lives”.*

*“Shebna, I’m not blind to the dangers that we face. I too am afraid. But if Jehovah allows Jerusalem to fall, so be it. How can we give up what belongs to Jehovah?”*

So, as a man of faith, Hezekiah focused on Jehovah’s ability to save his people despite Sennacherib’s continued advances toward Jerusalem.

*“I’m curious about this king of yours. Who does he think will come to save him from me? Jehovah your God is weak. He will cringe before my god Asher”.*

Hezekiah remained determined to trust in Jehovah. This decision required a tremendous amount of faith, especially with more than 185 000 Assyrian soldiers headed towards Jerusalem. Instead of trusting in himself, he continued to look for Jehovah as the source of true peace, even as an attack seemed imminent. And Jehovah again showed just how insignificant human rulers are in comparison to him.

Hezekiah learned that when a way out seems impossible, trust in Jehovah always leads to success. Jehovah rewarded that trust with victory over the Assyrians. This is a lesson we can apply now and in the near future.

There may be situations where true worshippers seem trapped, but never forget, Jehovah is all-powerful. He’s leading his people, and we can follow his guidance with full confidence. Jehovah will protect those who trust in him at Armageddon.

Jerusalem remains safe against attack for the time being but, peaceful conditions didn’t last long.

Hezekiah’s son Manasseh did what was detestable in the eyes of Jehovah. He brought back vile worship and personally took its vilest practices to extremes, even putting a carved image of a false god right inside Jehovah’s temple. So, here you have a king who’s supposed to be protecting the people from idolatrous influence doing the exact opposite, building altars to false gods. He even went so far as to pass his own sons through the fire, sacrificing them to these gods. The peace with God that Hezekiah worked so hard to achieve for the nation is now reversed by the actions of his son. Because of this, Jehovah punished Manasseh severely. He allowed the king of Assyria to take him captive to Babylon. While in captivity, Manasseh ultimately repented. He humbled himself and he stayed faithful right to the end of his life.

Grandfather.

We can imagine him impressing the importance of faithfulness to Jehovah on his young grandson Josiah.

Listen to me, Jehovah is holy and you must serve him the way he wants us to. All other gods are powerless.

Yet, in spite of all this, the people still thought that they could serve Jehovah and Baal. So after becoming king, Josiah started a campaign against idolatry.

*I've seen this cheaper."*

*"Take it or leave it".*

*"We start here. This is what we will do to every false god in the land".*

He tore down altar used for false worship, sacred polls, images, and statues. He was intent on cleansing the land of idolatry. Now, he showed remarkable courage to stand up for true worship at a time when few were doing so. There's no doubt this was a difficult task. At times he may have even wondered if he was doing the right thing. It's possible Jehovah provided Josiah with assurance from the prophet Jeremiah.

*"This is what Jehovah says, look, a son named Josiah will be born to the house of David and he will sacrifice on you the priests of the high places, those making sacrificial smoke on you. And he will burn human bones on you".*

That prophecy, made over 300 years earlier, confirmed that Josiah was the one prophesied to act against false worship.

This may have given Josiah even greater incentive and courage to continue his campaign which now included repairing the temple. These actions contributed to the peaceful conditions that elevated pure worship.

Josiah did so much to restore pure worship. That is why we love him. Yet, the people's heart condition remained polluted, so the nation required severe discipline.

Jeremiah prophesied the conquest of the Babylonians against Judah. "All this land will be reduced to ruins, and this land, and its inhabitants, will have to serve the king of Babylon for 70 years". Daniel himself may have heard Jeremiah speak those words, and he certainly saw it come true as he and his family were exiled to Babylon.

Talk about peace being interrupted. Daniel was a young Judean prince, taken from his homeland, separated from his family, but, being chosen to receive special training in the court of king Nebuchadnezzar, that presented another set of challenges. The entire way of Babylonian life was contrary to a Daniel growing up in Judah, but Daniel was determined not to pollute himself with foods Jehovah would not approve of, and Jehovah blessed Daniel's determination to be faithful as he was selected to serve as one of king Nebuchadnezzar's wise men.

Nebuchadnezzar was a warrior king intent on building a great empire. After he officially took the throne in 624 BCE, his domain grew. With each conquest, Babylon became an epicenter of trade and commerce. Nebuchadnezzar undertook huge building projects throughout the city which made the city seem impregnable.

Imagine the sense of security the inhabitants of Babylon must have felt locked safely behind the city's walls. Nebuchadnezzar attributed the prosperity and security all around him to the power of his false gods, the chief of these false gods was Marduk, the god of war. Yet, these

false gods and their priests would prove worthless.

One night, king Nebuchadnezzar had a strange dream.

*Call the wise men.*

*Oh king, may you live on forever. Relate the dream to your servants. We will tell the interpretation.*

*No, if you don't make the dream known to me, along with the interpretation, you'll be dismembered, and your houses will be turned to public latrines.*

*There is not a man on earth who can do what the king demands. What the king is asking is difficult. No one exists who can tell this to the king, except, except the gods.*

*"Seize them! Kill them!"*

*Jerah.*

*You're in danger.*

*Why, what happened.*

*I didn't hear everything, but the wise men anger the king. Everyone's to be executed by dawn.*

*Bring Hananiah, Michelle, and Azariah here. I'll try to learn more.*

*This edict to kill all the wise men would also include Daniel and his companions. So, let's look at this from Daniel's perspective. Here he is young man in a foreign land serving in the court of one of the most powerful and violent man alive. And that man is now demanding that someone in effect read his mind. "Tell me my dream and tell me what it means".*

*Oh king. Interpretations belong to my God Jehovah. He knows your dream and what it means.*

*Well, where is your God". Where.*

*I believe that He... I know that He will reveal it to me, please, give me time.*

Daniel is not acting on previous experience. He hasn't received interpretations of dreams from Jehovah, instead, he is acting on faith. Faith that he had learned by studying the sacred books of his time. These books likely included the inspired writings of Moses and David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other prophets.

Oh, we can only imagine Daniel pouring over these scrolls, opening up his heart to Jehovah, begging Jehovah to give him wisdom and understanding. He loved it. There's no doubt that as Daniel studied these accounts, his faith was strengthened, and his bond with Jehovah drew

even closer. But even though Daniel knew nothing of king Nebuchadnezzar's dream, he was fully convinced that Jehovah would reveal the dream and its interpretation and prove to be Daniel's salvation.

Do we know exactly which accounts Daniel was able to draw from at this time? It's impossible to say for a certainty but, we do know he had access to the books, he references the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Daniel could see how Jehovah blessed faithful obedient men in the past, so by asking Nebuchadnezzar for time, he wasn't looking to buy himself another day of life. He was allowing Jehovah to reward his faith by revealing the dream to him.

Daniel strikes a balance here. Although he is confident that Jehovah will reveal the dream to him, he isn't casual in the way he handled the situation. He did what any God-fearing man would do here. He approached Jehovah in prayer.

*Oh Jehovah, surely you didn't bring us here just to die. What will people say? We told them that you are the God of the heavens, the only God who can reveal secrets. Please vindicate yourself.*

*I found a man, from the exiles of Judah, who could make known the interpretation to the king. I know who he is, can you really make known to me the dream that I saw and its interpretation?*

*There is a God in the heavens who is a revealer of secrets, and he has made known to king Nebuchadnezzar what is to happen in the final part of the days. This is your dream.*

*You saw an immense image. That image was standing in front of you. You yourself are the head of gold, but after you, another kingdom will rise, inferior to you. Then another kingdom, a third one of copper that will rule over the whole earth. As for the fourth kingdom, it will be strong like iron. The kingdom will be divided, and as the toes of the feet were partly of iron, and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong and partly fragile.*

This took a tremendous amount of faith and courage on the part of Daniel. Now, we may find our peace threatened, our very lives might be on the line. In that moment, we can turn to Jehovah God in prayer, opening up our hearts, confident that He will support us. Like both Daniel and Jonah, we've been given an assignment to proclaim a message. This requires courage to speak out boldly concerning Jehovah's judgments against those who oppose his sovereignty. Both of these prophets are excellent examples of Jehovah backing those who trust in him.

Jehovah will always be with us as long as we have faith in him. When we face situations that seem impossible, as in the case with Hezekiah, we have the ability to tap into the most powerful force there is.

As this system comes to a close, we will find ourselves in situations that test our courage, and threaten our peace. We will have to stand up for pure worship just like Josiah, and this will be

unpopular but, with Jehovah on our side, we can face those situations with confidence. He's all-powerful and He's going to help us through it.

Now, here's the interesting thing. Some of the prophecies that Daniel recorded applied not only to the future of the Babylonian empire, but also, outline world events to our day and beyond. And these events are being fulfilled right before our very eyes.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What a motivating presentation. Even when our peace is threatened, we can focus on how our integrity relates to Jehovah's purpose. And we can endure with joy.

We look forward to watching part two of this important consideration during the final session of our convention.

Now let's sing together song number 130 entitled,

### ***“Be forgiving”***

That's song number 130.

### **SATURDAY AFTERNOON - PART TWO**

After watching the 2020 Regional Convention in her native language of Chippewa, sixteen-year-old Lisa from Malawi stated, “With this convention, I saw how Jehovah fulfilled his promise at Hebrews chapter 13 verse 5.

**“I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you”.**

Many have made similar appreciative comments after watching the convention in their language. You have made kind donations online at [donate.jw.org](http://donate.jw.org) and by other means.

Thank you for these donations that support our extensive translation efforts.

Earlier in our program, we discussed five "Peace Wreckers" that we should "Put Away". But, what can we do if peace has been disturbed? Can it be restored, and if so, How? We invite you to pay careful attention to the following four-part symposium.

Brother John Ekren, a helper to the coordinators committee will start us off with the talk,

### ***“Seek Peace and Pursue It - By not quickly taking offense***

The title of this series of four talks is, “Seek Peace and Pursue It”, and it's based on First Peter chapter 3 and verse 11. Let's read that together. First Peter chapter 3 and verse 11.

**“ Let him turn away from what is bad and do what is good; let him seek peace and**

## **pursue it”.**

Yes, we have to "Pursue Peace" and pursuit requires effort. Have you ever had to chase a piece of paper that was in your hands and got blown away by the wind? And just when you get to it, the wind blows it away again, and again. It can really take quite some effort to retrieve and get that paper back in your hands. Just standing there and watching the paper blow further and further away is not going to get it back.

Well, peace can be a lot like that paper. At some point it can get blown away and we have to then chase, or pursue it to get that piece back again.

This series of talks will help us to "Pursue Peace" in four ways. By not quickly taking offense, by apologizing, by forgiving freely, and by using our gift of speech wisely.

Let's consider our first way to "Pursue Peace" avoid quickly taking offense. Now, because we are imperfect, we might misjudge others and quickly take offense. Notice that we say "quickly take offense"? That's an important word. We need to avoid jumping to conclusions quickly, before we actually have the facts.

Even faithful men like Jesus apostles have taken offense too quickly. You may recall the time that Jesus and his apostles they were looking for lodging in a Samaritan village. Now, the Samaritans in that village rudely denied them lodging. At Luke chapter 9 verses 54-56, the apostles James and John say to Jesus, "Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven and annihilate them". But Jesus rebukes them for their rash and rather violent suggestion.

Think of the serious consequences had Jesus yielded to the violent temper of James and John? The Samaritans could have become prejudiced against the kingdom message, instead, Jesus pursues a peaceful solution. The account says they simply went to a different village.

Now, does this mean we're saying I can never take offense? No, you may have a legitimate cause for complaint. The key point is that we should not "quickly" draw conclusions before we hear all the facts. Proverbs chapter 18 and verse 13 says,

**"When anyone replies to a matter before he hears the facts, it is foolish, and humiliating".**

In the following dramatization, know what helps one sister to overlook an offense.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

And I expected more from you.

Haley, what are you talking about?

Gossiping, about my posts. You that lonely, you've got nothing better to do?

Haley, wait please. I don't know what's happening.

Did you talk to Emily about my posts?

What, yes we did..

So you gossiped about me.

No, I would...

I looked up to you. You're supposed to be the mature one and you're just like Emily, busy running your mouth

Haley, look, I can see you're upset, but trust me, this is a huge misunderstanding. I love you. I would never, ever say anything behind your back, so please, calm down.

Sometimes I just feel so alone. Between Nana and work and then knowing all of you are talking about me.

I promise, that's not what happened. You're just really tired and overwhelmed, so why don't we just slow things down a little.

You know, meetings always make me feel better, even on my worst days. Why don't we go inside, clean up a little, enjoy the program together. Then afterwards, we can all talk. I promise it'll be okay.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Haley really was upset. She'd already concluded that she was being gossiped about by everyone. If we find ourselves like Haley, feeling offended, how can we avoid quickly taking offense? Well, we must stop and think.

Let's read Ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 9 for some very good advice in these situations, Ecclesiastes chapter 7 and verse 9,

**"Do not be quick to take offense for the taking of offense lodges in the bosom of fools"**

Like Celia said in the parking lot to Haley. *"Please calm down"*. So in those situations we need to think about what you know, and just as importantly, what you don't know.

Now, you know what you were told happened but what was really said? In the video, Haley quickly believed what she was told. She did not even ask Celia what she really said. Or, you may know what was said but do you know what was really meant by it?

Haley asked, *"Did you talk about my posts"*? And Celia said yes, and immediately Haley assumed the worst. Or perhaps we misjudged the person who hurt us. Haley misjudged Celia on the spot by saying, *"You're just as bad as Emily"*. She had not even heard from Celia yet.

Haley said to Celia that she was the mature one. The one she looked up to and yet, she was quick to believe the worst about her.

Haley had not stopped and really thought about what she was thinking and saying. Perhaps she was having a hard day. Well, Celia really set a fine example for us. Even though Haley spoke harshly to her, Celie was calm and listened to Haley. As Haley explained how she was feeling lonely, dealing and caring for her grandmother. You can see the love and concern that Celie had for Haley even though just moments before she had spoken really harshly to her.

Well, besides taking time to think things through, we also need to remember that it is Jehovah's opinion of us that matters the most.

Now that's an important point especially when we deal with misunderstandings or false accusations.

Think about it, Jehovah is an eyewitness to everything. To illustrate that, I want you to imagine you had a traffic accident. Now, you were just sitting at the stop sign but another car ran straight into you. The police come and the person that ran into you says that you ran into them and the police believed them. You take the matter to court. The judge listens as the other person says that you ran into them, however, before you can say anything, the judge says, "No, that is not what happened. I was there walking on the sidewalk across the street that day and I saw the whole thing.

While it's extremely unlikely that you can go to court and expect the judge for your case to have been an eyewitness, this does illustrate though the peace of mind that we can have knowing that Jehovah is an eyewitness to all that happens.

So when falsely accused, or we have a misunderstanding that we cannot seem to clear up, it is of great comfort for us to know that Jehovah was there that day and saw the whole thing.

We don't need to take offense at every negative thing that is said or done around us. Or feel we have to defend ourselves as right on every occasion. We would surely wear out emotionally and probably not have very many friends. We should be willing to overlook minor transgressions.

Let's look at Proverbs chapter 19 and verse 11. Proverbs chapter 19 and verse 11, What can help us?

**“The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger, And it is beauty on his part to overlook an offense”.**

So, can you overlook an offense? As the proverb said, that “is beauty” on our part. If not, and you have a serious cause for complaint, handle matters according to Jehovah's direction. Show insight, slow down any anger, think carefully, and listen patiently to make sure you clearly have all the facts before you become offended or take action.

Remember that piece of paper that you had in your hands and got blown away by the wind? What if it was a hundred dollar bill? Well, you would make every effort to pursue it, and get it back, because it's valuable. Our peace with our brothers is far more valuable than paper money. When our peace with our brothers or sisters is blown away by misunderstandings,

mistakes, or sin, then you should "Pursue Peace", try hard to get it back.

Yes, we glorify God and promote peace when we avoid quickly taking offense.

Brother Ralph Walls, a helper to the personnel committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Seek Peace and Pursue It - By Apologizing”.***

I am so sorry, it's my fault, please forgive me. No matter how we phrase it, it can be difficult to apologize. Why is that so challenging? There are many reasons. We may fear confrontation, blame, or rejection. Perhaps we feel embarrassed and we're too proud to apologize. We may reason, apologizing will not undo the blunder I've already made. And it may even be that we are angry.

This is such a matter of concern that in July 2000, the California state legislature in the United States passed a bill designed to relieve people of liability if they express sympathy to an individual who was injured in an accident in which they themselves were involved. It was noted that people often hesitate to extend an apology out of concern that it could be construed in court as an admission of guilt.

The bible provides an account of a faithful servant, the Apostle Paul, who was a good example of one who apologized. The account is in the book of Acts chapter 23. The setting, a Roman military officer wanted to know why Paul was being accused by the Jews. So he brought Paul to the Jewish chief priests and commanded the San'he·drin in the high court to assemble. As we read Acts chapter 23 verses 1 through 5 together, we can't help but be impressed by Paul's boldness as he stands for what is right, but, at the same time, please take note of his humility. Acts 23.

**“Looking intently at the San'he·drin, Paul said: “Men, brothers, I have behaved before God with a perfectly clear conscience down to this day.” 2 At this the high priest An·a·ni'as ordered those standing by him to strike him on the mouth. 3 Then Paul said to him: “God is going to strike you, you whitewashed wall. Do you sit to judge me according to the Law and at the same time violate the Law by commanding me to be struck?” 4 Those standing by said: “Are you insulting the high priest of God?” 5 And Paul said: “Brothers, I did not know he was high priest. For it is written, ‘You must not speak injuriously of a ruler of your people’””.**

Paul immediately admitted his error. What he had said, that the one appointed as judge should not resort to violence, was right, yet, he apologized.

In the following dramatization, we will see an older sister applying the inspired words of Titus chapter 2 verses 3 through 5. In order to advise younger sisters to be sound in mind. We will also observe how one of the younger sisters avoids further problems and pursues peace by humbly apologizing.

## **VIDEO STARTS**

I don't know how this happened but Haley, I'm sorry. It hurts me to see you so upset.

I can't believe you two.

First, what you heard was not what I said.

Well, I thought that's how you felt, and even if I got that part wrong, all this drama.

No stop. Come on girls, Haley, come closer. Love is patient and kind. It's not jealous, it doesn't become provoked even when things become difficult. So, what are we going to do?

I just thought, if, No, I'm sorry Haley. I'm sorry, I shouldn't have judged you so harshly. I shouldn't have judged you at all, and I'm sorry for dragging you into this by twisting what you said.

It's okay, things happen, I've been on both ends.

I should never have spoken that way to you, Celia, I mean to either of you.

I've got to get home to Nana.

I'll call you tomorrow.

Bye.

## **VIDEO ENDS**

The older sister apologized, even though she was not in the wrong. She also urged the other two sisters to make peace. It takes courage, humility, and determination to apologize. It's interesting to note what's stated at Philippians chapter 2 and verse 3.

**“Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior to you”.**

That means our determined effort is not to win an argument, which could be contentious. Nor do we want to start a discussion with the primary thought being that we are in the right. That could mean that we are self-concerned or egotistical. Rather, in harmony with the principle of that scripture, we want to act with humility. Our aim should be to "Pursue Peace". Even if we think the other person is being unreasonable, we apologize. Why is it so important to do so? Because that is what makes our worship to Jehovah acceptable.

At Matthew chapter 5 verses 23 and 24 Jesus makes it very clear.

**“If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your**

**gift”.**

One bible scholar describes the scene this way. The worshiper has entered the temple. He has passed through its series of courts. The Court of the Gentiles, the Court of the Women, the Court of the Men, beyond that there lay the Court of the Priests into which the layman could not go. The worshiper is standing at the rail ready to hand over his living animal to the priest. At that critical moment, the worshiper remembers that his brother has something against him. What is he to do?

“Leave your gift there in front of the altar”,

Jesus explains,

“And go away”.

What does Jesus say is more important than offering up a sacrifice?

**“First, make peace with your brother, then when you have come back, offer up your gift”.**

The expression rendered, *“Make your peace”*, means to reconcile. Jesus words teach a crucial lesson. Reconciliation or Peace comes before sacrifice. The way we treat fellow worshipers has a direct bearing on our relationship with God. First John 4 and verse 20 pointedly says,

**“For the one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.”**

If we find ourselves in a situation when we have offended a fellow worshiper, we want to apply Jesus counsel. We want to take the initiative to approach our brother or sister. We may need to acknowledge their hurt feelings. We may also need to ask, What can I do to make amends? Often a sincere apology is all that is needed. Although, our worship today, no longer includes animal sacrifices, what Jesus was teaching emphasizes that there is a connection between peace with our brother and acceptable worship to God.

When two humans are at odds, there may be a measure of blame on both sides. Since both are imperfect and prone to air, this usually calls for mutual concessions. Even if only the one apologizing is right, the issue is not so much who is right and who is wrong, but, who will take the initiative to make peace.

When the Apostle Paul heard that the Christians in Corinth were taking fellow servants of God to secular courts over personal differences, he said, Why do you not rather let yourself be wrong? Why do you not rather let yourself be defrauded?

The principle is clear. Peace among fellow believers is more important than proving who is right and who is wrong. Keeping this in mind makes it easier to apologize for wrong that someone thinks we've committed against him or her. A heartfelt apology can open the way to

a constructive conversation. It can minimize problems, and restore peace.

Brother Leonard Myers, a helper to the writing committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

***“Seek Peace and Pursue It - By Forgiving Freely”.***

It's a simple fact that, to be at peace with others, we must be willing to forgive. Please notice two examples.

A father and his teenage daughter didn't get along. Minor disagreements often developed into shouting matches. Finally the tension got so bad that the daughter was asked to leave the house. Eventually, she recognized that she was at fault and asked for her father's forgiveness, but instead of overlooking her mistakes, her father rejected her efforts. He was unwilling to extend forgiveness to his own daughter.

Now, let's contrast that with another example.

A blameless man was condemned to die for a crime he didn't commit. Shortly before he died, the innocent man stated, “Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing”.

Those words of Jesus are recorded at Luke chapter 23 verse 34, and he may have been referring to the Roman soldiers who drove the nails into his hands and feet and, who didn't know who he really was.

Or, Jesus may have had in mind some in the crowd who demanded his execution, but, would later exercise faith in him.

The point is that Jesus was willing to forgive freely. How do we measure up with regard to forgiveness? Are we like Jesus willing to forgive others freely, or, at times, do we tend to be more like the man who was unwilling to forgive.

Granting forgiveness isn't always easy. Imperfection exerts a powerful influence over us, sometimes robbing us of compassion. When someone hurts us we may become resentful, or hold a grudge, and perhaps some of us were taught not to forgive others. Little wonder that cultivating a peaceful forgiving spirit can be difficult. Still, the bible encourages us to forgive freely.

Let's consider another example of forgiveness in the man Job. And we're familiar with his trials, loss of his possessions and ten children, a loathsome disease, and his wife told him to curse God and die.

Three companions heard about Job's calamities and they agreed to go comfort him. Job chapter 2 verse 13 states that when they arrived, they sat with him for seven days and seven nights, but they didn't say a word to him. Now, maybe that was a good thing because when they finally opened their mouths, they deeply hurt Job with their baseless accusations. But notice something interesting about this account.

Please turn with me to Job chapter 42. At the end of Job's trials, Jehovah asked Job to do something regarding these false accusers. Notice Jehovah's words there. Job 42, the b portion of verse 8,

**“...And my servant Job will pray for you. I will surely accept his request not to deal with you according to your foolishness...”**

Did you notice, after all the false accusations, Jehovah asked Job to pray for the men who had tormented him. Now, would Job tell Jehovah, Jehovah, after what they said to me. I'm not going to forgive them. Would Job be resentful? Notice the latter portion of verse 9.

**“And Jehovah accepted Job's prayer”.**

Job followed Jehovah's instructions. What was the result of Job's integrity and his forgiving spirit? Verse 10,

**“After Job had prayed for his companions, Jehovah removed Job's tribulation and restored his prosperity. Jehovah gave him double what he had before”.**

The account goes on to say that Job had 10 more children, he lived for 140 more years, and verse 17 states,

**“Finally Job died, after a long and satisfying life”.**

Job was blessed for his forgiving spirit and he set a good example for us to forgive freely. In the following dramatization with Celia and Haley, notice why Haley finally decides to forgive freely.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

*Emily sends Haley a text message - Hi Haley, Can you join me on a study tomorrow? (Haley ignores the text).*

Emily leaves a voicemail - Hey it's me. Been thinking of you. Great broadcast. How did you like the new original song? Give us a call.

Haley replies to Emily's text message – Sorry. I cant come.

(Back with Celia)  
I wish she would give it a rest.

Sorry?  
Oh, nothing.

Sorry, it's just Emily for the millionth time.

What's the problem, love?

There's no problem. It's just...

Difficult to let her back in.

Not that simple.  
Not that simple?

You want to forgive,

...but, not get burned again.

Keep in mind a chance to forgive is a chance to imitate Jehovah. We wouldn't want to miss that opportunity.

I never thought about it like that.

Think back to a time when you wanted forgiveness. When it meant everything. How did it feel?

You feel awful that you've let everyone down.

(Your very precious... ...Thank you.)

Then they forgive you, And suddenly, everything's okay.

(Haley phones Celia)

Emily, Sorry I haven't been back to you. I have plans for tomorrow?

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What good reasoning on the part of Celia. Did you notice the expression that really touched Haley's heart? A chance to forgive is a chance to imitate Jehovah. We wouldn't want to miss that opportunity. So when we've been wronged, we don't want to miss the opportunity to imitate Jehovah by forgiving freely.

Please notice how this is highlighted at Colossians chapter 3 verse 13. When we consider Job's example, remember that Jehovah instructed him to pray for his companions, and that helped Job display a forgiving spirit. We'll notice here what Jehovah instructs us to do, Colossians 3 13.

**“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely, even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same”**

The Greek verb used here for “Freely Forgive” is related to a word often rendered undeserved kindness, or favour. When used in the sense of forgiving, this verb conveys the idea of doing so freely, generously. Just as when you out of generosity give a gift to someone, Jehovah requires that we freely forgive others in imitation of him.

Did you notice the end of the verse, "You must also do the same". Now, if the offense is minor it's best to overlook it first Corinthians chapter 13 verse 5 states that "love does not keep account of the injury" and Proverbs 19 verse 11 tells us that "it is beauty to overlook an offense", however, if we feel that we need to talk to our brother or sister about an offense that was committed against us, what's the best way to handle that?

First, we should ask Jehovah in prayer for his guidance. Then, with the brothers good qualities in mind, graciously tell him that we want to make peace. Listen carefully and empathically. We shouldn't interrupt even if we don't agree with everything being said. It may be that his viewpoint is wrong, but it is his viewpoint. Then, when it's our turn to speak, we want to be gracious, tell the brother what we appreciate about him. Apologize for any part that we played in the misunderstanding. If our humble efforts result in good, thank Jehovah. If they don't, keep asking Jehovah for guidance while we look for another opportunity to make peace. When we truly forgive, we make a heartfelt decision to let go of resentment. And what peace that can bring us.

Now, forgiving doesn't mean that we approve of a wrong action, consider it unimportant, or pretend it didn't happen. Also, if we've been treated unjustly and have a cause for complaint, we do what we can to "Pursue Peace" and resolve the matter, and then we confidently leave it in Jehovah's hands.

Brothers and sisters, what will you take away from this consideration? I'm sure you'll agree that it can be a challenge at times to forgive, but rather than be like the man we spoke of earlier, who refused to forgive his own daughter, may we follow the examples of Jehovah, Jesus, Job, and Haley, by forgiving freely, generously.

Remember, a chance to forgive, is a chance to imitate Jehovah, and we wouldn't want to miss that opportunity. May all of us "Pursue Peace" by being willing to forgive freely.

Brother Garrett Losch, a member of the Governing Body, will now present the final talk of this symposium,

### **"Seek Peace and Pursue It - By Using our Gift of Speech Wisely".**

Why is it challenging to use our gift of speech wisely? Because something powerful constantly works against us. What is it? Imperfection. The tongue is powerful. It can do much good but because of imperfection it can also cause much harm. This thought is well expressed in the bible book of Proverbs. For example, Proverbs 12:18 says,

**"Thoughtless speech is like the stabs of a sword, but the tongue of the wise is a healing".**

And Proverbs 18:21 states,

**"Death and life are in the power of the tongue, those who love to use it will eat its fruitage".**

Words have power so we need to be careful about what we say, and how we say it. Perhaps you can recall when someone spoke unkindly to you, and hurt you deeply. On the other hand, thoughtful speech can mend an aching heart, and heal friendships.

Because of imperfection, we all have difficulty controlling our tongue. This was true even of the first century disciple James. He humbly acknowledged the challenge that all humans face in the third chapter of his inspired letter. Notice how James described this in James chapter 3 verses 3 to 6 and verse 8.

**“If we put bridles in the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we guide also their whole body. 4 Look also at ships: Although they are so big and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder, wherever the man at the helm is inclined to go. 5 So, too, the tongue is a small part of the body, and yet it makes great brags. See how small a fire it takes to set a great forest ablaze! 6 The tongue is also a fire. The tongue represents a world of unrighteousness among our body members, for it defiles all the body and sets the whole course of life on fire, and it is set on fire by Ge·hen'na”.**

And verse 8

**“But no human can tame the tongue. It is unruly and injurious, full of deadly poison”.**

In addition to inherited imperfection, our upbringing could also be a factor. The Watchtower of September 15 2006 page 21 paragraph 6 states,

*“In addition to human imperfection family environment plays a role in the misuse of the tongue. Some people were raised in homes where parents were not open to any agreement without self-control fierce.”*

Despite such challenges it is possible for each one of us to seek peace and pursue it. Jesus set a good example in using the gift of speech wisely. He used his speech to encourage and comfort others. While on earth, he applied to himself the words founded Isaiah chapter 61 verse 1 which states the following,

**“The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, Because Jehovah anointed me to declare good news to the meek. He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives, And the wide opening of the eyes to the prisoners”.**

As recorded at Matthew 12:20, Matthew applies the words of Isaiah 42:1-3 to Jesus. In Matthew 12:20 he stated,

**“No bruised reed will he crush, and no smoldering wick will he extinguish, until he brings justice with success”.**

We learn an important lesson from such verses. Jesus recognized that the tongue has power. Power to harm and power to heal.

The Watchtower of February 15 2015, page 13 and paragraph 11 thus stated that quote,

*“Jesus showed discernment in all he said and did”.*

Can we imitate Jesus more closely? If so, what will you do the next time an opportunity arises for you to use your gift of speech wisely. In the following dramatization, notice how the wise use of the tongue helps to heal things.

**VIDEO STARTS**

*(TWO MONTHS LATER)*

*I just need a little help. What do you think I should do for my winter collection?*

*Well, I don't know, but I love what you did with your new stuff, especially, this set.*

*Oh, thanks. You've all given me so many great ideas.*

Yeah, but you make them okay.

Yeah.

OK girls?

You love it.

Oh, this is my song.

Mine too.

“You have a treasured place, in Jehovah's house, He will help you out. And you have....”

Oh, I sing like a crow.

No, stop.

I'll tell you what else, its her song, but you'd better have earplugs handy.

Veronica. Oh my goodness, she's in love with her own voice.

Every sit near her at the hall, like, she's the only one that can sing. And she is such a deva.

My first thought, Oh no, here we go again.

I've seen this movie before.

You don't think she's showing off?

Is this just about Haley?

Seems it's all about Haley.

Is there just a little bit of envy in there?

I've lived it.

If it's a case of her being more careful, how she comes across, that's another matter.

What did she suggest?

I should tell her that she needs to stop.

Can you believe that, especially as a pioneer. What kind of example is...

How quickly it snowballs out of control.

You are such.... Wow, I can't believe you.

Are you that lonely that you've got nothing better to do.

Haley?

How difficult it can be to unravel.

I'm sorry, I shouldn't have judged you so harshly. I shouldn't have judged you at all.

A chance to forgive is a chance to imitate Jehovah. Think back to a time when you wanted forgiveness.

Has anyone ever tried talking to her about her singing?

You know what I love about Veronica, She's probably the most hospitable person I know. Always open house at her place. And can she cook. Have you tried her Curry?

I haven't tried it yet.

Ya, It's so good.

Its so good.  
I really look forward to that.

It's really good.

Ok, Ill ask her.

She does these Curry nights.

Oh, You're going to love it.

## **VIDEO ENDS**

We should use our gift of speech to honour God and to benefit others. And if somebody gets angry at us, our mild reply can defuse the situation. As Proverbs 15:1 says,

**“A mild answer turns away rage, but a harsh word stirs up anger”.**

We can also use our gift of speech to console and encourage others. First Thessalonians 5:11 and 14 states,

**“11 Therefore, keep encouraging one another and building one another up, just as you are in fact doing”.**

**“14 On the other hand, we urge you, brothers, to warn the disorderly, speak consolingly to those who are depressed, support the weak, be patient toward all”.**

Yes, even faithful servants of Jehovah may at times struggle with depression. How can we help such ones? Offer specific genuine commendation to help them see their own value in Jehovah's eyes. Share with them the powerful words of bible texts showing that Jehovah truly cares about, and loves those who are broken at heart, and crushed in spirit.

We can also use the power of our tongue to provide much needed encouragement to others.

Has a fellow believer lost a loved one in death? Sympathetic words expressing our care and concern can comfort a grieving heart.

Is an elderly brother or sister feeling unneeded? A thoughtful tongue can reassure older ones that they are valued and appreciated.

Is someone struggling with a chronic illness? Kind words shared on the phone or in person can do much to lift the spirits of one who is sick.

How pleased our creator must be when we use the power of speech to others, sayings that are good, for building up. We may not be able to fix their problems, but we can let them know that we love them and we care about them.

For example, you can arrange to spend time with him or her. Additionally, we can use God's word to strengthen them. Or, you may notice that someone in the congregation is discouraged or depressed. You could read an encouraging bible verse and even offer to say a prayer. Reassure such ones that their brothers and sisters in the congregation love them.

And speak in a way that shows that you really mean and believe what you say.

This symposium has given each one of us much to think about has it not? We have been reminded that seeking peace is not always easy. We have also learned that pursuit of peace requires effort. In what specific ways are you resolved to Seek Peace and Pursue It?

In the days ahead, may we all continue to "Pursue Peace". One, by not quickly taking offense, two, by apologizing, three, by forgiving freely, and four, by using our gift of speech wisely to encourage and comfort others. And may Jehovah, the God of peace, bless you abundantly for doing so.

Thank you brothers for reminding us that the peace we enjoy does not happen by chance. It requires continuous effort on our part. But we can succeed with Jehovah's help.

We have now come to the concluding talk of this session. True Christians come from a variety of backgrounds and cultures. Individual consciences differ. How can we remain united despite these differences?

Please give your attention to brother David Splain, a member of the Governing Body, as he delivers the talk entitled,

***“Safeguard our Uniting Bond of Peace”.***

When we think of unity, the words of Psalm 133:1 may come to mind. Let's read them now. The words aren't going to be on the screen, so, let's look them up in the bible. I'll give you a moment. That's Psalm 133 and verse 1, It says,

**“Look! How good and how pleasant it is, For brothers to dwell together in unity”!**

Well we certainly agree with these words of David. Now, speaking of David, he knew the value of unity, and we may remember that he didn't always get to experience it in his own life, the beginning and the end of his reign were marked by civil war., the very opposite of unity. But, you'd think it would have been easy for the Israelite's to remain united. After all, they came from the same roots. They were all children of Abraham. They spoke a common language, Hebrew, and they came from a similar social background. Their ancestors had all been slaves in Egypt, so there was no basis for anybody to brag about his heritage, still, the Israelite's found reasons to hate one another.

Israel's first king was from Benjamin. Its second king was from Judah. That was reason enough to start a war in Israel.

Let's fast forward now to the first century. Unity is so important that it was on Jesus mind on the night before he died. You remember, he prayed to his father that his disciples might be one, just as he and the Father are one.

Now, that could have been a challenge. Why do we say that?

From a human standpoint, there was no reason for Jesus disciples to be united. Unlike the Israelite's, they did not have a common ancestor. They did not have a common mother tongue. And they came from a variety of social backgrounds. Think of it, the first Christians were Jews or Jewish proselytes. Growing up, they were taught that gentiles were unclean and they wouldn't even enter the home of a gentile let alone preach to one.

As for gentile Christians, they came from every nation under heaven. Most of them knew nothing of the Hebrew language or the Hebrew scriptures. They had worshiped false Gods. Some had been highly educated in Athens, Alexandria, or some other center of worldly wisdom. Others had little formal education, yet, when they accepted the truth, Christians became united and at peace with one another.

The apostle Paul wanted to help them to safeguard that bond of peace. Now, that's the theme of our discussion this morning and we're going to look at his words recorded at Ephesians chapter 4 verses 3 to 6. And we're going to focus in on a particular expression in this, in these verses. This is Ephesians chapter 4, I'll give you a moment, Ephesians chapter 4 and we're going to read verses 3 to 6.

Now Paul is interested in unity here, so let's see how he frames his discussion, he says,

### **“Earnestly endeavoring”**

So an effort is involved,

**“Earnestly endeavoring to maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace. 4 One body there is, and one spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism; 6 one God and Father of all...”**

Now let's go back to verse 3 and look at the expression, the uniting bond of peace. So, our discussion is “Safeguard the Uniting Bond of Peace”. Now, the study bible has an interesting note on that expression. It tells us that the word translated “uniting bond”, can also be translated, “ligament”. Ligament. And it is translated ligament in other verses. Now we know what a ligament is, it's a band of strong tissue that holds our bones together. Well, so we when we talk about the uniting bond of peace, we mean that peace is the ligament, it's the tissue that holds God's people together. That was true in the first century, and it's true today.

Like the early Christians, we come from different backgrounds, we speak different languages, yet, Jehovah has shown us how to remain United and at Peace.

Now, let's explain what we mean by being United. To be united doesn't mean that we all have to like the same things, or we all have to think the same on every subject, there's room for a variety of tastes and opinions. There's variety on this convention program. We don't all wear the same style of suit, or have the same colour of tie. What about you? What's your favorite colour? Your favorite food, favorite pet?

In Jehovah's organization there are dog lovers and cat lovers. And not everyone likes the same breed of dog or cat. Have you ever visited someone who has a pet that he thinks is just adorable, you take one look at the animal and you wonder how anyone could love a face like that, yet he does.

People are different and their pets are grateful for that.

The variety we find among God's people today will continue on into the new world. Jehovah

loves variety. How many colours are there? How many species of plants, birds, and animals? Among God's creation we find the simple and the complex, the plain and the fancy, the sweet and the sour, the rough and the smooth. There's great variety among people, even in the new world. Perfect humans won't have the same personality, talents, and abilities. You've always wanted to play the violin. Don't think when you're perfect you'll just be able to pick up a violin and play. And there's no guarantee you'll be able to play in an orchestra.

Now, one way to maintain unity is to respect the conscience of others. This is very important because very often, when unity is disturbed, it's because we don't respect the ability of other brothers and sisters to decide things for themselves. Now, what do we mean by the conscience? Let's be simple. It's the faculty that helps us determine right from wrong. I'm going to repeat that. The conscience is the faculty to determine right from wrong.

Now, let's consider how our upbringing and our culture can help shape our personal view of right and wrong. In some cultures, there are large families. Conversation around the dinner table is loud, you can hardly hear yourself think.

The children tease one another, and don't hesitate to ask each other personal questions. The girls borrow each other's clothes, sometimes without asking. Some people would say that's wrong but, the girls see nothing wrong with it, and neither do their parents.

In other cultures, family members are polite and courteous, but they don't talk much about their plans or their feelings. The parents don't often talk about their past because they value their privacy.

Now, some who were raised that way tend to be rather strict with themselves and others. They have definite views of right and wrong. Borrow their clothes without asking, and they'll say that's stealing. "I'm calling the elders". There are no gray areas with them.

Now, there are lots of exceptions, and we're not saying that everyone in a certain culture fits the bill, but, you get the idea. Now, what do you suppose happens when a publisher from one culture moves into a congregation where the other culture predominates? If he doesn't adjust his way of viewing others he'll be miserable. Is one way right, and the other wrong? No, members of both cultures could learn from one another.

Speaking of culture, we might ask ourselves, how do I feel about brothers and sisters who come from cultures that are very different from my own? They may speak with an accent. Their style of dress may be different. Their manners and food may not be what we're used to.

Suppose that an elder is younger than we are, or from a different race? Will we accept his counsel? Will we ask him for counsel, or, will we look for an elder who's older, and from a similar background? Will we celebrate our differences, or will we allow them to disturb our unity?

So that's one thing, but let's talk about our personal history. Our personal history can also affect our view of right and wrong. Some grew up in a household where alcohol was a problem. Home was not a happy place. And as adults, they stay as far away from alcohol as

they can. And they take a dim view of anyone who uses it even in moderation. To them, it's just plain wrong to drink.

Others have only good memories of their childhood. Home at suppertime, there was always wine on the table, but nobody ever abused it.

A person who left behind an immoral lifestyle might be extremely sensitive about choices of clothing. He may be troubled by a clothing style that other brothers and sisters find totally acceptable. If they're not careful, those who tend to be strict with themselves could impose their conscience on others.

Now let's consider a familiar scenario. Four publishers are working rural territory in a car group. Now, each home is separated from the next by many miles or kilometers. At the first call the driver and her companion get out, and the other sisters stay in the car, they have no choice, there's no place to go.

Now the householder has many questions, and a bible study is started. It's noon when the two publishers returned to the car all smiles. You know what's coming next don't you? One of the sisters in the back seat says, "well the two of us can't count anytime this morning". What's she done? She's spoken for herself and for her companion, and unintentionally, she's imposed her own conscience on her friend. Now, if she doesn't want to count any time, that's her business. It would be best if she kept her business to herself.

If you've ever visited a foreign country and gone on a guided tour, probably one of the things the tour guide wanted to show you was the architecture inside a church.

Now some brothers have no problem entering a church if it's part of a tour because to them it's no different from visiting a museum. Others, who were strong supporters of false religion, couldn't enter a church for any reason, not even to attend a wedding, or a funeral. To them it's just plain wrong.

Consciences can differ in this respect and we have to respect that. We have to acknowledge that and we're going to expand on that idea.

In a moment, well, we've hardly scratched the surface when it comes to describing the variety of personalities and viewpoints in Jehovah's organization, so here's the question. How can we maintain our unity? Remember what Paul said,

**“Earnestly endeavoring to maintain”**,

**“Maintain this perfect bond of unity”**.

It means that we have to put forth effort to maintain that unity.

Well, first of all, it'll help a lot to get well acquainted with brothers and sisters who think differently from us. Get to know their background. That'll help you to overcome not to overreact when they take a position that we don't agree with. It'll help us not to judge them.

Apollo wrote very plainly on that subject. In the words found at Romans chapter 14. and verse 4. Its a simple statement but very powerful. Let's check it out together. Romans chapter 14. I'll give you a moment, and verse 4. Paul writes,

**Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for Jehovah can make him stand.**

Now, let's go back and look at that first sentence again,

**“Who are you to judge the servant of another”.**

We know what a judge does, he declares someone guilty or not guilty. That's not our job. Jehovah is the judge. If each of us concentrates on his own thinking, in his own conscience, the peace and unity of the congregation will be preserved.

Well, we all want to be balanced. When we determine what is right and what is wrong, we want to have a balanced view of things, a good conscience, so how can we be balanced when determining whether something is right or wrong. Now, in some cases, it's easy, the bible tells us. But in other cases, there's no clear answer.

Let's consider a scenario we touched on earlier. The matter of entering a church. Now, that may not be a problem where you live but in some places it's a real issue. And remember these talks are for our worldwide brotherhood, so we're going to consider a subject that will be a real problem for many to overcome. And we hope that they will benefit from it. So, here's the scenario.

Two different sisters are married to men who are not in the truth. Now, in both cases the husband's mother has died. The funeral will be in a church. One sister decides to go, the other decides against it.

The sister who decides to attend has considered that in that church, there will just be a talk by a clergyman. They'll be no congregation singing, congregation prayers, or religious gestures. She was never very religious anyway so none of that would mean anything to her, and her husband, and his family will be happy if she just sits quietly until it's over.

Now, the second sister has a different set of circumstances. The service in that church involves participation by the congregation. She used to be an active member of that church, and she's afraid she'll do something she'll regret. Her husband's family get very emotional at funerals, and they're likely to make a scene if she doesn't participate, so she respectfully tells her husband that her attendance could cause him embarrassment and declines to attend.

You can see that each situation is different. Now we're going to discuss four questions that we might ask ourselves when we're called upon to make any difficult decision, and uh, I will repeat the question because if you're taking notes, you may want to write at least the question down. These are very very good questions that we can ask ourselves before we make a difficult decision, are you ready,

*Here's number one:* What will make Jehovah happy? I'll repeat that, What will make Jehovah happy?

Now, that should be our main concern, to please Jehovah. Well, how do we know what will make Jehovah happy? We identify the bible principles that have a bearing on the situation. One way we can do that is by checking the index or the Research Guide. What are some scriptural principles a sister who's married to an unbeliever might consider when deciding whether to attend a funeral in a church? Can you think of some?

What about First Peter 3 verse 1.

**“Wives be in subjection to your husbands”.**

Jehovah is pleased when a Christian woman respects her husband, whether he's in the truth or not, but a wife's subjection is relative. She's dedicated to Jehovah, not to her husband. She's dedicated to Jehovah, not to her husband. So that's first Peter 3 1.

What about Isaiah 52 and verse 11,

**“...Touch nothing unclean”. “...Keep yourselves clean...”.**

Under the Mosaic law, if someone so much as touched something unclean, he became unclean. Many brothers and sisters would find it very hard to sit quietly while a clergyman told lies about the condition of the dead. To them it would be touching something unclean. Others might compare that to a young person in school, sitting quietly while his teacher tells lies about the origin of life.

If someone does decide to attend a funeral in a church, he or she should be absolutely determined not to participate in any religious ritual whether singing hymns or so much as saying amen to a prayer that the clergyman offers. Remember the goal, to please Jehovah. So, the first point was, “What makes Jehovah happy?”

*Number two:* Number two, how might my choice affect others? Have you got that? How might my choice affect others? We would never want to stumble anyone, even in a family matter such as attending a wedding or a funeral in a church, which we may consider as a personal matter. We need to weigh the effect our decision could have on others. It could affect them in one of two ways.

Now, the first is the obvious way. In some areas, if a witness even entered at church, his brothers and sisters would lose respect for him, but there's a second way, the witness could stumble someone. He might be able to attend the funeral and make no compromise but, suppose a new brother decided to follow his example when a family member died? The new brother could give into family pressure and participate in idolatry.

How tragic is that? The apostle Paul never worshiped idols, so when meat that had been offered to an idol went up for sale in a meat market, it probably didn't bother Paul's conscience to buy it because he knew that an idol is nothing. But, some of his brothers had

worshiped those very idols before coming into the truth. They could have felt guilty about eating that meat. To them, it would be like having a communion meal with an idol. The feelings of his brothers were important to Paul. He was willing to sacrifice his own rights for the sake of his brothers.

We'd never want to take the unloving view that if our brother is stumbled by what we do, it's too bad for him. On the other hand, if we're the type of person who is often stumbled by what others do, we need to ask Jehovah to help us gain a more balanced viewpoint.

So far, we've discussed the need to make Jehovah happy, and to consider the feelings of our brothers. What's next?

*Number three:* Have I asked for counsel? Have you got that? Have I asked for counsel? Now, maybe the elders haven't dealt with the exact situation we're facing, but they know a lot of people. They may know someone who has dealt with the situation before and seen how he handled it. Or, they may know about the effect the decision had on others, for example, they might know how the congregation reacted the last time someone attended a wedding or a funeral in a church.

Another situation where brothers often ask for the help of the elders involves the use of blood fractions. Should we accept them or not.

The Governing Body has refused to impose its conscience on the brotherhood. What do we know? We know that the bible says to abstain from blood, but, as you divide it into fractions, and the fractions get tinier and tinier, at what point does blood stop being blood? Each one will have to decide that for himself. Now, some might say, well if it's a really really tiny fraction it doesn't bother me to take it, but others will say, it doesn't matter to me, if it's from blood, I don't want it. And their conscience also has to be respected.

Now, let's illustrate. Air is made up of nitrogen and oxygen, and together, they make up 99 of air. That leaves one percent. The one percent is made up of a variety of gases, carbon dioxide, hydrogen, neon, small fractions.

When it comes to small fractions, elders need to be careful though not to insert their personal opinion into the discussion, such as by saying, "*I wouldn't take any of it*". They should simply help the publisher to reason on the basic principles and let him make up his own mind.

So, where are we. We make Jehovah happy we consider the feelings of our brothers and sisters. We ask for counsel.

*Number four:* Did I take the time. Did I take the time to meditate prayerfully before making my decision? Did I take the time to meditate prayerfully before making my decision? Your goal is to make Jehovah happy, so you wouldn't want to make your decision hastily. We should Jehovah for guidance first, rather than asking him to bless a decision we've already made.

Have you ever heard someone say, "*That doesn't bother my conscience*". We might ask how did he come to that conclusion? Did he follow the four steps we just mentioned? Did he do

research to learn what makes Jehovah happy? Did he think about how others might be affected? Did he ask for counsel, and did he meditate prayerfully on his decision, or, is he just following his feelings? Following your feelings isn't the same as following a bible-trained conscience. I'm going to repeat that,

Following your feelings is not the same as following a bible-trained conscience.

Our conscience needs to be trained in harmony with scriptural principles. Now, Paul's conscience didn't bother him a bit when he was persecuting Christians. He thought he was doing Jehovah a favour, but, when he realized how Jehovah felt about it, he knew he had to change. We have to be sure that we're really getting Jehovah's thinking on matters.

Remember Jeremiah 17 and verse 9? Simple expression, but so true, Jeremiah chapter 17 and verse 9, it says,

**“The heart is more treacherous than anything else, and is desperate. Who can know it”?**

“The heart is treacherous”, We might allow our emotions to get the better of us. For example, when a family member is disfellowshipped, if the person is living outside the home, we know that we should limit our association to necessary family business. Now, if the family was never very close, that might not be a problem. But, suppose family ties are really strong. That can be a challenge. If we allow ourselves to be ruled by emotion rather than by scriptural principles, we could stretch the meaning of necessary family business to include almost any activity. The heart is treacherous. Asking ourselves the four questions we just mentioned can help us to make decisions based on Godly principles rather than simply relying on our feelings.

Now let's see how mature Christians can apply these principles, and how the elders can help. The following video interviews are about weddings and funerals. A touchy subject in many cultures as you will see.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

In Japan, religious rituals are associated with each stage of life, and with each season of the year. As Jehovah's witnesses, we want to keep the cleanliness and unity of the congregation. In this regard., one of the most delicate areas is the decision on whether to attend a non-witness funeral or not.

The first thing we must consider regarding funerals is not to be involved in religious rituals and acts of worship that are condemned by the bible. In harmony with the principle at Second Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14, we need to keep completely separate from pagan acts of worship.

Next, even if we don't participate in the worship of other religions, we need to consider if our decisions could stumble someone in the congregation. When we consider the bible principle in Luke chapter 17 verse 2, we do not want our decisions to hinder the faith of someone in the congregation.

The third point to think about is our conscience, we need to seriously think about the bible principle in Galatians chapter 6 verse 5, where it says that

**“Each must carry his own load”.**

This bible principle also applies when elders want to support others.

Of course, those in the congregation can ask the elders for support in issues related to funerals, however, in matters of conscience, elders cannot force decisions on others. So it would be wrong to make some kind of rule regarding attending non-witness funerals. If each person can make decisions based on bible principles, we can have a truly peaceful and free atmosphere where each individual's differing situation is respected. This would really contribute to the unity of the congregation and all can maintain a clean conscience and serve happily before Jehovah.

In my culture, specifically the Namibian Oshiwambo culture, like in many African cultures, there are many spiritualistic customs related to weddings that are included in wedding celebrations.

Unfortunately, my family is not in the truth, so obviously for Ben and I, that was one of the main concerns. They don't understand our worship of Jehovah and they don't understand that we apply bible principles and not a tradition of men.

We got engaged before the pandemic, but, obviously, now that our wedding was to be over video conferencing it meant that we didn't have control over many things. We tried to imagine situations that could stumble our brothers or disrupt the unity in the congregation.

We had to, in advance, think of bible principles that would apply in our case, but particularly, what we also found helpful was speaking to a mature elder. He gave us a principle in Proverbs 14 verse 15. He told us to be very careful when people say, I will do this, or, I won't do this at your wedding. Basically, it was up to us to make sure that the proceedings or things that happened at our wedding would be in order and in harmony with bible principles.

Another principle that came to mind was first Corinthians 10 was 23. So, obviously we knew that we had the right to do many things but, we were also very conscious of how our brothers would view our wedding. We didn't want anybody to be at our wedding and feel embarrassed, or even stumble, to be there.

Now, looking back at our wedding, we look back with fond memories, so applying bible principle doesn't restrict our fun. Also, it contributed to the unity among our brothers because all of us those present those who were invited we were able to enjoy the wedding. You're not worried about Oh, did that thing offend anybody, so you're able to enjoy the day without any bad memories.

**VIDEO ENDS**

As you can see, our brothers in many countries are faced with very difficult decisions where weddings and funerals are concerned. The guidance the elders can provide is invaluable.

Now sometimes medical doctors complain that their witness patients are inconsistent because we don't all have the same view of certain medical treatments. One witness patient accepts certain fractions or therapies so the doctor figures he knows what Jehovah's witnesses believe, but then the next patient comes along and he rejects them all. The doctor is confused. Those doctors don't understand the role of the conscience.

We shouldn't worry when medical professionals don't understand our differing viewpoints because we should be glad that we serve a God who dignifies us with the freedom to make many of our own decisions.

Now, the apostle Paul mentioned four qualities that will help us to maintain the uniting bond of peace, and we're going to find those qualities at Ephesians chapter 4, and we're going to zero in on verse 2. Let's turn to Ephesians chapter 4 and we're going to look at verse 2. Now, we read verses 3 to 6 earlier, and you know that Paul was concerned about unity. Unity is what he had on his mind. And now he's telling us that these four qualities are going to help us to maintain our unity. Earnestly endeavoring, remember what he said. Earnestly endeavoring to maintain the oneness of the spirit. The work that we need to put into promoting unity, verse 2,

**“With all humility and mildness, with patience, putting up with one another in love”.**

Isn't that's beautiful. You notice the qualities, humility, mildness, patience, and love. When we're humble we recognize that our opinion isn't is the right one. Humility will also prevent us from trying to impose our conscience on others, as if Jehovah had appointed us to judge them. What about mildness, mildness will help us to think about the effect our words might have on our brothers and sisters. We would never want to hurt them. Even when we strongly disagree with them, we should give them the benefit of the doubt. If someone says something that makes you mad, pray before you speak. Pray before you speak.

Love covers a multitude of sins which contributes to the peace of the congregation, and we deeply appreciate it when our brothers are patient with us. In turn, we need to be patient with them, because, we're all at different stages of spiritual growth and we have to acknowledge that.

Well, we've talked about making Jehovah happy with our decisions, we can also please Jehovah when we work hard to promote peace in the congregation. And sometimes, it does take an earnest endeavour. Sometimes we have to work hard at ensuring that the congregation is at peace. What about the elders? The elders take the lead in working together in unity. They should always speak with the united voice. If they don't, the congregation will sense that they're divided, and this will make the brothers and sisters uneasy.

Any difference of opinion should be worked out in private, while showing deep respect for one another. Just because someone disagrees with us, doesn't make him a bad person. We have to understand that and, uh, his difference of opinion may search us through. It may be something that we need to think about and consider. And we always consider that the other person may be right.

What about us publishers? If we're having a hard time getting along with someone, rather

than asking Jehovah to change him, we should ask Jehovah to mold us like the great potter He is.

We should ask him to show us why he drew that person to the congregation. Remember what Jesus said, "No one comes to him, unless the father draws him". What does Jehovah see in that person that we aren't seeing. We each have a responsibility to contribute to the peace and unity of the congregation. May Jehovah bless us as we work toward that goal.

Thank you Brother Splain for that motivating talk. We are determined to do our part to safeguard our Uniting Bond of Peace.

This session has provided such practical lessons. What can we look forward to in the next session. The scripture theme will be Romans chapter 15 verse 13 which says, in part,

**"May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace..."**.

The program will feature a seven part symposium with bible examples of those who sowed and reaped peace. We will also want to invite as many as possible to enjoy the public bible discourse entitled,

**"Friendship with God, How possible"**.

Now let's sing together song number 113, which draws attention to what it means to have Godly Peace. The song is entitled,

**"Our possession of peace"**.

After the song you may have your local concluding prayer again that's song number 113.

### **SUNDAY MORNING – PART 1**

Greeting's brothers and sisters. The scriptural theme for this session and the next is taken from the inspired words found at Romans 15:13, which says in part,

**"May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace."**

We invite all to sing song number 101,

***"Working together in Unity"***

Again, that's song number 101.

At times, specific challenges can make it difficult for servants of Jehovah to pursue peace. What are these challenges and how can we overcome them? These questions will be answered in a seven part symposium. We will consider how we can imitate the examples of

those who reaped peace after first sowing it.

To begin, let's give our attention to Brother William Turner, a helper to the Service Committee as he presents the talk,

***“How they Sowed and Reaped Peace – Joseph and his Brothers”.***

The bible contains many fundamental principals that a Christian can use every day to guide his life. For example, at Proverbs 13 verse 20 we're told that,

**“If we walk with wise persons, we will become wise”.**

Proverbs 28:20 states that

**“If we're faithful, we will receive many blessings”.**

Likely you have Bible principals that you live by as well, However, as it pertains to pursuing peace, there is one essential principal that must be followed. Let's find out what it is. Turn with me please to Galatians chapter 6, and let's read the words of Galatians chapter 6, and verses 7 and 8. Here we read,

**“Do not be misled, God is not one to be mocked, for, whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap, because the one sowing with a view to his flesh will reap corruption from his flesh, but the one sowing with a view to the spirit, will reap everlasting life from the spirit”.**

So, the principal, We reap what we sow.

You might think of a farmer, he knows that he must plant what he hopes to reap. He also knows that he will not reap fruitage right away, but he trusts the results will come in due time. It is similar with the quality of peace, the only way for us to reap peace, is to sow it. And as we put in the work to achieve it we trust that in due time we will reap the benefits. In this symposium we will consider bible and modern-day accounts of how Jehovah's people despite particular challenges have reaped peace after first sowing it.

Now one particular challenge to gaining peace is problems within the family. Because of imperfection it's not uncommon to have disagreements, even tension from time to time. And family members may hurt one another in various ways, and usually such offences are minor and peace can quickly be sown and reaped. But what if the offence is more serious. A family member says or does something that hurts us deeply. Well even then it still may be possible to sow and reap peace. We can prove this by considering the bible account of Joseph and his brothers. Now we're familiar with the story, out of envy Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery and this was by no means a minor offence.

It began with Joseph being led to Egypt. Some time later he was falsely accused and thrown into prison. So, for 13 years, Joseph suffered mistreatment when he had done nothing to deserve it. Now, it could have been very easy for Joseph to feel that if he ever saw his

brothers again, the best option for peace would be not to have any dealings with them at all. Perhaps we might feel the same way as well. But Joseph didn't do that, in fact, after some years passed, both Joseph and his brothers sowed peace.

Now note how this was done. Turn with me please to the 105th Psalm, and note the 19th verse of Psalm 105. It says,

**“Until the time that his word proved true, The saying of Jehovah is what refined him”.**

Joseph trusted in Jehovah to refine him, to shape his thinking, and Godly qualities, he refused to become bitter. In fact, how interesting it is to note that there is nothing in the scriptures to indicate that Joseph ever told anyone, not even Pharaoh, that his brothers were the ones who kidnapped him, and sold him as a slave.

And how about Joseph's brothers? Years after they had mistreated him they met Joseph in Egypt. When Joseph tested them by giving the youngest brother Benjamin significantly more attention than he gave the others, he saw his brothers had changed. They had let go of envy. They showed genuine concern for their brother, and for their father Jacob. Joseph realized that his brothers were repentant, and he forgave them. And because Joseph and his brothers were willing to take steps to sow peace, they reaped the benefits and eventually were able to enjoy a harmonious relationship,

Well, how can the example of Joseph and his brothers help us today? In the following dramatization notice how a family member sows peace.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

And every morning, and I mean every morning, there's Jeremy singing at the top of his lungs.

Okay, I wasn't the only one.

No, but you were the loudest.

Spoken like a true big brother.

I was always impressed with how close you two were.

Well, it wasn't always that way. No, I mean it started out that way, Nick and I we weren't just brothers, we were friends. But then the family business ran into trouble and what started as a small disagreement just exploded.

How our business works. Instead of criticizing it, could you just once...

Jeremy, do you have any idea what this is gonna cost us? I didn't have a choice. You went behind my back.

What's your problem?

You, you're the problem.

We tried to work it out, but things just got worse. It was like a door slammed shut between us. On the outside, I acted like everything was fine, but inside, I couldn't let it go. I felt like a total hypocrite, and that had to change.

I needed a lot of help from Jehovah to let go, to move on and make things right with Nick. It took a long time for the wounds to heal.

And for us to trust each other the way we used to,

But we did.

I'm so grateful that we made peace before the world turned upside down.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

So how can you and I imitate Joseph and his brothers. Let's discuss three steps.

The first step is found in Ephesians chapter 4 verse 32. Let's read that, Ephesians 4 verse 32.

**“But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you”.**

So first, we must be ready to forgive. If we let grievances and resentment build up and develop in our hearts, it becomes even more difficult to be forgiving. Did you note in the video what started as a small disagreement between Nick and Jeremy, exploded into something much bigger, Why?, Jeremy could not let go of his resentment towards his brother? We must work to treat others in a forgiving way, just as Jehovah treats us.

The second step? Don't dwell on the offense. Proverbs 17:9 says,

**“...the one who keeps harping on a matter separates close friends”.**

And isn't that how Jeremy described the relationship with his brother? It was a door slam shut between them. It wasn't until steps were taken to sow peace, having that open honest communication with each other, spending time together, working with each other in the ministry, only then did things start to improve. And did you notice, everything did not go back to normal right away? It took time to reap peace, time for those wounds to heal, time to regain lost trust.

So, we can't look for miracles, but we should look for progress. Like the farmer, trust that in due time, we will see results from our efforts.

And here's where the all-important third step comes in.

Ask Jehovah in prayer to help us to let go of resentment. Remember Psalm 105:19? It was the

**“Sayings of Jehovah”**

that helped refine Joseph to develop the qualities needed, not to become bitter, and to let go of any resentment.

In the video Jeremy acknowledged that he needed Jehovah's help to let go, and to move on. And Jehovah can do the same for us. It's not easy when we go through situations that threaten the peace of our family. But, if we live by this fundamental principle, we "reap what we sow", then we can be assured that with a forgiving spirit, looking for opportunities to sow peace, and beseeching Jehovah for his help, that our efforts will be blessed, and in due time, we, and our family can reap the benefits and enjoy true peace.

Brother Ronald Curzan, a helper to the teaching committee, will now present the next talk of this symposium,

### ***"How they Sowed and Reaped Peace - The Gibeonites***

There is a battle that has lasted for centuries and continues down to our day, it's a battle of wills. The will of disobedient humans, who fight against Jehovah's will. Rather than submitting or surrendering their will, to do Jehovah's will, most humans refuse to make peace with him, becoming peace breakers.

On the other hand, millions throughout the centuries have humbly submitted to Jehovah's will making his will, their will. They are known as peace makers. By sowing peace with Jehovah, they have reaped the benefits of having a close personal friendship with him and, the wonderful hope of living forever in a peaceful new world.

Even so, we must admit, it can be difficult at times to accept, and then follow Jehovah's direction, or direction that we may receive from his organization, especially if we don't understand the reasons behind the direction or, it's not what we might prefer.

What is needed to sow and reap peace? Humility! Humility is defined as a lowliness of mind, freedom from pride, or arrogance. A humble person is not self-willed, but they actively look for ways to sow peace with Jehovah, and others. He's known as a peacemaker.

What is the result of humility and sowing peace? Notice what Proverbs 22 and verse 4 says,

**"The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life".**

Yes everlasting life. The bible contains many fine examples of those who sowed and reaped peace by humbly submitting to Jehovah's will. Let's consider the example of the Gibeonites. The Gibeonites, weren't they enemies of the Israelite?

Yes. So, how did they humbly sow and reap peace with Jehovah and with his people? As you recall, after Joshua led the Israelite across the Jordan river into the promised land, Jehovah directed them to remove the pagan Canaanite nations who dwelled there. This included the Gibeonites.

The account at Joshua chapter 9 informs us that the Gibeonites were plainly told that it was

Jehovah's will that the Canaanites be annihilated. Israel's stunning victories over Jericho and Ai made it very clear that Jehovah was fighting for his people and the Gibeonites did not want to be next but, what could they do if this was Jehovah's will?

Well, they devised an interesting plan. They sent representatives to seek peace with the Israelite and thereby with Jehovah. According to verse 11, they were instructed,

**“We will be your servants”.**

Now, make a covenant with us. So, this is what they were to say as representatives, verse 4 says that the Gibeonites

**“Acted shrewdly”**

by trying to trick the Israelite with their worn out clothing and provisions, pretending that they had travelled from a very distant land, but were actually just 20 miles away. Did their plan work? Despite their deception yes, their plan was successful, in fact, in verse 15, Joshua made a covenant of peace with the Gibeonites.

Evidently, this was in harmony with Jehovah's will, and reflected their humility and desire to seek peace with him and his people. They demonstrated their humility in submission to Jehovah's will and his representative Joshua, by following whatever direction they received. In fact, notice the direction in verse 27 it says,

**“Joshua made them gatherers of wood, and drawers of water for the assembly and for Jehovah's altar”.**

Although the Gibeonite men were likely skilled warriors. They were happy and content to do whatever work they were given to support pure worship. Humbly following direction saved their lives and brought them peace. How can we imitate the Gibeonites? By bringing our lives into harmony with Jehovah's will.

For some, this may require making big changes, adjusting their thinking, giving up harmful practices, and avoiding bad associates. We can also imitate the Gibeonites by being willing to perform whatever assignments we are given, humbly, to support pure worship.

So, the lesson is clear. Sowing and reaping peace, requires humbly following direction. This lesson is highlighted in the following dramatization. Notice the benefits of submitting to Jehovah's direction.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

You see, the pandemic lasted longer than any of us expected and all the conflicting news reports just added to the stress. Then my sister lost her job and had to move in with us, so yeah, it was me, and Kelly, Nicole, and dad.

20 seconds son. 20 seconds. (WASH HANDS)

Uh, where's your mask?

Don't worry, here, you can use this one.

I won't get near anyone.

Gary listen,

Nobody at the warehouse is wearing masks. And do you know how many people have actually gotten sick? Zero so far.

You saw the last Governing Body update. We can't let down our guard, not now that...

I get it, okay. Look, I think it's great that the brothers are trying to keep us safe but,

But what,

Don't you think that they're, you know, overreacting?

But of course it wasn't the brothers who had the problem, it was me. A week later I found out that a friend in our service group was in the hospital with Covid-19. He was young, and he'd been taking all the right precautions. I had really let my guard down.

Now is not the time to slacken our hand when it comes to safety. Don't let your guard down. Don't think the virus can't affect you or your family.

I saw how the organization was really trying to protect us, and how much my decisions were affecting others, including the people I love the most. As the pandemic dragged on I learned the importance of being humble and obedient. Following Jehovah's direction didn't just help us stay safe, it brought us peace.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What timely lessons, especially with all that we are facing today.

Like Gary, there are times that we may need to adjust our thinking on matters and put aside our personal opinions and preferences so we can loyally and humbly follow Jehovah's direction, or whatever direction we receive from his representatives, the Faithful and Discreet Slave.

Gary learned an important lesson. Humbly following direction doesn't just help our family stay safe, it brings us happiness and peace. A vital lesson for us today. What can help us to humbly follow direction now as well as in the future? Note what the apostle Paul said at Ephesians chapter 5 and verse 17. He says,

**“...stop being unreasonable, but keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is”.**

The bible clearly shows God's thinking on matters, but, what if it's not so clear to us or, we struggle to fully grasp how it applies to us personally? Or, in a given situation, what did Paul advise, he said,

## **“Keep perceiving what the will of Jehovah is”**

How can we do that? Well, just as a miner keeps digging deep below the surface of the ground to find precious gems, we must look beyond the surface of what we read in the bible. This requires that we keep digging deep, carefully searching for gems in the form of bible principles, then, we must prayerfully meditate on what we find. Then Jehovah's precious thoughts will become our thoughts.

Perceiving Jehovah's thinking on matters will help us to avoid getting into a battle of wills so we can follow his direction or whatever direction we receive from the Governing Body. Like the Gibeonites, may we be peacemakers by continuing to sow peace with Jehovah, and his people. As we humbly make Jehovah's will our will, we will joyfully reap abundant peace forever.

Brother Kenneth Flodine, a helper to the teaching committee, will now consider the next talk of the symposium,

## **“How they Sowed and Reaped Peace, - Gideon”**

The man Gideon is the bible example we will consider. But what is the challenge this talk intends to address? Are you ready for this? Differences between fellow Christians. You might think, no, how can that be? Jesus said the identifying mark of his disciples will be the love among themselves not the differences. And that is true. In our Christian brotherhood, we feel the love. Love is prominent. It is dominant, but, as individuals we are drenched in imperfection. Differences will inevitably erupt. James 3:2 doesn't mince any words. It says,

**“...we all stumble many times”.**

Not constantly, not every day, but it acknowledges that we make mistakes many times.

A brother or sister may say something to hurt us or maybe we push their emotional button with words or they push ours. Usually it's not intentional. Often it's a misunderstanding. We, or they say something in good faith. One thing's appropriate, the other does not. Or possibly what we said or did was perceived in a way that we could not even have imagined. But it happened, and now we must sow peace in order to reap peace.

And when we plant seeds, some germinate much faster than others. In the opening talk of this symposium, it acknowledged that a farmer trusts he will see results in due time. If we find ourselves at odds with a fellow Christian, the bible example of Gideon can help us to sow and reap peace.

Now Gideon was at war with the Midianites, and he asked his fellow worshipers, the Ephraimites to help chase them down in Judges chapter 8. They had tremendous success, we say great, but after the battle, the Ephraimites were offended. They tried to pick a fight with Gideon. They felt that Gideon did not call them into battle soon enough. Judges 8:1,

**“Then the men of E'phra-im said to him: “What have you done to us? Why did you not**

**call us when you went to fight against Mid'i-an?" And they quarreled bitterly with him".**

Well, these are all armed fighting men. If this difference of opinion was allowed to escalate, it could get out of hand very quickly. In fact, in this case, hand-to-hand combat might have ensued. Instead though, how did Gideon sow peace, with words? Let's read verses two and three (Of Judges 8). He, Gideon said to them,

**"But he said to them: "What have I done compared with you? Are not the gleanings of E'phra-im better than the grape harvest of Abi-e'zer? 3 It was into your hand that God gave Mid'i-an's princes O'reb and Ze'eb, and what have I done compared with you?""**

Notice,

**"When he spoke this way, they calmed down".**

Now in this case, the germination period was very short. Gideon sowed peace with well chosen words, and he reaped peace in one conversation. Now, in the following dramatization, notice how a brother prevents the situation from escalating into a confrontation.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

And you know how Jehovah's people are when there's a need. Our brothers step up, so even though we had a lot of work to do back then, we always had willing workers. So many workers that some started to feel like they were being overlooked.

Hey Ray, what's up?

Hey Matt, I hear you're organizing the food distribution for our congregation.

Yeah, try my best.

Yeah, well, can I give you a hand? My truck's all ready to go.

We actually finished just loading up for the day so I think we're good, but wow, yeah, thank you very much for offering.

Okay, uh, when's the next run?

You know what, uh Ray? We're about to pull out right now. Is it okay if I call you back?

Yeah, yeah sure.

Ray was such a hard worker, more than most of us even realized. He put his heart into every assignment. But, when I told him we already had all the help we needed, it didn't go the way I hoped.

Ray, I think you're muted.

So what you're saying is you don't think I'm qualified to help out.

No, no, we just, we know you're working hard caring for your mom. We didn't want to...

Isn't Paul Thompson on your crew?

Yeah, but,

And Oliver Kagan?

Oliver's my assistant, yes, but.

So how does this work Matt? I mean, you just use your friends and you shut the rest of us out. Don't you think I noticed how you brothers ignore me?

Ray, I owe you an apology. I'm so sorry. I should have spoke with you about this right from the start. You're working so hard taking care of your mom, the last thing we wanted to do was make things harder for you, but even more than that we didn't want to have to ask you to do something that would put you or your mother at higher risk.

I know, I worry about that too.

You know, your mom, we wouldn't want anything to happen to her. She's one of our congregation treasures.

I know.

And you're not so bad either. Seriously, you're such a good example. Think how Jehovah must feel when he sees all that you're doing, for us, and for your mom.

Thank you. That means a lot to me. If something comes up that I can help with then, even just a little, and I can do it from home.

Well, that's a good point.

Maybe I can get your thoughts on something, if that's OK?

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Two good brothers, but, due to imperfection, they were both looking at the exact same situation from two different perspectives. Matt was well intended in what he did for Ray. He realized he was caring for his ailing mother, he was trying to protect him, but Ray is offended. He even accused Matt of showing favouritism to his friends and ignoring others.

Well, how did this calm down?

Well, first of all, thankfully, Ray went directly to Matt and expressed his feelings between the two of them, alone. Well, what did that allow for a follow-up?

Well Matt now had the opportunity to absorb and understand Ray's concerns. What a blessing

that was. And so, what followed after that? Well, you remember when he grasped it, Matt paused, and apologized.

His words, like Gideon's well spoken words, calmed Ray down. It was a short germination period. He sowed and reaped peace in one conversation. Well, how can we imitate Gideon? When there's future differences with fellow worshippers, Second Timothy 2:24, and recall when the men of Ephraim confronted Gideon, they were confrontational. They were upset. They were rattling their sabres, but here Paul in effect summarizes for Christians Gideon's demeanor. Second Timothy 2:24.

**“For a slave of the Lord does not need to fight...”**

You see, with words or swords. Instead, like Gideon, it says,

**“but needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach”**

And notice this,

**“showing restraint when wronged”.**

That is not easy to do, but showing restraint, when wronged is a means of sowing peace. Now, if it's just a minor offense, we might ask ourselves, can I put up with this slight to avoid a confrontation?

But of course, in the case with Ray, he felt hurt deeply. Matt realized the perspective was different, but, you remember in hindsight, Matt admitted, I should have talked to you first. With those words, he planted seeds of peace.

Now amazingly, long before the first century, Gideon manifested, later, what became a Christian principle. At Philippians 2:3 it says,

**“...with humility consider others superior to you”.**

Do you remember Gideon's exact expression? Twice he said, What have I done compared to you? His humility calmed the Ephraimites down instantly. So, what can we do? Well, we can apologize for our contribution to the difference, even if the apology is done on the other person's terms. We can pray for him. We could give a sincere compliment. Do something kind for the person, and if we have a discussion, may our words be gracious and toned kindly.

Now it would be nice if all the differences between Christians could have a short germination cycle, but, due to circumstances personalities or the nature of the issue that's not always possible. But may we each be determined to do our part to sow peace, and like the farmer, expect peace in due time. And oh, how sweet restored peace truly is.

And now, Brother Robert Lucione, a helper for the publishing committee, will give the next talk of this symposium entitled,

## **“How they Sowed and Reaped Piece – Abigail”.**

Pursuing peace can be a challenge. Because of our imperfections and the complexities of life, we have to work for peace even under normal conditions. But pursuing peace becomes a greater challenge when it's one-sided. Difficulties arise in the family and in the congregation when one person pursues peace but the other does not.

For example, in the congregation, perhaps we have a friend who has a problem with another friend in the congregation, but does not do anything to reconcile the situation. Or in the family, a Christian mate may have difficulty pursuing peace if his or her spouse does not apply bible principles. Well, what do we do then? Well, in those situations, the bible account of Abigail may be helpful.

I invite you to turn in your bibles to First Samuel chapter 25, and here we're introduced to Abigail and her husband Nabal. And you notice, here in verse 3, Nabal is described as “harsh”. In verse 25, Abigail describes him as “senseless”, in verse 17, his own worker describes him as “worthless” and says “nobody can speak with him”.

Well, with a personality like that, it's not surprising that he mistreats David's young men. And now, David wants revenge. How do you pursue peace in a situation like that?

What does Abigail do? Well, you think about it, what could she have done? See, Abigail could have done nothing. It's not hard to imagine that she had a difficult life as well living with this man. She could have just stepped back let David come through, and do what he had in mind. Or, she could have gone out to David, and inflamed the situation, maybe describing what a terrible man he is and how he mistreats her as well. See, either of these approaches could have made her life easier, but she didn't do that.

Now Abigail could not change her husband's ways but she did what she could to defuse an escalating conflict. In fact, notice her respectful, well-chosen words. Let's go back to First Samuel 25 and let's read verses 27 through 31.

**“Now let this gift that your servant girl has brought to my lord be given to the young men who are following my lord. 28 Pardon, please, the transgression of your servant girl, for Jehovah will without fail make for my lord a lasting house, because my lord is fighting the wars of Jehovah, and no evil has been found in you all your days. 29 When someone rises up to pursue you and seeks your life, the life of my lord will be wrapped securely in the bag of life with Jehovah your God, but the lives of your enemies he will hurl away like stones from a sling. 30 And when Jehovah has done for my lord all the good things he has promised and he appoints you as leader over Israel, 31 you will have no remorse or regret in your heart for shedding blood without cause and for letting the hand of my lord take revenge. When Jehovah confers good upon my lord, remember your servant girl”**

Do you notice what Abigail does? She comes in with a gift. She bows down to David, she takes the blame for the situation herself, and she reasons with him using Godly principles. Abigail's actions calm David and averted calamity. She pursued peace. But to do that, she

had to look beyond her own feelings and consider what was best for Jehovah's name. And that is not always easy to do. But what was the result? Because she sowed peace, she pursued peace, she reaped peace. How can we benefit from Abigail's example? Why is it important to do so now? Let's look at the following dramatization.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

And later on, when things got even more intense, that's when our piece was really put to the test.

Yeah, but Tim, you always found a way to keep us positive.

Well I learned a lot about that from my better half. Amy's always had a way of bringing people together, for example, just before the pandemic, there were these two pioneer sisters in our congregation. Becky was energetic industrious and fearless in her ministry, and Lena experienced self-sacrificing, and such a good bible teacher. But, they didn't exactly get along.

You ready to go? Are you okay?

It's just it's Becky, she's just such a phantom pioneer. We never see her. I'm sorry, but she just needs to be serious about her ministry.

Well, she's been doing metro witnessing and...

I know, I know, and LDC too right? She does plumbing?

Concrete. She does have a lot of energy. Remember when we used to be like that?

I don't know that I was ever like Becky.

No, you weren't. You were Beckyer then Becky. I couldn't keep up with you. Those long service days in your little red car.

That feels like a long time ago.

You know, Becky reminds me a lot of you, I mean, both of us, 20 years ago. She's working so hard and she's made so many sacrifices for the truth, just like you have. I think we should get together, the three of us. You should get to know her better.

The next week I had them both over to the house. And the more those two got to know each other, the closer they became.

You know that proverb, the tongue of the wise is a healing. Amy taught me what that verse really means.

Okay, everyone out.

When everything changed, and we suddenly found ourselves locked up together, I tried to

show that same spirit so that we could stay united. And with Jehovah's help, we did.

## **VIDEO ENDS**

Now, did you notice what our sister did and did not do? And she could have done nothing. She could have let Lena, her service partner, cultivate those thoughts about Becky. Or, Amy could have poured fuel on the situation, maybe agreeing with Lena, or telling a few stories how Becky annoyed her as well, but she did not do that. See, Amy's desire to sow peace moved her to help Lena see things from a different perspective. And as a result, the congregation benefited and reaped peace. Notice how the Apostle Paul explains this approach that we should take. If you turn in your bibles to Romans chapter 12 and verse 18. Romans chapter 12 and verse 18,

**“If possible, as far as it depends on you, be peaceable with all men”.**

**“As far as it depends on you”.**

See, our congregations, our families, benefit when we sow seeds of peace, before matters get out of hand. It's like seeing a small fire in our house. What do we do? Do we just ignore it, I hope it goes away? Do we fan the flames? Do we put fuel on it? No, we do something, Why? Because we know that if left unchecked, that fire could destroy our home.

Well, it's similar when we see problems that developed and peace being disrupted? We do the same, why? Because we know that if we don't do something, and if it's left unchecked, that disturbance could destroy our family, and the congregation. So, the question is, is, how do we sow seeds of peace?

Well, Abigail was a good example. Did you notice what she did? She considered how best to approach the situation. She was proactive. She didn't just hope it would go away on its own. She used respectful soothing speech. She was careful not to fan the flames, or add fuel to it. All good steps we can take. And we have other resources to help us as well. We can do research in the bible and in our publications to see how others have sowed peace in similar situations. And we can also consult with the elders.

Now, we understand that this is especially a challenge if the situation is in the family, as it was for Abigail. That is not easy at all. And in those situations, try to focus on your mates good qualities, not on his or her irritating traits. But with all of this, we have to be realistic. Remember what the apostle Paul said there is recorded in verse 18 he says,

**“If possible, as far as it depends on you”.**

So Paul was acknowledging that peace with others may not always be possible. So, what do we do? We have to do the best that we can, and then we leave the rest in Jehovah's hands. So, may we be determined to develop the practice of pursuing peace now. Whether we're in the congregation, or in the family, we can be confident that if we sow peace, we will reap peace, even if others don't respond. How? We'll have peace with Jehovah, peace with ourselves, and the knowledge that we did the right thing.

Additionally, when in the future a force for peace is vitally needed, we will be prepared to provide it.

Brother William Malenfant, a helper to the teaching committee, will now consider the next talk of this symposium,

***“How they Sowed and Reaped Peace – Mephibosheth”.***

Inherited imperfection. We don't like it, but we all have it. And since imperfection means that everyone is less than perfect, we are bound to be treated unfairly at times, even by fellow Christians.

In rare cases, one might become the victim of slander, or even fraud. Consider with me an account about slander that occurred in the nation of Israel in the days of king David. It's about a man named Mephibosheth who was slandered by a man named Ziba. Examining the way that Mephibosheth handled this matter can be of real help to us to sow peace and to reap peace.

Jonathan was Mephibosheth's father, and king Saul was his grandfather. When Jonathan and Saul died, king David gave to Mephibosheth all the land of his grandfather. David assigned Ziba as a servant to take care of the land that he had given to Mephibosheth. Sometime later, a rebellion in David's household forced him to flee from Jerusalem and Ziba went out to meet David. When David asked Ziba about Mephibosheth, and why he didn't come with Ziba to show his support for David, Ziba slandered Mephibosheth saying that he was seeking the kingship for himself. Sad to say, David believed the slander and gave Mephibosheth's land to Ziba.

Some time later, Mephibosheth met with king David and explained why he didn't show up to travel with him. He told David that Ziba had lied about him. Upon hearing Mephibosheth's side of the story, David now decided that he and Ziba should share the land. Instead of complaining or seeking vengeance, Mephibosheth displayed the spiritual qualities of a peacemaker and he was willing to be wronged. He said to David, as recorded at Second Samuel chapter 19 and verse 30. these words,

**“At this, Mephibosheth said to the king, let him take it all now that my lord the king has come to his house in peace”.**

Yes, Mephibosheth was more concerned about David's kingship than he was about himself.

In the following dramatization notice how a brother reacts to a perceived injustice and thereafter how he sews peace with his brothers.

**VIDEO STARTS**

First time we met David, we were in chains. I'd seen a lot of things during my time as a guard, but nothing like the peace that you all had.

Prison chains may be strong, but we all had something much stronger.

But, we had to work for that piece, right Phil?

That's right. See, there was a misunderstanding that got blown way out of proportion. And I didn't handle it the best. The more I tried to defend myself, the worse it became.

Brothers, there must be some mistake. This isn't true, you know me. I wasn't prepared for how far I would go.

There's one more announcement. Brother Philip Kim is no longer serving as an elder. Now, that brings our meeting to a close.

The next few months were a real struggle, but when more details came to light I thought I'd be reappointed. But I wasn't. I couldn't understand why.

Phil come on.

I felt bitterness growing inside. Everything became about me, how I felt, what I deserved. It was like a fog that stopped me from seeing what Jehovah deserved, and I really needed his help.

I found comfort in accounts of Jehovah's servants who were either misunderstood, or misjudged, but maintained their loyalty to him. They helped me realize that it's a privilege just to be in Jehovah's organization. Being at peace with my brothers was more important than any appointed position. Without peace, I don't know how we could have managed what was to come.

Is your arthritis bad today? Then I'll be your secretary, just like Barrack was to Jeremiah.

I don't know what I'd do without you.

### **VIDEO FINISHED**

The question now, for all of us, is, how can we imitate the example of Mephibosheth?

First of all, if you are the victim of minor gossip, or rude treatment by someone, why not choose to let it pass and not make a big issue of it. Isn't that what First Peter 4:8 advises. First Peter 4:8 reads,

**“Above all things, have intense love for one another”.**

And then it tells us what our love can do, it says,

**“Because love covers a multitude of sins”.**

Yes, love covers sins and imperfections, if we are willing to let love have its way. But what if you are the victim of a more serious injustice, for example, the brother in the video he felt that he was a victim of injustice when he was deleted as an elder. He tried to clarify matters, but since he didn't get the response he was hoping for, he became very upset. He lost his peace and he caused others to lose their peaceful relationship with him.

To regain his peace, the brother dug into the scriptures, looking for examples he could benefit from. And he prayerfully looked to Jehovah to help him. He could see the importance of self-control, and, being guided by God's spirit. As a result, he was able to be at peace with himself, and so, peace with his brothers.

Now, think for a moment about the unfair decision David made when he told Mephibosheth that he and Ziba were to share the land. Ziba was the cause of the problem not Mephibosheth. However, Mephibosheth displayed the qualities of a spiritual man, by not looking out for his own interests, by being patient, and by not seeking vengeance.

Read with me at Second Samuel chapter 19 verse 25 through verse 28. Second Samuel 19:25-28, it reads,

**“When he came to Jerusalem”**

That is Mephibosheth went to Jerusalem,

**“To meet the king, the king said to him: “Why did you not go with me, Me·phib'o·sheth?” 26 To this he said: “My lord the king, my servant tricked me. For your servant had said, ‘Let me get my donkey saddled so that I may ride on it and go with the king,’ for your servant is crippled. 27 But he slandered your servant to my lord the king. However, my lord the king is like an angel of the true God, so do whatever seems good to you. 28 All the household of my father could have been doomed to death by my lord the king, and yet you placed your servant among those eating at your table. So what right do I have to cry out further to the king?”**

It's truly remarkable. Mephibosheth was grateful for what he had and he was seeking nothing more. He enjoyed peace of mind and heart. If a matter involving slander or fraud arises today, a Christian may choose to follow Jesus instructions at Matthew 18 15-17. However, if for some reason following that procedure does not fully resolve the matter, he or she may choose to pursue it no further, and suffer loss, rather than disturb the peace of the congregation. We can leave any unresolved issues with Jehovah knowing that he sees what we do and what others do, and he will carry out justice at the right time.

For our own benefit, we really must try to let go of resentment. When we do, we benefit ourselves. When we forgive, we forgive others, Jehovah forgives us. Now, that doesn't mean that we minimize or excuse the wrong conduct of fellow believers, no. But, it does mean that we imitate Mephibosheth by letting go of resentment and pursuing peace. We draw closer to Jehovah by following the advice at Psalm 55:22.

**“Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to fall”.**

And as Romans 15:13 assures us, Jehovah will,

**“...fill you with all joy and peace by your trusting in him”.**

Brother Joel Dellinger, a helper to the service committee, will now consider the next talk of this symposium,

***“How they Sowed and Reaped Peace - Paul and Barnabas***

What's the next challenge we'll discuss? It's a disagreement between elders. If you're an elder, have you experienced that? Were voices raised? Did tempers flare? Has a friendship with a fellow elder cooled off?

Though we rightly expect appointed brothers to be exemplary, the fact is all of us, including elders, are still imperfect. Differences in backgrounds, personalities, experience, and opinions, can lead to disagreements and a disagreement, if not resolved, can disrupt our peace, and that of others.

In this talk we'll consider how two elders in the first century, Paul and Barnabas, sowed and reaped peace. Let's see how their example can help appointed men today including all of you dear elders to resolve a disagreement. Please open your bible with me to Acts chapter 15 and read together verses 36 to 39. In the reading, please note the problem that arose between Paul and Barnabas. That's Acts chapter 15, beginning in verse 36.

**“After some days, Paul said to Bar'na-bas: “Let us now return and visit the brothers in every one of the cities where we proclaimed the word of Jehovah, to see how they are.”**

**37 Bar'na-bas was determined to take along John, who was called Mark. 38 Paul, however, was not in favour of taking him along with them, seeing that he had departed from them in Pam·phyl'i-a and had not gone with them to the work. 39 At this there was a sharp burst of anger, so that they separated from each other; and Bar'na-bas took Mark along and sailed away to Cy'prus.”**

What was the problem? These two elders strongly disagreed about whether to take Mark with them on their next missionary tour. Of course, expressing a difference of opinion is not always wrong. Verse 7 of this same chapter reports that the apostles and older men in Jerusalem had an intense discussion that led to a good outcome. But in this case, what resulted? Please look again at verse 39. It would be nice to read, At this, Paul and Barnabas prayed to Jehovah and came to an agreement.

Sadly though, their discussion on this occasion led to a sharp burst of anger, and they separated. As a result, their friendship was affected by a temporary strain.

Why do we say temporary?

Because in time, it appears that Paul and Barnabas put this matter behind them. A short time later in Paul's letter to the Galatians, he wrote about Barnabas, and the activity they had enjoyed together. And Paul did not bring up their dispute. Also, when Paul later wrote to the Colossians, and then to Timothy, Paul spoke well of Mark. In fact, in Paul's last inspired letter, the Second to Timothy, he wrote this,

**“Bring Mark along with you, for he is helpful to me in the ministry”.**

Yes, it seems that Paul and Barnabas resolved their disagreement. Now let's think about that brothers. What made that possible? It's this. Long before their disagreement, they had shared together in an exciting ministry for years.

They were united in what the bible calls a bond of peace, so even though their friendship experienced strain, the bond between them was strong. Strong enough to withstand the stress.

Well, let's bring this to our day. In the following dramatization, please notice how an elder sows peace.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

But you know there's more to the story. Phil didn't know just how tense things were between Tim and I.

No idea.

We never talked, I mean really talked about it until it was too late.

Look, we need to talk. I think we need to seriously reconsider Phil's qualifications. You know he's not the type of brother.

Enough, enough, enough about Phil. Look, I know he's your...

Friend, but, the body agreed, that he no longer qualified to be an elder. Friend? Friend!, He's worked with us for years.

The body decided unanimously that he should no longer serve.

Because you push them...

Excuse me?

It's enough that we have those outside the congregation putting pressure on us, we do not need more in here.

Seriously,

The conversation, the argument, it was terrible. We both said things we didn't mean.

And after that we both handled the situation poorly.

We need to make things right.

It wasn't easy, but we talked it out. And we made peace with Jehovah's help.

Can you imagine what it would have been like in that cell block if we hadn't.

We finally told Phil the whole story once we were all roommates.

Wow!

We're ready!

Let's go sing.

Like an Island of calm, In a dark and stormy seas, God's people are living in peace. With our eyes of faith, we see beyond the clouds, and know that the storm soon will cease on the earth, they'll be peace at last. For all eternity. From the valley below.....

### **VIDEO ENDS**

Elders, here's the question before all of us now. How can we imitate Paul and Barnabas? First, as elders, we must apply scriptural counsel, and our dealings with one another. In the video, we just saw how imperfection got the better of Tim and Carl. Their body language, choice of words, tone of voice, as Tim put it, the argument was terrible.

But after the dispute what did those two elders eventually do right? They applied scriptural counsel and made peace.

For example, the divine counsel at James chapter 3 and verse 17 reminds all of us to be peaceable and reasonable. The Watchtower once suggested how this could be applied to elders, I quote,

*“Peacemakers modestly express their thoughts, and then respectfully listen to those of others. Instead of insisting on his own way, a peacemaker will prayerfully consider his brother's viewpoint. If no bible principle is violated, there is usually room for varied points of view. Experienced overseers know that preserving the peace is more important than getting one's own way”.*

What a beautiful thought. So, what's our first lesson? If we, as elders, apply scriptural counsel in our dealings with one another, we'll never allow a difference of opinion to become a cause for animosity.

Romans chapter 12 and verse 10 outlines a second lesson. Please open your bible with me there. Under inspiration, at Romans chapter 12 and verse 10, Paul wrote this,

**“In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honour to one another, take the lead”.**

Brothers, elders, now, before life gets even more difficult, this is what we need to do. We need to strengthen love and affection for one another. We can do that by continuing to speak well of our fellow elders in public and in private, by resisting the urge to talk negatively to other elders about any disagreements that arise, and by regularly reflecting on our brothers good qualities and on our past service together.

In the video, weren't we happy to see how Tim and Carl imitated Paul and Barnabas and eventually reaped peace? Though not easy, they applied scriptural counsel, and resolved their problem. That warm smile on Carl's face when he showed up at Tim's home, the dessert, perhaps Tim's favourite pie, the heart-to-heart talk, and their lasting friendship, even in prison, shows that they maintained their love and affection for each other.

Dear brothers, elders, may we do likewise. Let's settle disagreements quickly and peacefully. When we do so, we'll reap not only peace, but, will prove to be examples to the flock just like Paul and Barnabas.

Brother Stephen Lett, a member of the Governing Body, will now consider the final talk of this symposium,

***“How they Sowed and Reaped Peace, - Modern Day Examples”.***

How do many people react when they see corruption and injustice? They become incensed, and they want to fix the problem. How do they try to fix the problem? By becoming involved in political efforts or social movements that claim to fight corruption and injustice.

In contrast, why do Jehovah's witnesses not get involved in political efforts or social movements? The simple answer, because they've learned from God's word that the problems of this world cannot be corrected. Ecclesiastes 1:15 says,

**“What is crooked, cannot be made straight...”.**

Satan's world around us is like the trunk of a tree that has grown so crooked, twisted, gnarled, it cannot be made straight. Jehovah's witnesses have learned, it would be futile to spend our time and energy trying to correct what Jehovah tells us cannot be corrected. Additionally, Jehovah's witnesses have learned how and where real peace can be found, even now.

In this regard, let's consider two modern day examples of ones who came to acquire Jehovah's thinking on this matter. Let's talk about Egidio Nahakbria and Frede Bruun.

Now, first, as Egidio, born in a remote part of East Timor, he experienced horrible guerrilla warfare during his childhood. Many of his neighbours disappeared or were killed, and he feared he would be next.

But, some years later, he moved to the capital city and entered a university where he met many other youths with backgrounds similar to his. He became part of a student group that was trying to achieve social change through political action.

Many political demonstrations were organized, but most ended up in riots with many of his friends injured, some were even killed. But then, through a relative who was studying with Jehovah's witnesses, Egidio started to study.

Now, here's what he said as he started this study. “As I studied the bible, I began to feel that I had never really known love. Despite my rough appearance and disposition, the witnesses

treated me with fellow feeling and brotherly affection”.

Well soon he was baptized, became a regular pioneer, and he was so happy because now he knew he was truly helping people. He ended his life story with these words, “In the past, I felt angry, unloved, and unlovable, but thanks to Jehovah, at last, I have found true love and peace”.

But now, let's talk about Frede. From an early age he was very upset by all the hatred bloodshed and war he saw around him, but, especially he was disturbed by religion's role in all of this. He observed that much of this hatred, bloodshed, and war, was encouraged, supported, or at least condoned, by religion. But in 1955, he attended a convention of Jehovah's witnesses and after the convention he accepted a bible study.

Now during his studies he learned many wonderful things, but something he learned really motivated him. He learned the identity of the great prostitute, Babylon the Great, mentioned in Revelation chapter 17 and 18. He learned that this prostitute is the world empower a false religion, then, he was really amazed when he was shown Revelation 18:24 which says,

**“...in her...”**

The prostitute,

**“...was found the blood of all those who have been slaughtered on the earth”.**

So, he learned that the world's religions could never be a force for international peace because they take sides, they're divided, and they go to war. In contrast, he saw that Jehovah's witnesses are an international brotherhood that truly practices what Jesus taught.

Frede progress was very fast. He got baptized, started pioneering, he attended the 50th class of Gilead, and has served many years in Guatemala helping people, as he was helped, to find the true source of peace.

But now we ask, what are lessons we can learn from Egidio and Frede? Well, many, but here are three big ones.

*Number one.* We can never correct the corruption and injustice of this world by means of political efforts or social movements.

That reminds me of the illustration a brother used about trying to get rid of a problem with spider webs, but being unable to get rid of the spider. You knock the webs down, the spider builds them right back. Knock them down, builds them back. You never get rid of the problem.

Well, in this illustration, Satan is the spider, and since he's the source of corruption and injustice, as long as he exists, the problem will exist. And little puny humans can't get rid of Satan. He's superhuman. So, the solution must also be superhuman, and that's where God's kingdom comes in. God's kingdom can, and will not only get rid of the webs, but the old spider Satan himself too.

*Now, here's our second lesson.* We must remember that political activism often leads to violence which is the opposite of peace. We pursue peace don't we, not conduct that often leads to violence.

*Our third lesson,* unlike the religions of this world, we must promote peace with all people, which definitely means we refuse to get involved in any way in the wars of Satan's world.

That reminds me of an experience a young brother had in the ministry.

A very emotional woman said to him, my son died for you to have the freedom you have. Why won't you fight for your country? Well, very calmly, the young brother said, I'm very sorry about the loss of your dear son, but one thing I can guarantee you is that it was not one of Jehovah's witnesses who killed your son. Now, I don't know if you can make that guarantee about your religion, but I can make that guarantee.

Well, as it turned out, she was Catholic, so she definitely was unable to make that guarantee. So let's remember these three powerful lessons that we have discussed.

But now, we'd like to say to you dear interested ones in attendance. If you're not yet one of Jehovah's witnesses, we warmly invite you to please study the bible with us. See for yourself how genuine love is the best way of life and is the best way to deal with the problems that divide society today.

Jesus made it crystal clear that the identifying mark of true Christians is love. At John 13:35 he said,

**“By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves”.**

So, dear interested ones, see for yourself whether this genuine love exists among Jehovah's witnesses.

But now, we say to those of you who are already Jehovah's witnesses, please continue to cultivate and show love for the whole association of brothers. And doing so will require that you remain strictly neutral regarding the world's political affairs and other controversies. Just as our leader remained neutral at John 17:14, Jesus said of his disciples,

**“They are no part of the world just as I am no part of the world”.**

So, during discussions in the ministry or anywhere for that matter, remain, remain strictly neutral on political topics. Take no position regarding what laws should be enacted, repealed, or changed. And don't pressure others to agree with your view. But to succeed in this, we must be careful not to allow the media of this world to manipulate our thinking.

News broadcasts are often presented in a biased, opinionated way so we've got to be careful not to adopt the bias of a commentator. Only if we keep our thinking neutral will we be able to keep our speech and actions neutral also. And remember, you're good example of showing love in Christian neutrality may attract honest hearted ones to the truth.

But now we ask, what have we learned from this symposium? Well, let's highlight just one valuable takeaway lesson from each of our six parts.

*The first part*, Joseph and his brothers. Our lesson sow peace by letting go of resentment.

*The second part*, the Gibeonites, humbly submit to Jehovah's will even if it differs from what you prefer.

*The third part*, prevent conflicts from escalating by choosing words that calm, reassure, and heal.

*The fourth part*, Abigail. Do what you can to promote peace and then leave matters with Jehovah.

*The fifth part*, Mephibosheth. Be willing to suffer loss rather than disturb the peace and the congregation.

And just another thought on this, let's always remember that defending Jehovah's name and reputation is far more important than trying to defend our own name and reputation. Be willing to suffer loss rather than disturb the peace in the congregation.

*The sixth part*, this part, modern day examples. Serve the God of peace with his people and you will have peace.

Yes, during this symposium, we've learned many valuable lessons as to how we can sow peace. Let's all be determined to do so with all our heart. And what will be the final result? For the answer, let's watch the final dramatization of this symposium.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

There's one more story to tell. I didn't know it at the time but seeds of truth were being planted in my heart. You were all so different, I couldn't understand it. You were prisoners, yes, but you felt free, truly free. After you were released, it became clear to me that you have God's blessing and I wanted to know why? Phil help me find the answer. "...and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free",

Phil encouraged me to make the truth my own. I had real trouble at first with all the turmoil going on. At the time, the idea of being peaceable and waiting on God's kingdom, it was hard to grasp. But with Jehovah's help and the patience of these good people, I was baptized before the start of the Great Tribulation.

Joseph, during our time in prison, the story of your life, your time in prison, and how Jehovah was always with you became a real source of strength for us. I remember one day Carl said, what did you say?

I said, one day we'll have a meal with Joseph and we'll say thank you, and here we are.

Really, it's I who should thank you. Each and every one of your stories touches my heart. You

know a lot about my life, but would it be all right if I shared a few more stories?

Please, we have so many questions?

Can you tell us about Egypt?

What was Pharaoh really like?

Dreams, we gotta talk about those dreams.

You do have many questions and I have many details to share, and thanks to our God Jehovah, we have all the time we need.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What a touching video. If we wholeheartedly sow peace, “we'll save ourselves, and those who listen to us”. But, what fundamental truth from our great God have we discussed during this symposium? It's expressed at Galatians chapter 6 verse 7.

**“For whatever a person is sowing, this he will also reap”.**

If we sow tomato seed, we will always get tomato plants. Well, this unfailing fundamental truth applies to peace. If we sow peace, we will always reap peace. Although in some cases it may take some time for the peace we sowed to bring good results, but, if we persevere in sowing peace, we will reap peace of mind, peace with others, and most importantly peace with Jehovah. And will reap the reward of living forever in a world where there will be an abundance of peace.

So, let's be determined to sow peace now, so we can reap peace forever. And if you think about it, that's a pretty good investment of our time and effort isn't it. Sow peace now, and reap peace forever.

Thank you brothers for those practical talks. May we all remember these useful examples and sow peace now, so that we can reap peace eternally.

Let's sing together song number 28,

***“Gaining Jehovah's friendship”***

That's song number 28.

### **SUNDAY MORNING - PART 2**

We extend a warm welcome to all who accepted an invitation to join us for this convention. We live in an unfriendly world where true friends are hard to find. Is it possible to draw close to God and have him as our friend? If so, what must we do to gain God's friendship?

Brother Kenneth Cook, a member of the Governing Body, will answer those questions in the discourse entitled,

## ***Friendship with God - How possible***

Is it realistic to believe that you can be a friend with God? If until now you've answered no to that question, please consider this. The lives of millions of people today prove that friendship with God is possible. Their lives prove that we can find a peaceful, and meaningful life now, as well as hope for an everlasting and peaceful future.

If you desire that for yourself and others, we urge you to listen to this scriptural talk. We emphasize the need to listen because many people ignore that important question, that is, can you be a friend with God?

Why is it that many put such an important question out of their mind? There are a number of reasons, for example, some believe that God is impersonal, or unknowable, or, that he does not exist and that he's not interested in humans. They are taught that God is a mystery, and that he is cruel, harsh, and demanding.

Many religious leaders claim that God will punish bad people forever in a place of torment. Do you feel drawn into friendship with a God like that? Who in their right mind would? Still, other people, after seeing all of the Injustice and suffering in the world, have concluded that God must be dead, or that he never existed at all. And then there are those who believe that they have done too many bad things in their life to ever be a friend of God.

Do any of those causes for doubt or concern apply to you? If so, please listen carefully to the following four key points that may help you to see that friendship with God is truly possible. We will then develop each one.

*First* we'll look at how sin separates us from God. *Second*, we'll look at how God has taken the initiative to heal the breach, and bring obedient humans back into friendship with him. *Then* we'll examine what we can do to become God's friend in an everlasting way. And *finally*, we will consider how friendship with God brings peace now, and in the future. So, for our *first point*. What is it that separates us from God? In a word, sin. Why does sin separate us? Because the true God is Holy. He's pure, and his conduct is perfect. He does not have a trace of sin. He's clean in the highest sense. No human can be holy to that degree, not even close.

To illustrate, consider the words human, and imperfect. They go together don't they. You cannot fully describe humans without mentioning imperfection. It's just a part of us, and human history shows this to be sadly and painfully true. So then our sins, or imperfections, create a barrier between us and God. This separation is described at Isaiah chapter 59 and verse 2, where we are told in part,

**“...your own errors have separated you from your God. Your sins have made him hide his face from you...”**

**“Separated from God”,**

it says. We were born into this state, but God did not create us to be sinful. Our sins are not his fault. The first humans, Adam and Eve, were created perfect, but they proved to be

ungrateful and selfish. And they rejected God's friendship. They destroyed their peace with God by sinning against him, and they became his enemies.

Adam then passed sin on to his descendants as well as death. We read about this terrible inheritance at Romans chapter 5 and verse 12. In this verse, the Apostle Paul summarizes why our inherited sinful condition leads to death. He wrote,

**“That is why, just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned”**

**“Death spread to all men”.**

This pandemic of sin has a 100 percent infection rate, and a 100 percent mortality rate. No human can escape it.

As Paul said, death spread because

**“They had all sinned”.**

On our own, we cannot correct our sinful state. It's as if we have fallen into a deep pit with seemingly no way out. But, are we left without hope? No, in fact, although God views some people as his enemies, he treats others as his friends.

For example. Regarding the man Abraham, the Bible book of James says, in Chapter 2 and verse 23 that,

**““Abraham put faith in Jehovah, and it was counted to him as righteousness,” and he came to be called Jehovah’s friend”.**

Abraham was as imperfect as we are but he became to be called God's friend. What has God done to make it possible for humans to gain his favour and blessing? Simply put, our creator has taken the initiative. He has taken steps to heal the breach that was caused by sin, and to eliminate the separation between us and Him. How has he done this? First, the holy scriptures tell us that God desires for us to come to know him, and to be at peace with him. In fact, He appeals to us to do this. In the Bible book of Acts chapter 17 and verse 27. We are told that God wants us to

**“Sincerely seek Him”**

and that if we do, we will find that,

**“He's not far off from each one of us”.**

Next, and very important, God took the initiative to make this possible by providing the sacrifice of his son Jesus, in order to redeem us from sin. That was an unparalleled act of love. As we now read First John chapter 4 and verse 10. Please, think about what it says regarding this matchless act of love on God's part. And so that we may never forget that God

took the initiative to heal the breach, so to speak, First John 4:10 says,

**“The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins”.**

What did God do? God loved us it says, and he sent his son. This sacrifice that God provided, by means of his son, is called propitiatory, because it can atone for our sins. And, here is how it can do so.

What Jesus gave in sacrifice for us was equal to what Adam lost for us. That is, a perfect human life.

Adam exchanged his perfect life for death by his rebellion against God. As mentioned earlier, Adam then passed sin on to his descendants. And he placed us on a path, outside of God's friendship.

On the other hand, the death of Jesus allowed for a ransom, or a means to satisfy God's justice, so that we could receive back what Adam lost for us.

That undeserved gift from God was given at great cost. Clearly, our creator wants us to come to know him, and to enjoy a beautiful friendship with him. We should be very grateful that God took the necessary step to close the gap, and provide a way for us to become his friend.

The next step involves each of us. What is required of us? Humility!

We must be humble enough to accept God's gift. If we are humble, we'll see our need for God's mercy, and, will then do our part to show appreciation. The Bible book of Acts chapter 3 and verse 19 tells us that this involves repenting, and turning around.

In other words, to receive God's gift, which includes his mercy, we must adjust our thinking by repenting, and then. Turn around by adjusting our conduct, and course in life, wherever necessary. The opportunity to do this is open to all people. As our creator, God, is not partial in his mercy.

And, in the friendship he offers, he has kindly put everything in place for us. All we must do, is be grateful, and humble. And then, take the next step. That step involves accepting Jesus and his teachings. God requires that we follow the example of his son. How closely must we do so? At John chapter 14 and verse 6 Jesus explained,

**“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me”.**

No one! So then, to come into God's friendship, we must follow his son as true Christians.

So far we have reviewed how sin separated humans from God. Then we considered what God has done to heal the breach, or close the gap so that we can come back into His favour

as His friends.

Now, let's look even further into what we must do, which brings us to the third key point. How can a person become God's friend? We invite you to consider what is said at James chapter 4 and verse 8. If you have a copy of the Bible, we urge you to follow along. James chapter 4 and verse 8. As we read it, please notice first, the invitation, then, the response, and finally, what we must do. It reads,

**“Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you indecisive ones”.**

So, first, what is the invitation? It is,

**“Draw close to God”,**

That is followed by what response on God's part,

**“He will draw close to you”.**

But, for God to do this, what must we do to show that we accept his invitation? We must cleanse and purify ourselves according to his standards. This will take effort.

For example, we must learn about his standards, and we must come to appreciate that they are the best for us. And then, we must be determined to follow them. Above all, we do this because we want to please God, and, to be his friend.

So then, how can you develop a friendship with God? Show initiative, and put forth the effort.

Consider this, if you have a house plant, you know that it doesn't grow on its own. You have to water it regularly, and keep it in an environment that helps it to grow. True? Something similar is true of our friendship with God. We nurture this friendship by reading, and studying God's word, the Bible. When we do so, we learn important things about God. For example, we learned that God's name is Jehovah, and as is true of any good friendship, it's important that we use his name.

If we're sincere in our efforts to

**“Draw close to Him”,**

as we read at James chapter 4 and verse 8. Jehovah will

**“Draw close to us”,**

and he never abandons his true friends. In fact, John 17 verse 3 tells us that

**“Coming to know God means everlasting life”,**

for us. What an undeserved kindness and priceless gift for Jehovah's true friends.

So that you too can enjoy a bright future as God's friends, we warmly invite you to accept a free interactive Bible course, offered by Jehovah's Witnesses, using the publication, Enjoy Life Forever. Here's what it looks like. Jehovah's Witnesses can help you to get either a printed or an electronic copy.

It begins with the lessons, How can the Bible help you? The Bible gives hope, and, Can you trust the Bible? We urge you to learn these things, and to worship God in harmony with the truth that is revealed in his word.

So, what important points have we considered regarding how a person can become God's friend? First, get to know God by reading and studying his word. Jesus said that

**“Doing this, means everlasting life”.**

And then learn about God's name and use it.

Now, we'll list four more things that those who desire to become God's friends must do.

They are, Imitate God's qualities, Reject thinking and actions that offend God, Associate with those who want to be God's friend, And avoid friendship with people who ignore or mock God's standards.

Now, a few things in that list speak for themselves, don't they? Such as associate with those who want to be God's friend, and avoid friendship with people who ignore or mock God's standards. That makes sense, doesn't it?

Think back to our illustration about the houseplant. You must not only water and nurture it, but you must keep it in the right environment. One that helps it to grow.

Likewise, associating with those who also want to be God's friend is the right environment for us. But, what about the requirement to imitate God's qualities? How can an imperfect people do this? Well, for a few minutes, we'll look at just two of God's qualities and how we can imitate him, and we begin with God's love.

An important way that we can imitate God's love, and become his friend, is by applying what his son Jesus taught us. For example, Jesus said,

**“Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them”.**

A simple statement, but one that takes effort to apply, true. Can we do this? Yes. And a person who desires to be God's friend will put forth the effort needed to do this. To succeed in imitating God's love, we must try to see people as Jehovah sees them. We must try to put ourselves in the place of others, so that we can understand their needs, their concerns, and even their pain of heart.

Some may be challenged physically because of injury, disease, or aging. Others are coping with emotional trials because of depression, or anxiety. Many people face difficulties that we have not experienced.

For instance, a young person may find it hard to understand older people, and he or she will really need to think about what it must be like to be an older person. If that is true of you, how can you imitate God's love?

One important way is by listening carefully until you understand the other person's feelings. When you do so, you are in a better position to imitate God's love. Those who desire to be Jehovah's friends, will be moved to imitate his love by acting according to what others really need.

That brings us to a second and related quality, that of kindness. Anyone who desires to be God's friend must be kind to others. Here again, we can learn much from what Jesus said, and did.

God's son said that the Most High is kind toward the unthankful and wicked. Jesus appreciated this outstanding quality of his heavenly father and he imitated God's kindness.

What helped Jesus to do so? He treated people in a kind manner by anticipating how his words and actions might affect their feelings.

For example, the Bible tells us that a woman, known to be a sinner, approached Jesus weeping and wetting his feet with her tears. Jesus discerned that she was repentant, and he knew how heartbroken she would be if he just dismissed her unkindly. Like his heavenly father, Jesus looked for the good in her. We know this because, he commended her, then he forgave her.

Following Jesus example, how can we also imitate God's kindness. We can do so by being gentle to all people, whenever possible. Kind people discern how to deal with delicate situations. Kind people avoid hurting the feelings of others.

When we do this, we try to anticipate how our words and actions might affect them. That is how a true friend of God will treat others.

Well, this review of just a few of Jehovah's many outstanding qualities gives us an idea of how much we can benefit from reading the Bible, and then applying its many lessons for us. Yes, friendship with God is possible, and we can imitate his outstanding qualities.

In the following video, please take note of how we can use the Bible to build a friendship with God.

## **VIDEO STARTS**

### ***Is Friendship with God Possible?***

Have you ever wanted to ask God, Who are you? Where are you? Do you care about me?

You Are Not Alone. For centuries people everywhere have felt the need to know their maker.

Imagine a woman who has never known her father. All her life she has been told lies that her father abandoned her. But deep inside she feels she knows it's not true. One day, she receives a letter from her father. She learns that he is alive, and that unbeknown to her, he had been reaching out to be part of her life since the day she was born.

The daughter learns who her father is. Eventually she finds him. They learn about one another, and build a strong bond until their inseparable friends.

The Bible is like a group of letters from our heavenly father.

As we read the Bible, we learn how to talk to God, how he responds, and the many ways he shows his tender care. The bible can help us to do something we may never have thought possible, Be Gods Friend.

That friendship starts by learning the name of your heavenly father and new friend. And God tells us his name, whose name is,

**“You who's name is Jehovah. You alone are the Most High”.**

Jehovah guarantees that, If you,

**“Draw close to him, He will draw close to you”.**

Our loving father openly extends friendship to all who search for him. Will you accept his invitation?

To learn more about what the Bible says on this, and many other topics, go to [jw.org](http://jw.org).

**VIDEO ENDS**

As that thought-provoking video asked, do you see the need to come to know your creator? Are you willing to put forth the effort needed to accept his invitation and become his friend? If so, the Bible contains the guidance that you need, and the reward for applying what it says is not reserved for the future only. Friendship with God brings peace now.

You can have a more peaceful and meaningful life right now by becoming Jehovah's friends.

When you become a friend of God, he will listen to your prayers, and extend his mercy to you. And when you sense his forgiveness, you will experience deep-seated Joy.

Psalms 32:1-2 says in part,

**“Happy is the one whose transgression is pardoned, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man whom Jehovah does not charge with guilt...”.**

What a blessing it is to sense Jehovah's forgiveness. God's forgiveness can free you from the burden of guilt that you may feel because of past wrongs. This includes wrongs that you may have committed before you came to know God and became his friend.

Is such a thing possible for you? Yes it is. As our video pointed out, the Bible teaches us how to pray to God, and how God responds to our prayers. And you can be assured that he will listen to your prayers, including your prayers for his forgiveness and his help.

At Proverbs 15:29, we read that Jehovah,

**“...Hears the prayer of the righteous”.**

Who are the righteous? The righteous are those who strive to live by his requirements.

What a comfort for us to know that we can be God's friend. Because he sees what we are trying to do, and he listens to us. But there is more.

Our friendship with God can also result in peace with other people. In fact, Jesus urged us to seek such peace with others. He said that we should love even our enemies, and do good to others without hoping for anything back. And then we read at Luke 6:36 that he added,

**“Continue being merciful, just as your Father is merciful”.**

Such a good example can touch the hearts of others, and move them to become Jehovah's friends as well. Consider the experience of Jose who learned how to love from true friends of God.

At the age of 13, Jose was involved in guerrilla warfare. He was taught to hate the people who were allegedly responsible for the injustices that he saw all around him. His aim was to eliminate those people. He saw many of his companions fall in death and Jose became filled with feelings of bitterness and revenge.

While making grenades or bombs, he would ask himself, why is there so much suffering? If there is a God, does he even notice? Many times Jose wept. He was depressed and confused. Eventually Jose came in contact with the local Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses.

At his first congregation meeting, he noticed the loving atmosphere there. Everyone greeted him in a warm and friendly manner. Later, a discussion on the subject, *“Why does God Permit Wickedness”*, provided answers to the very questions that he had been asking. As he learned more from the Bible, Jose made changes in his way of life, and in his thinking.

He learned to imitate God's love and thereby become his friend. Breaking his ties with his companions though proved to be challenging. Every time he went to the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, he was followed.

Some former associates even attended a few meetings so as to understand what brought about such a great change in Jose, but once they were satisfied that he was not a danger to them, they left him alone.

At age 17, Jose was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. As God's friend, Jose soon started sharing what he was learning full time. Instead of scheming to kill people, he could now share a message of love and of hope with them. What a great reward for choosing to become Jehovah's friend.

Yes, even those who were once enemies can learn to be at peace with one another and be God's friends.

So, what have we learned? We have reviewed why friendship with God is realistic and possible for us. The Bible tells us that since ancient times God has called some humans his friends. We also looked at what God has done to heal the breach, or close the gap between us and him. How has he done so? By means of his son. Through Jesus, Jehovah God provided the ransom sacrifice that was needed to redeem us from sin.

Then we looked at what you must do to take advantage of God's mercy, and become his friend. This includes studying his word the Bible, and then imitating his outstanding qualities.

Finally, we considered how you can find a meaningful life now, as well as true peace with others.

Jehovah promises that his friends will receive eternal life in peace. If that is what you yearn for, then please accept our invitation to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. By doing so, you will learn about an unending future when anguish of heart is gone forever. An unending future, in which God will permanently wipe away tears from the faces of his friends. That future is not only possible, it is the future that God promises.

Thank you Brother Cook for helping us to see how friendship of God leads to genuine peace.

Around the earth, millions are pursuing peace, and building faith in Jehovah God and His word the Bible.

If you would like to have Bible discussions, free of charge, at the time and place convenient for you, please inform one of Jehovah's Witnesses, or, visit [jw.org](http://jw.org) and fill out an online request for a Bible study. We will be happy to arrange for one of Jehovah's Witnesses to assist you.

Additionally you can find interactive self-guided bible study lessons on our website [jw.org](http://jw.org).

We have reached the conclusion of this session. We look forward to the next session, in which we will see part two of our feature Bible drama "Jehovah guides us in the way of peace", and we will hear the final talk of this convention.

Now, let's sing a song that expresses our confidence and God's promises. We invite you to

sing song number 147 entitled,

***“Life Everlasting is Promised”.***

That's song number 147, after which you may have your local concluding prayer.

Welcome one and all the concluding session of our pursue peace convention is about to begin. As you watch the music video presentation reflect on how learning about our creator and speaking about him to others can help us endure any test of faith with joy and peace please enjoy the video.

Welcome to the final portion of this convention, which corresponds to the Sunday afternoon session on your program. The scripture theme is taken from Romans 15:13 which says in part,

**“May the God who gives hope, fill you with all joy and peace”.**

To begin, let's sing a song that describes the blessings that God's kingdom will bring. The song is number 23 entitled,

**“Jehovah begins his rule”.**

Song number 23.

So, in part one of our feature Bible drama, we saw how Jehovah gave peace to his servants in the past. As we near the conclusion of this system of things, how can we strengthen our confidence that Jehovah will fulfill his promises for the future?

We now invite you to watch part two of the feature Bible drama,

**“Jehovah guides us in the way of peace”**

Bible prophecy is a fascinating subject. Prophecy is far more than just predictions about the future. Jehovah knows all the facts. He can even control, and change factors to ensure the outcome he desires.

At Isaiah 55:11, He says,

**“My word that goes out of my mouth will not return to me without results, and it will have sure success”**

Jehovah's prophecies have a perfect record of success. He has led his people in the past, so when He prophesies that he'll lead his people to real lasting peace in the future, this isn't a prediction, it's a guarantee.

The prophecies given to Daniel, clearly show that God's kingdom will without a doubt bring lasting peace for all mankind.

I found a man from the exiles of Judah, who could make known the interpretation to the king.

I know who he is. Can you really make known to me the dream that I saw, and its interpretation?

This is your dream.

Jehovah is the great time keeper.

The prophetic portions of the book of Daniel built faith by showing that Jehovah knows the course of history centuries, even millenniums in advance. While portions of these prophecies were fulfilled in Daniel's time, many of the details are being fulfilled right down to our day. So as we discover, the significance of these prophecies we're excited about what lies ahead. And our confidence grows as we discern how Jehovah has been leading his people all along.

In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed.

The divine dream that Daniel interprets for king Nebuchadnezzar, constitutes a prophecy crucial for the lasting peace of mankind. A promise from Jehovah to set up a kingdom that would be vastly superior to earthly kingdoms.

History has shown us how every type of human government imaginable has failed. So how would Jehovah's government come? When would it arrive? These were questions Daniel himself likely had.

Jehovah is a revealer of secrets. He would eventually answer these questions in due time.

As a diligent student of the scriptures the prophet Daniel had full faith and confidence in Jehovah's ability to schedule events and bring them about, and now, likely in his 90s, Daniel was particularly interested in prophecies regarding the restoration of his beloved city Jerusalem.

When 70 years in Babylon are fulfilled, I will turn my attention to you, and I will make good my promise by bringing you back to this place.

Jeremiah's prophecy had given Daniel hope because it indicated the Jews would soon return to their homeland of Judah and rebuild Jerusalem along with its temple. It makes sense that Daniel would be interested in the restoration of the temple because, from the time of king Solomon, the temple in Jerusalem was the world centre for worship of Jehovah. So, it was very important to the Jews. In the scriptures the temple was often called, the house of Jehovah. Now after Jehovah allowed young Daniel and the rest of the Israelite's to be taken captive to Babylon, the city of Jerusalem, and the temple were destroyed. So naturally, a God-fearing man like Daniel would be interested in seeing the temple rebuilt. Again, as a man of faith, Daniel supplicates Jehovah,

**“O Jehovah, do here, Do forgive. Oh Jehovah, Do pay attention and act. Do not delay, for your own sake, O my God...”**

**“Oh Daniel, now I have come to give you insight, and understanding”.**

The visit of this angel gave Daniel some answers, and a hope. Jehovah's messenger provided so many details of promises to come. Jehovah assured Daniel that the Jews would be restored to their homeland. Their exile in Babylonia was almost over. But, that wasn't the end of the angel's message. He gave Daniel insight into something of far greater significance.

Daniel was told when God's people could expect the arrival of the foretold Messiah. The Messiah would be the ruler who would make it possible for obedient humans to regain the blessing of perfect life, free from sickness, free from death.

The messiah would pave the way for lasting peace for mankind.

What a strengthening message for Daniel to receive. And he likely had some questions. The angel told Daniel that Jerusalem and its temple would be rebuilt before the Messiah arrived, yet, at the time, Jerusalem and the temple were in shambles. How would they rebuild it, and who would be responsible for this?

Babylon had been overtaken by Mido Persia, pictured by the silver chest and arms of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. Not long after this change in world rulership, Persian king Cyrus issued a royal decree. It was a commission from Cyrus himself for the Jews to return to Jerusalem, and rebuild the temple.

King Cyrus' release of the Jews was in notable contrast with the Babylonians desire to keep them captive. Cyrus even authorized funds from the king's house to cover construction expenses.

Why would this pagan ruler have any interest in first of all, letting the captive Jews free, and secondly, financing the rebuilding of their temple in Jerusalem. Ezra's words at second Chronicles 36:22 tell us,

**“Jehovah stirred the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia”**

Jehovah can maneuver events to make sure his word is fulfilled. He can use anyone to accomplish his purpose, and this would include even a foreign king like Cyrus. So, with this decree, the Jews returned to Judah.

Launching a construction project, and resettling an entire city was a major undertaking. High priest Jeshua and Governors Zerubbabel were appointed to take the lead in setting up the altar, and rebuilding the temple. But, this wasn't without its challenges. Enemies of Judah sought to sabotage the building of the temple, attempting to disrupt the peace.

Initial attempts to halt the building progress fail however, eventually these enemies succeeded in having an official ban placed on the temple building work. What was the problem here? It appears the Jews let fear of man stop the building work. After about 14 years of constant opposition.

Now, there's a bigger picture at play here. Remember Daniel's prophecy foretold that Jerusalem and its temple would be rebuilt before the Messiah arrived? Yet, with the work halted, the temple remained unfinished. What would that mean for the coming of the Messiah? Jeshua and Zerubbabel needed guidance. This is where Jehovah steps in to provide encouragement, first through the prophet Haggai.

Haggai's clear and powerful message gets right to the heart of the matter. He conveys Jehovah's direction to get up and keep building the temple despite opposition. The Jews had a decision to make here. Would they allow opposition to hinder the work, or, would they listen to Jehovah's words through Haggai and keep rebuilding the temple. To guide them further, Jehovah spoke to the prophet Zechariah and gave him visions to provide the Jews with a message.

Zechariah made it clear to the Jews that Jehovah would not allow their opposers to harm them or thwart the temple rebuilding work. It was only with Jehovah's guidance that the Jews would succeed. Energized by Jehovah's motivating words through these two prophets, they courageously resumed construction of the temple and it was inaugurated in 515 BCE.

Now it seems that at some point over the following decades, the Jews lost their initial zeal.

The temple was rebuilt and inaugurated, but Jerusalem's walls and gates remained unfinished with huge gaps left in them. And that was significant because the city was surrounded by enemy nations. Without the protection of these walls, Jerusalem seemed vulnerable. When Nehemiah learned of this, he was visibly distressed.

What's going on Hanani? How are the people?

Not good. The conditions are disgraceful.

The walls of Jerusalem are broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.

What about the temple?

It stands, but the services are nothing but empty rituals. Most of the people, and the priests, ignore God's law.

Nehemiah must have been shocked to hear about the condition of Jerusalem. At this time, he was serving as cup-bearer to the Persian king in Shushan. The journey from Shushan to Jerusalem was about a thousand miles, still, Nehemiah felt compelled to act.

Nehemiah rejoiced at the prospect of rebuilding the walls. The Jews at this time, were still fearful of their opposers, but Nehemiah was intent on changing that. He knew that Jehovah was behind the work, and if Jehovah is behind something, there's no amount of opposition that can thwart his will. So, the wall repairs begin.

This isn't to say that there were not challenges along the way. Opposers did not give up.

I recommend we turn the accusation of sedition against Nehemiah.

That's brilliant.

Yes, he will beg for our help.

These opposers threatened the Jews. Schemed against them, and even accused Nehemiah of treason. Nehemiah's peace, and the peace of the Jews supporting the work was threatened. But despite the attempts of opposers, Nehemiah and the Jews looked to Jehovah for guidance and kept working.

When Jehovah declares his purpose, there is nothing that can prevent him from carrying it out. So if Jehovah wanted a rebuilt Jerusalem, complete with rebuilt walls, Nehemiah would have complete faith in Jehovah's ability to support the rebuilding efforts. And with this support, the city walls were completed in just 52 days.

Nehemiah, the wall is complete.

That's it.

With rebuilt walls, and a rebuilt temple, physically the city was in good condition. However, about 12 years later Nehemiah returned to Shushan. During his prolonged absence, the spiritual state of the Jews deteriorated. It was so sad. As many in Israel fell back into bad practices. Some in the priesthood including high priest Elijah no longer took their responsibilities seriously, therefore, Jehovah raised up the prophet Malachi to counsel the negligent priests.

Why have you Levites despised Jehovah's name?

Despised it?

You present a blind, lame, or sick animal as a sacrifice and say that it is nothing bad. Should Jehovah accept it from your hand? And there's another thing you do so that he no longer looks favourably on anything you offer, because you betray the wife of your youth, although she's your partner, your legal wife. The lips of a priest should safeguard knowledge and people should seek the law from his mouth. But you, you have made many stumble.

Evidently Malachi's words had little effect on the priesthood. Despite his warnings, the people refused to change. When Nehemiah returned, what he found shocked him.

For a long time the priests, and the Levites have not taken their duties seriously. When the people saw that, they stopped bringing in tithes. Without the tithes, most Levites and singers returned to their fields.

Did Elijah not tell the people to bring your provisions.

In your absence, the prophet Malachi warned him, and all the priests. But Elijah, he took our storeroom, emptied it of our provisions. He gave it to Tobiah to use as a dining hall.

In addition to no longer providing financial support, the people started conducting business on

the sabbath.

What are you selling today? Only the best quality fish from Tyre.

They were marrying foreign women.

I'm marrying Gizla today.

Gizla? That Mobite girl? I heard you bind yourself with an oath, and a curse, not to take a wife from the nations.

This action could have disrupted the line to the Messiah, and it definitely threatened to contaminate pure worship. These men were bringing the restored nation into disfavour with Jehovah. This is the same reason why Jehovah allowed Babylon to destroy Jerusalem in the first place.

So, Nehemiah took action against these faithless ones.

Please, cleanse this room, and replace the utensils.

Yes my lord.

And gather all the Levites, the singers, the deputy rulers to me. I'm assigning them all back to their posts.

He enforced the strict observance of the sabbath.

What's the meaning of this? I had to sleep on the ground last night.

You know God's law, no work, no business on the sabbath. Go, you and all the Levites. Guard the gates and keep the sabbath holy. Don't let anyone in.

He disciplined those who had taken foreign wives.

Did you not swear never to marry someone who doesn't serve Jehovah?

Nehemiah, nobody, cares. Ah.

Did you not?

Yes, yes.

Then why have you ignored the command of Jehovah and your own oath?

There's no doubt Jehovah was guiding Nehemiah's efforts all along. After a spiritual cleansing was done, a measure of peace was again enjoyed. And with this, the vigorous rooting out of apostasy, the record of the Hebrew scriptures comes to a close.

Now, we don't have an inspired record of events in the centuries leading up to Jesus birth but, history shows that Jerusalem underwent several changes during these years. The Medo-

Persian empire was overtaken by Greece, represented by the copper belly, and thighs, of Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. While the city seemed to survive the change in control, without any physical damage, its spiritual state was threatened.

The Greek empire set the stage for the spread of Greek language, culture, and religious thought. And Israel was affected by this influence.

Years later, king Antiochus IV was determined to eradicate Jewish worship and customs. He went so far as to sacrifice a pig to the Greek God Zeus at the temple of Jehovah. This was a vicious attempt to defile, and stamp out pure worship. However, the desecration had the opposite effect. It sparked an uprising of zealous Jews, and three years later, they cleansed the temple and rededicated it to Jehovah.

About a century later, Jerusalem experienced another change in rulership as Rome became the dominant world power. Rome corresponded to the legs of iron in Nebuchadnezzar's dream image. Under the rule of Herod the Great, Jerusalem enjoyed considerable prosperity. Herod's greatest work however was the reconstruction of the temple, and its building complex.

The temple, and its daily sacrifices remained in operation down to Jesus day. The bible record picks up before Jesus was born to us.

May Jehovah have mercy on us!

What's happening?

Is the sun up already?

Are they.... are they angels?

Do not be afraid, for look, I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, for today, there was born to you, in David city, a Savior, who is Christ, the lord.

Jesus birth and ministry fulfilled many prophecies. In 29 CE, Jehovah anointed Jesus with holy spirit. This corresponds exactly to the words of Daniel's prophecy that Jehovah gave him more than 500 years earlier. The promised Messiah had arrived.

Early in his ministry, Jesus read these words from the prophecy of Isaiah.

The scroll of Isaiah the prophet reads,

**“Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me, to declare good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, and a recovery of sight to the blind. To send the crushed ones away free, to preach Jehovah's acceptable year”.**

Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.

Holy spirit empowered Jesus to perform many miracles in just a few short years on earth. This had a profound effect on the people living in his day.

I'm a very sick woman I've suffered from a flow of blood for some 12 years. He can heal me. Even if I could touch, just the fringes of his outer garment, I will get well.

Who touched my other garments? Who touched me?

Please, please forgive me my lord. It was I that touched you. I have faith in you. I knew that if I could just touch the fringes of your outer garment, I could get well.

Take courage daughter, your faith has made you well.

The miracles Jesus performed were unlike anything that people had seen before. Finally, the people had hope. A hope for the future, a hope for peace. He even demonstrated that he had power far beyond any human ruler.

Lord, Mary is here.

Lord, if you've been here, my brother would not have died.

Lazarus come out!

Free him, and let him go.

There is so much we can learn from Jesus miracles, works, and teachings. They reveal Jehovah's purpose, and power. They show how enjoyable, how peaceful life will be under God's Messianic ruler.

Humans alive at this time could see visible proof of this. Jesus ministry accomplished so much in just three and a half years, and prophecy regarding the Messiah continued to be fulfilled as his opposers succeeded in putting him to death.

With the sacrifice of Jesus perfect human life, the entire arrangement for worshipping Jehovah had changed. There was no longer a need for animal sacrifices. Pure worship was no longer centred around the temple in Jerusalem. The only way to worship Jehovah acceptably was through the Messiah, Now people everywhere could find the way to peace through faith in Jesus ransom sacrifice.

The Jewish system of worship under the Mosaic law was over. Jerusalem and the temple no longer had Jehovah's favour. Jesus perfect human sacrifice was the only solution for lasting peace.

So, what did this mean for the city of Jerusalem and the temple? Well, before his death, Jesus provided his followers with a warning regarding Jerusalem's destruction. In Luke 21:20-21 he says,

**“When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near. Let those in the midst of her leave. And let those in the countryside not enter into her”.**

A good ruler guides his people. Although it wasn't yet time for him to take the throne as ruler of God's kingdom, Jesus by the way he acted, gave us insight into the kind of ruler he would be.

By providing first century Christians with a warning to leave Jerusalem and all Judea, he was guiding them and protecting them.

Jesus prophesied the destruction of the city, and just a few decades later that prophecy came true.

The Roman empire still had control of Judea, and tensions ran high between the Romans and the Jews. Eventually the Jews revolted against Roman rule.

With the city surrounded and Roman forces closing in, it seemed there was no way out, but Jehovah's word cannot go unfulfilled. For no apparent reason, the Roman forces withdrew.

For faithful Christians, this was their opportunity. It's simple, those who followed Jesus direction to leave Judea were guided to safety. For those who delayed, escape became difficult or impossible.

There was no doubt, Jerusalem no longer enjoyed Jehovah's special favour and protection.

The city and its temple were completely destroyed.

There are parallels we can draw from the warning Jesus gave to those first century Christians, to the warning we have been given for our day.

Jesus gave us one composite sign that indicates the destruction of this current system of things is very close. Prophecies in the bible give us no doubt, we are living in "the last days".

Jehovah has not revealed all the details of how everything will work out, but we know that everything he has revealed will come true. This includes details outlining how world events would unfold in the time of the end, before mankind would experience permanent peace.

Remember Daniel's prophecy indicated that there would be only one dominant world power in place at the time of the end. By world war one, the power represented by the feet of iron and clay had emerged. During that war, Britain and America forged a partnership that continued through the second world war.

This means a special relationship between the British commonwealth and empire and the United States of America. Neither the sure prevention of war, nor the continuous rise of world organization will be gained without what I have called the fraternal association of the English-speaking people.

These two countries continue to be a dual English-speaking world power. The characteristics of iron and clay used to represent this world power are significant.

And as the toes of the feet were partly of iron and partly of clay, so the kingdom will be partly strong, and partly fragile.

In times, the United States and Britain have displayed iron-like strength through their involvement in armed conflicts. However, iron mixed with clay is considerably weakened. This can be observed as common people undermine the Anglo-American world power's ability to act with iron-like strength.

As the political and social developments foretold in the bible come to a climax, we have a measure of peace. We know Jehovah will guide his people even as the world's spiritual and moral condition sinks to new depths.

As many in the first century, Jerusalem continued their lives as if nothing had changed, so too today, many continue on with their lives. Meanwhile we remain alert as we see fulfillment of bible prophecy right before our eyes.

In the days of those kings, the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be destroyed. The book of revelation tells us what will soon happen.

The political rulers of the world will give the United Nations unprecedented power and authority. The apostle Paul foretold that the nations will declare "Peace and Security", but, it won't prove to be true peace. The nations supporting the UN will attack the institutions of false religion. Then a coalition of earth's governments, that the prophet Ezekiel calls Gog of the land of Magog, will attack God's people. Yet, we don't need to be fearful. That's when we can put into action all of the lessons we've learned. Those who trust and obey Jehovah's guidance can look to the near future with confidence.

As we've seen, Jehovah has always been in control of the situation. He has never guided his people in a certain direction, then fail to provide for them. That's why we can say that the lessons we learned from the faithful men we've studied are more than just lessons. This has been Jehovah paving the way for peace, from the start.

Looking back, we see exactly how Jehovah has led his people. It took many years but, he's been in control the whole time. Would it make sense to think he isn't in control anymore?

No power in heaven, or on earth, can prevent Jehovah from accomplishing his express purpose. He has never relinquished control, and he is still guiding his people.

Now, think about this. If Jehovah has guided his people to this point, we can have full confidence that trust, and obedience to his direction, will prove to be our salvation. Even if a way out seems impossible.

Jehovah is all powerful. He's going to help us through whatever we may face. We won't have to fight, and we won't need to fear annihilation. Jehovah has things under control.

And this kingdom will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush, and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it alone will stand forever.

God's kingdom will fill and renew the entire earth. Jehovah's promises will be completely fulfilled. Lasting peace will finally become a reality for all mankind.

Just imagine what faithful servants have to look forward to under Jesus heavenly rule.

He will be able to provide what no man ever could. Can you imagine what that will be like?

**“For look, I am creating new heavens, and a new earth, and the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart. The righteous will possess the earth and they will live forever”.**

**“He will swallow up death forever, and the sovereign Lord Jehovah will wipe away the tears from all faces”.**

**“He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away”.**

**“At that time, the eyes of the blind will be open, and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped”.**

**“At that time the lame will leap like the deer, and the tongue of the speechless will shout for joy, for waters will burst forth in the wilderness, and streams in the desert plane”.**

**“They will build houses and live in them. And they will plant vineyards, and eat their fruitage, for the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and the work of their hands my chosen ones will enjoy to the full, but the meek will possess the earth and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace”.**

What a faith strengthening drama. We are at peace knowing that Jehovah is in complete control.

All in attendance will be pleased to know that parts 1 and 2 of the drama documentary, “Jehovah guides us in the way of peace” are available now for download on [jw.org](http://jw.org), and in the JW library app.

Have you enjoyed the original songs that have been featured at recent conventions? We now have the privilege of watching a video medley, and reflecting on the lessons we have learned at our conventions over the past few years. Enjoy.

Doubt and fear surround me, The way ahead not clear. Through uncertainty you guide me; I know you're always near. Life may not be easy, But this I know is true: You're the God who's ever loyal; My life is safe with you.

Jehovah, give me eyes of faith And help me always see. There are more with us than against us. Courageous let me be. Courage, give me courage; With courage, I'll endure. Jehovah, give me courage; Your victory is sure.

Feeling fear is human. In my own strength, I'm frail. You have been my rock and refuge; Your power never fails. Help me be courageous, And let my heart be brave. Lasting harm can never hold me, No prison, gate, or grave.

Jehovah, give me eyes of faith And help me always see, There are more with us than against

us. Courageous let me be. Courage, give me courage; With courage, I'll endure. Jehovah, give me courage; Your victory is sure.

Jehovah, give me eyes of faith And help me always see, There are more with us than against us. Courageous let me be. Courage, give me courage; With courage, I'll endure. Jehovah, give me courage; Your victory is sure. Jehovah, give me courage; Your victory is sure.

Look around us now; See the love on each face Out there in the world, hard to find. All these faithful friends, With the love they all show, Glad to leave that old world behind.

Love never fails; that's promised. It always will endure.

Love,unfailing love, That's what Jehovah gives. That's what he is. Love, unfailing love That's what we need to live. And the love here today, In our heart may it stay, Unfailing love.

Though sometimes it seems, Like the cares of this life, Weigh us down and feel hard to bear, Giving brings us joy When we share faith and hope, Comforted by God's loving care.

Love will remain; that's promised. It always will endure.

Love,unfailing love, That's what Jehovah gives. That's what he is. Love, unfailing love, That's what we need to live. And the love here today, In our heart may it stay.

Love, unfailing love, That's what Jehovah gives. That's what he is. Love, unfailing love, That's what we need to live. And the love here today, In our heart may it stay, Unfailing love, Unfailing love, Unfailing love.

The stars that fill the summer night Look down from above. The beauty of the day and night You fashioned with love. Your hands prepared the land and sea, And ev'rything that came to be Brought joy to your heart.

There is joy in your creation, In the message of salvation, And the Paradise to come. But to have your love forever, Is a real and lasting treasure. You alone will prove to be, Our joy eternally.

Jehovah, we have all we need To bring us delight, The things we hear and touch and see, And feel deep inside. You gave us such a perfect start, Eternity in ev'ry heart, And joy in our lives.

There is joy in your creation, In the message of salvation, And the Paradise to come. But to have your love forever, Is a real and lasting treasure. You alone will prove to be, Our joy eternally.

This joy could not be ours Without the gift of your Son. His sacrifice has paid the price, So joy could be ours for all time.

There is joy in your creation, In the message of salvation, And the Paradise to come. But to have your love forever, Is a real and lasting treasure. You alone will prove to be, Our joy eternally.

There is joy in your creation, In the message of salvation, And the Paradise to come. But to have your love forever, Is a real and lasting treasure. You alone will prove to be, Our joy eternally.

Our next song encourages us to look ahead with confidence. The song is entitled,

***“See yourself when all is new”***

Let's sing together song number 139. That's song number 139.

***SUNDAY AFTERNOON PART 2***

Each year we look forward to the high quality video presentations that have become a highlight of our conventions. Work is underway on videos and dramas for future conventions. The set construction and other work needed for the series “The good news according to Jesus” is well along. Additionally, planning and construction of our new media production facility in the United States is moving ahead steadily. All of these efforts are supported by voluntary donations.

If you would like to have a share in supporting the worldwide work of Jehovah's witnesses, one way you can do so is through your financial contributions. For more information please visit [donate.jw.org](http://donate.jw.org).

We have seen that Jehovah promises us a future filled with happiness and peace. How will universal peace come about and what will it mean for mankind?

Please pay close attention to brother Jeffrey Jackson, a member of the Governing Body, as he answers those questions in the final talk of this convention entitled,

***“Universal Peace is Sure to Come”***

What is true peace? For those who live in lands where they have wars, no doubt the focus they have on true peace is to stop fighting, to stop the conflicts, to not have any wars.

And it's true that peace does include an absence of war, but, in many cases the efforts of mankind to try and gain peace by stopping wars is similar to what we say is a band-aid solution.

What do we mean by that? Well, a person may have a horrible sore, perhaps even cancerous, and if he just puts a band-aid over the top, maybe it hides the sore, but really doesn't solve the problem, does it?

Because peace is not just an end of war. You know yourself, if you were to live in a country where there isn't any war, but still you're worried about your health, your well-being, and your safety, or if you feel sick, and hungry, would you say that you're having a peaceful life? Of course not.

According to the Bible, the word peace means far more than just an absence of war. It means good health, well-being, and safety. And from our convention, we've seen that there's a lot involved with true peace. It includes having a peaceful relationship with Jehovah God. It also means having a peaceful relationship with others. And also it includes the peace of heart and

mind that gives us tranquility.

But now, in this final talk, we're going to consider a bigger issue, and that is universal peace.

Now, what do we mean by universal peace? What we mean by universal peace is a type of peace that is everywhere, in heaven, and on earth. In all aspects of life. It's the type of peace that only the God of peace, Jehovah can bring, along with the Prince of Peace Jesus Christ.

Soon they will take dramatic steps toward the restoration of universal peace.

Let's take our bibles, and if we turn together to Romans chapter 16 and verse 20, we'll see what's included in this restoration of universal peace. That's Romans 16 and verse 20, there we're told,

**“For his part, the God who gives peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. May the undeserved kindness of our Lord Jesus be with you”.**

Yes, the restoration of universal peace also includes the crushing of Satan the Devil. So, in our final discussion, the final talk of this convention, we're going to consider four basic questions.

The first one is;

When was universal peace disturbed?

Secondly, who will restore universal peace?

The third question, How will it be restored?

And then finally, we're going to think about what further blessings mankind will enjoy at that time.

But before we go on to answer those questions, let's review together the program that we've had. I'm sure you'll agree, this has been a beautiful convention and it's encouraged us to pursue peace. But what are some of the good points that you remember from the program?

Well, as we mentioned already, there are three aspects to peace that we discussed. First of all, our peace with Jehovah God.

The Friday program finished with the final talk, and that's where it mentions about not being misled by imitation peace. And then Sunday, what a beautiful public discourse we had. It said that that friendship with God, how possible? And then the second aspect of our peace is peace with one another.

The first day, remember we had that beautiful symposium on family peace? What were some of the things that we need to do to have peace in our family? Well, love and respect are important. We need to improve our communication with one another. We need to work as a team, and worship together.

And then Saturday, we had another interesting symposium when it said about peace wreckers. Things that can wreck peace. Do you remember some of those?

Inappropriate Boasting, Envy, Dishonesty, Harmful Gossip and Uncontrolled Anger.

And then the third aspect of peace deals with our personal peace, our inner calm despite trials.

On Saturday, we had a very interesting talk that mentions the need to safeguard our "Bond of Peace".

And then on Sunday, we went through another symposium where it gave examples of those who had sowed peace, and then reaped peace.

As we look through the program, I'm sure there's so many points that you can remember that you enjoyed. Of course, one of the highlights at any convention is when we have the baptism.

If you were baptized at this convention, we'd like to welcome you, yes, welcome you to the Christian brotherhood, because we know that you're working hard to have peace with Jehovah God.

But now, at this point, let's watch a video that gives us some lessons with regard to what we saw in the various videos in this convention. Enjoy!

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Hey everyone, Brooke here, guess who just walked in, Olivia. And there's Jake. Would she ever?

No she would never, she's an angel.

It feels out of your control doesn't it. Remember when we studied about the Shulamite girl? Who was really in control?

She was.

You have the same power. If you believe that, it'll change how you handle the pressure.

My peace comes from doing the right. Think, I am a wall.

You're just a coward. Take your trash.

Think about what the jailer had done to Paul. He could have hated him for it.

Yeah, he could have, but I guess he saw the jailer's pain instead of just his own.

Let me show you just one scripture.

All right, one scripture.

Jehovah has taught us to love, and he's given our family peace.

Hello everyone, Hayley from DeNure Design here.

You don't think she's showing off?

Is this just about Haley?

Can you believe her?

I haven't seen all her posts.

If Celia agrees that Haley's doing something she shouldn't, you should talk to her.

I've noticed your posts lately on Quickposts.

What about them?

Some people might think you're bragging.

Who would think like that, you?

I didn't want to upset you. Jake said that I should...

Jake! So, everyone thinks my posts are inappropriate?

It's not what I'm saying at all.

You are such...

Think back to a time when you wanted forgiveness. Love is patient and kind. It's not jealous.

I'm sorry, Hayley.

Genuine affection fights peace wreckers and affection grows when we really know our brothers and sisters well.

I was always impressed with how close you two were.

Well, it wasn't always that way.

What started as a small disagreement, then exploded.

You, you're the problem.

I needed a lot of help from Jehovah to make things right with Nick.

There was a misunderstanding that got blown all out of proportion and i didn't handle it the best.

That's when our piece was really put to the test.

The body decided unanimously that he should no longer serve.

Because you pushed them.

Phil didn't know just how tense things were between Tim and I. I found comfort, and accounts of Jehovah's servants. They helped me realize that being at peace with my brothers was more important than any appointed position.

It wasn't easy, but we talked it out, and we were able to make peace with Jehovah's help.

Without peace, I don't know how he could have managed what was to come.

At that moment, when you hear the verdict that you'll stay in prison, it's like you've been knocked unconscious. But then, the doors of the elevator opened up, and in front of us...

That's Jehovah, when you're just about to lose all your strength, Jehovah does that something for you.

The Russian brothers and sisters, I pray for them constantly, because they're going through a very tough time.

What I've learned from all of this is peace isn't from what's outside, from what's going on, and what you're experiencing. I've learned that peace is on the inside, and that that comes from Jehovah.

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What priceless lessons those were. But now, at this point friends, we're going to turn our attention to that bigger issue. Universal Peace. Remember the first question we're going to answer? When was universal peace disturbed?

Before mankind was created, universal peace existed for countless ages. It was just like a beautiful pond of water that was undisturbed. No ripples. Mirror-like in appearance. In other words, there was utmost harmony with Jehovah and with all the spirit creatures.

But then, it's just as if a rock was thrown into that beautiful pond and peace started to be disturbed. When do you think that happened? Well, we'll find the answer to that question by turning to the Bible, and this time, if we look at First John chapter 3 and verse 8. That's First John chapter 3 and verse 8. Notice the answer to the question, when did the problem start. There we're told

**“The one who practices sin originates with the Devil, because the Devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was made manifest, to break up the works of the Devil”.**

So notice the answer to the question? Because the devil has been sinning from the beginning, or as the footnote says, from the time that he began.

Does that mean right from the very time when he was created? No, he wasn't the Devil then was he? He was a perfect angel. So when was it that this universal peace started to be disturbed? When was it that the ripple started to go through the universe?

Well, you might remember that it wasn't at the time that he deceived Eve. It's a little bit like the Bible says, with a woman who gives birth to a child, that's not when the child's life starts is it? It starts well before then, so likewise, this disruption of the universal peace began in heaven first. At the time, the angel, who became Satan, started to covet the position of Jehovah. To want worship from others, and by doing this, he alienated himself from God and no longer was he in harmony with Jehovah's will.

Then, that sinful attitude was manifested in the garden of Eden. That's when he took the next step and started to disturb the peace of Adam and Eve, and of course, they lost their peace with God. But let's take a moment and think about what was really involved with those events there in the garden of Eden.

Some very important issues were raised. Remember how Satan first of all spoke to Eve. He asked what seemed like a ridiculous question. Is it true that God hasn't allowed to eat you to eat from any tree in the garden? All the trees are banned? Well, of course that's ridiculous. But what was he doing? He was calling into question Jehovah's qualities, Yes, he was inferring that Jehovah may not be so generous. Maybe he's stingy. Perhaps he's holding things back from Adam and Eve things, that they really should have. And then Satan went one step further. He said, "You will not die".

Really what he was saying is, Jehovah is a liar. What a horrible accusation. Sadly, Eve didn't defend Jehovah. We would have expected that she would have said to Satan, who are you? I don't know you, why would I believe you? I know my loving heavenly father Jehovah, but no she sided with the Devil.

So, what would Jehovah do? Well, think for a moment about this. What if someone accused you wrongly in front of everybody, calling you a liar, saying all sorts of bad things about you. What would you do? Would you go and punch them in the face?

Well, if you did, that wouldn't be the right thing to do, and it certainly wouldn't answer the questions raised. You see, was that person really true in what they said, or not? How would you solve this?

Well, you may take the person to court, and in that court case, that person could offer whatever evidence they feel they have to prove that you're a liar. On the other hand, you can produce witnesses to prove that, really, you aren't a liar, but you're very truthful. And then finally, there would be a decision made as to who was right and who is wrong. Well in a similar way, these issues, these questions raised in the garden of Eden, started a symbolic court case.

So how did Jehovah respond? Wisely, he allowed time to settle these issues. He allowed Satan the opportunity to try and rule mankind, to do things his way. At the same time mercifully, he provided the hope for the unborn children of Adam and Eve.

You remember in Genesis chapter 3 verse 15 it speaks of an offspring, or a son, who would come later and eventually undo the bad that Satan had done there in the beginning, and eventually free mankind from sin and death. But what has Satan been doing since this has been given to him. He's still craving worship from other people. He wants them to bow down to him, and acknowledge him as their god. He also uses lies and deceit to blind the minds of persons, and, he also has great anger, particularly at this time in history where he knows his end is near, and so he's influencing the world to hate anyone who stands up on Jehovah's side.

But now, let's think about a very interesting question. Even though we're living in a world that is ruled by Satan, is it possible at all for us to have a measure of peace with God? We're experiencing so many trials and challenges. We face opposition. We have illness, economic problems, disasters. Is it possible to have some measure of peace?

The answer is found again in the scriptures, and this time, if you turn with me please to the book of Second Corinthians chapter 1, Second Corinthians chapter 1, and verses 3 and 4.

Notice this beautiful promise.

**“Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, 4 who comforts us in all our trials so that we may be able to comfort others in any sort of trial with the comfort that we receive from God’.**

Isn't that a beautiful scripture? What does it highlight? Notice, Jehovah obviously is aware of our suffering. He feels for us. He wants to help us. It mentions, he's the father of tender mercies. But at the same time, we realize that Jehovah won't step in and fix all our problems at this point. Why? Because this is the time that Satan has the opportunity to try and rule the world and the problems of this world really come from Satan.

At the same time, we wouldn't expect Jehovah to step in and start to solve the problems as if he were helping Satan the Devil. But there is a time when Satan will be taken away and the problems will be solved.

We can think of Jehovah's position similar to that of a father whose son is running in a marathon race. As he sees his son running in the race, he may see the sun is starting to tire him out, or perhaps, you may see that others in the race are not obeying the rules.

Does that mean that the father then jumps in, and takes the place of his son, and helps him as he runs along? No. The rules don't allow it.

But, what the father can do is continue to encourage his son, “Keep on going, yes, you can do it”. So, in a similar way, what did this verse tell us? It said that Jehovah gives us comfort. How does he do that? He gives us peace by means of his word the Bible, by means of holy spirit, and by the loving brotherhood that we have.

So, at this point, what we'd like to do is have a look at a video that will highlight how Jehovah lovingly helps us, even in times of need.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

We are living in “critical times hard to deal with”. Many people have lost all hope, and servants

of Jehovah are not free from trials. We may face loss of property, loss of health, loss of loved ones. We may experience deep emotional trauma, or even imprisonment for our faith.

Our trials are similar to those of Job, a faithful servant of Jehovah who was so saddened, that he once asked, "Why didn't I die at birth".

Perhaps we've had moments like that. But, why should we not lose hope? Because, with every trial comes Jehovah's support. Support, received in many forms, material support, emotional support, and spiritual support. And while Jehovah will not remove all our trials now, we trust that with his support, we can endure them until they disappear in the real life to come, Psalm 34:17 and 18 says,

**"They cried out, and Jehovah heard. He saves those who are crushed in spirit".**

### **VIDEO ENDS**

So we can see, even though our peace has been disturbed, we can enjoy peace with God.

So, let's think about our second question. Remember that question was, Who will restore universal peace? Well, we already saw the answer when we referred to Genesis chapter 3 verse 15. The first prophecy in the Bible. It mentioned the promised offspring, or son, and that one is Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace. He has the key role in restoring universal peace. Very soon, he's going to take the decisive action to remove this whole world, and then take progressive steps toward the restoration of universal peace.

But, why can we be so sure that Jesus will come soon? It's a very simple answer. By seeing the current events that are happening in the world today. Yes, as we look around us, we see so many things that are happening that prove to us that Jesus will soon step in to help us.

Now, how can we say that? Well, let's have a look together, at the famous prophecy that's recorded in Matthew chapter 24. Matthew 24 and verse 3. Remember, the apostles at this particular time were asking Jesus a very important question. It's at the second part of verse 3. It says, they asked,

**"Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?"**

Now, you remember, no doubt from your previous studies of the bible how Jesus then went on to list many events that would occur during the last days. He mentioned wars, he mentioned earthquakes, he mentioned famines and all sorts of pestilences. Truly, we have seen those things happen in recent times. In addition to all of that, Matthew 24:14 mentioned the need to

**"Preach the good news of the kingdom"**

But, there could be some who perhaps may doubt a little and say, well, there's been wars all through time, there's been earthquakes at other times, not just in the last days, and food shortages. So, why can we be so sure that this is the time when we know that Jesus will soon bring about an end to wickedness.

Well, let's use an illustration. Most of us are familiar with using a computer. Now, when you sit at your computer, what's the first thing that you need to do after you've turned it on? Usually you have to type in a password, don't you? And you have to get it right. You have to put in all those numbers and letters that are required, otherwise, you won't be able to start working on the computer.

Now, these days, people are very concerned about having strong passwords. What do you think if you had a password that had 24 different letters and numbers. That's a very strong password, and it would be very difficult for someone just randomly to try and find out what those numbers were and unlock your computer.

Well, how does that relate to the sign that Jesus gave? Notice that if you look back at Matthew 24 verse 3, the question was not the signs of your presence but, the sign, just like a password, one sign.

But then that sign has many different features, in fact, at least 24 different features, so even though there have been wars in the past, this is the time when we see all those features coming together at one time. And then that way, we could say, it opens the fulfillment of Bible prophecy.

Yes as we look around us, as we listen to the news each day, we can see that there is a definite fulfillment of what Jesus said. Truly, the end is close.

It's just like a jigsaw puzzle to use another illustration. When you have all the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, and you start to put them all together, eventually, when all the pieces are in place, the picture is clear isn't it? And that's exactly how we should feel about the prophecy that Jesus gave. Soon, very soon, he is going to step in and take action.

But of course, sometimes we may feel yes, we've known about this for quite some time, and it means that we've had to wait a long time. But, that doesn't negate the fact that the evidence of the last days is here.

Perhaps we could illustrate it this way. Most of us have gone to an airport to meet someone who's coming, maybe from overseas, or another part of the country. Now, since 9 /11, it's very hard to go to an airport and actually stand on the side of the runway and see the plane land. Usually what happens? Once you get to the airport, you're allowed to go into a large room with other people and all you see are monitors on the wall.

Now, what may the monitor say. Well, you see, it says there, the flight has left, then later, maybe the monitor says the flight is on time. Then it says the flight has landed. Then it says the flight is taxing, then it says, at the gate.

Well, now you start to get really excited, aren't you? And yet you haven't seen the plane, and you haven't seen your friend yet, but, you can see from the indications of what you see on the monitor that it must be close. And then all of a sudden, the doors open, people start to come out.

Well, now you're really excited because you know yes, you're going to meet your friend. Well,

that is similar to how we can view the last days. There's been a lot of things happening that we don't actually see, but we see the indications of what's happened, and we know that very soon Jesus, the angels, and the 144 000 will take steps to remove this whole world, and then take further steps toward the restoration of peace.

Isn't that a beautiful promise? So naturally, that takes us to the third question. How will universal peace be restored? What will Jesus need to do? Basically, we could say there are two actions required.

One, is to remove Satan and the peace disturbers, and then the second action is to undo all the evil that Satan has done.

You see, we don't want a band-aid solution do we, where you're just hiding something that's very serious by putting a band-aid over it. So, not only does Jesus need to take away those that are disrupting the peace, but, he also has to take steps to heal mankind, and to heal the earth so that all the evil the bad things that Satan has done will be overturned.

So, let's think about those two actions for a moment. Remember the first one is to remove the peace disturbance. What steps are involved with that?

Remember, this is a progressive action. If we take our Bibles and turn to the book of Revelation, we'll see there are several things mentioned here that help us to see how progressively Jesus has, and will, bring about this removal of peace disturbance. If you turn with me please to Revelation chapter 12. Let's read together verse 9. Revelation 12.

Now immediately, no doubt you remember that Revelation 12 is talking about the time when Jesus government, his kingdom was established in the heavens. That was in 1914. In verse 9, it mentions what happened shortly after that time. Let's read it,

**“So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him”.**

Do you notice the word that came up several times, “Hurled down”. You see, Jesus didn't go and say to Satan well look, um, if you don't mind, uh, we'd like you to relocate you to the earth. Whenever you're ready. No, Satan was hurled down, and what confidence that gives us. That means that Jesus has the power to be able to remove Satan from the heaven.

That gives us some idea what's going to happen in the future with regard to the earth. Of course, now we're living in a time when Satan and his demons are here in the vicinity of the earth, and they are causing so much trouble.

So, what's another step that Jesus will take in removing those who disrupt the peace. Well, let's look at another chapter in the same book, Revelation chapter 19. Revelation chapter 19 and we're going to read starting at verse 19 right through to 21.

We might mention before we start reading it that here, it describes political organizations. Kings and those who oppose Jesus and Jehovah God. And in a symbolic way, It refers to these as beasts, as organizations that have disrupted the peace. Let's see what happens to them.

**“And I saw the wild beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the one seated on the horse and against his army”.**

Now, that one is Jesus Christ.

**“20 And the wild beast was caught, and along with it the false prophet that performed in front of it the signs with which he misled those who received the mark of the wild beast and those who worship its image. While still alive, they both were hurled into the fiery lake that burns with sulphur. 21 But the rest were killed off with the long sword that proceeded out of the mouth of the one seated on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh”.**

So, what happens to these political organizations in opposition to Jehovah and Jesus? Again we see the word “Hurled down” into destruction.

And what about the rest of mankind that opposes Jesus rule? Well, let's look at verse 21. What does it say?

**“But the rest were killed off with the long sword that proceeded out of the mouth of the one seated on the horse. And all the birds were filled with their flesh”**

Now, that's a very interesting comment isn't it. It helps us to see here that all those who oppose Jesus will be destroyed in the battle of Armageddon. So, that's another step in getting ready for universal peace.

First of all, Satan is cast out of heaven, and then secondly at Armageddon all those humans who rebel against Jesus, and, and uh, reject his rule, they will be taken away, destroyed, but there's something else too.

Let's look at chapter 20 of Revelation. Chapter 20 and verses 1-3 says,

**“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss, and a great chain in his hand. 2 He seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for 1,000 years. 3 And he hurled him into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him, so that he would not mislead the nations anymore until the 1,000 years were ended. After this he must be released for a little while”.**

What do we notice from this description? You see gradually, in a progressive manner, Jesus will eradicate and remove those who disrupt peace. So Satan and his demons cast down to the earth, at the battle of Armageddon, those who rebel, will be destroyed, and then Satan will be put in a symbolic prison, in this abyss, for a thousand years, along with his demons.

So, that's the first action that Jesus needs to do to get rid of these troublemakers. That opens up the way for what the Bible refers to as the thousand-year reign of Jesus Christ with his kingdom and co-rulers.

What is going to happen during that thousand year reign? Remember we said it's not a band-aid type solution is it. He will need to help mankind and the earth to heal.

Notice, please how this is described for us in a scripture that we've already read. Let's turn to it again, First John chapter 3 and verse 8.

Remember, in the beginning of that verse, that's where it told us how universal peace was disrupted in the beginning, at the time when that angel became the Devil and started sinning.

But notice what it says in the second part of this verse.

**“For this purpose, the son of God was made manifest”**

to do what?

**“To break up”**

or to destroy

**“The works of the devil”**

Isn't that an amazing concept? Jesus not only removes those who disrupt peace but he will break up the works of the Devil. The things that he's done over these thousands of years that he's been ruling this earth.

That means all the evil, all the suffering, death, all of that will be taken away. Mankind will be gradually healed.

Now Jesus started to break up the works of the Devil when he willingly gave his life as a ransom. So, even now, we have the opportunity to gain a measure of peace with Jehovah and with others. We can ask Jehovah for forgiveness based on the ransom sacrifice.

But during the thousand-year reign, there'll be further things that Jesus will accomplish. Notice these three aspects.

He will undo all harm. Now that includes sickness, war, disease, famine, all these problems. All the harm will be undone. He will also undo death by resurrecting those who have died. And he will also undo sin by helping mankind to grow to perfection.

Isn't that a beautiful promise. Undoing all these “works of the Devil”, and then by the end of the thousand years, what will we see with regard to the earth? It will be a paradise. It will be exactly as Jehovah purposed it to be in the beginning. Yes, Jesus, by means of the kingdom, will have completely broken up the works of the Devil.

Now, is that the time then when universal peace is restored? No, not quite yet. Why not? Something else has to happen. And we're going to re-read another scripture, and that's Romans 16.

Remember, we referred to that in the beginning, and here, we see a very interesting connection between two different things. So that's Romans 16 verse 20,

**“For his part, the God who gives peace”.**

Will do what?

**“Will Crush Satan under your feet shortly”.**

Do we see the connection here? Universal peace is connected with the crushing of Satan the Devil. So, universal peace can only be restored after Satan has been destroyed.

Now, what events will occur leading up to Satan's destruction? Well, remember, as we read already in Revelation. Satan is going to be allowed to be released from that prison, the symbolic prison, and he'll have an opportunity to try to mislead people who are living on the earth at that time. Those who join Satan will be destroyed forever. Then Satan will be permanently destroyed.

But what will happen to those perfect persons who prove faithful to Jehovah. Let's see what the bible says. If we turn to the book of Romans, Romans chapter 8 and verse 21, Romans 8 21.

**“...that the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God”.**

What does that really mean? It means that at that point everyone will become part of Jehovah's universal family. All intelligent creatures in heaven and on earth will be united as one family in the pure worship of the one true God Jehovah. What a beautiful time that will be.

But, what further blessings are involved with this process of gradually bringing universal peace? Well, during the thousand-year reign of Jesus, there's going to be wonderful blessings. Those who are obedient to Jehovah, and Jesus, will experience the things that were described in the bible book of Psalms. In Psalm 72.

Let's turn to that together. Psalm 72, and here we see portrayed some very interesting prophetic statements about the thousand year reign. You'll notice at the beginning what it says regarding Solomon.

So, although initially this was referring to an extent with regard to Solomon, but Jesus mentioned that he's greater than Solomon, so, this has a prophetic application to the thousand-year reign. Let's see what it says about peace, starting at verse 1. We'll go through to verse 4.

**“O God, give your judgments to the king, And endow the son of the king with your righteousness. 2 May he plead the cause of your people with righteousness, And of your lowly ones with justice. 3 May the mountains bring peace to the people, And may the hills bring righteousness. 4 Let him defend the lowly among the people, Let him save the sons of the poor, And let him crush the defrauder”.**

What a beautiful description of what will happen in the thousand year reign. Yes, all those who, under Satan's rule were lowly, beaten up, disadvantaged, all these will experience relief because of the righteous rule of Jesus Christ.

Let's go down a little further to verses 12 through 14. It tells us a little more about what Jesus will accomplish. Starting in verse 12 we're told,

**“For he will rescue the poor who cry for help, Also the lowly one and whoever has no helper. 13 He will have pity on the lowly and the poor, And the lives of the poor he will save. 14 From oppression and from violence he will rescue them, And their blood will be precious in his eyes.”**

What does that mean? Their blood will be precious in his eyes?

In the bible, usually the word blood is associated with life, isn't it? So, it's saying that each person's life will be precious to Jesus Christ. What a beautiful description of what will happen during the thousand year reign.

Then if we go back a little to verse 5, we'll notice that this part of the Psalm helps us to see how widespread peace will be at that point. It uses very picturesque language. Notice there in verse 5 it says,

**“They will fear you as long as there is a sun”**

Well, we know the sun continues on, so they'll continue to fear him,

**“and as long as the moon remains, For generation after generation. He will be like the rain that falls on the moan grass, like showers of rain that water the earth. In his days, the righteous will flourish, and peace will abound until the moon is no more. He will have subjects from sea to sea, and from the River, to the ends of the earth.”.**

Yes, what a beautiful description of the peaceful arrangements that will prevail during the thousand-year-reign of Jesus' kingdom. But then, the thousand years finishes. What can we expect when that reign ends?

I'm sure you're going to enjoy our consideration of a very special part of the scriptures, First Corinthians chapter 15. Please turn there with me and we're going to go through and look at what these verses tell us about after the end of the thousand year reign.

The section of scripture we're going to consider is First Corinthians chapter 15 verses 24 through 28. Starting in verse 24 we're told,

**“Next, the end, when he hands over the Kingdom to his God and Father, when he has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power. 25 For he must rule as king until God has put all enemies under his feet. 26 And the last enemy, death, is to be brought to nothing 27 For God “subjected all things under his feet.” But when he says that ‘all things have been subjected, it is evident that this does not include the One who subjected all things to him 28 But when all things will have been subjected to him, then the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone”.**

What do these verses tell us about the end of the thousand year reign? Well let's go back to verse 24. There it says,

## **“Next, the end”.**

Now this end mentioned here is not Armageddon. This is the end of the thousand-year reign. At the end of the thousand-year reign, there are some other things too that will have finished.

That means, first start the end of the kingdom arrangement, there will also be an end to sin, which means that mankind will no longer need the ransom or a mediator or priesthood. And then verse 26, now this says,

**“The last enemy, death is brought to nothing.”.**

In other words, the graves will be emptied. Those who have experienced the Adamic death will have been brought back. Mankind will all attain to perfection with the end of sin, Adamic sin. So, at that point in time, something very, very special happens. What is it?

Well, let's go back in the beginning of our discussion. When we talked about the problems that occurred in the garden of Eden. Remember Satan the Devil raised some issues that resulted in a symbolic court case that involves the sanctification of Jehovah's name, yet, Satan had claimed that Jehovah is a liar, that he doesn't rule mankind out of love. He even raised a question later about who would actually serve Jehovah.

So, this issue has continued on the issue of the sanctification of Jehovah's name, right down through history. And over and over again, Jehovah's name has been sanctified. His reputation has been vindicated. We can see that he's a loving God, unlike Satan, such a horrible person. But Jehovah has stood out as being the loving heavenly father.

So now, at this point in time, we can say the universal court case comes to a conclusion. The issue is settled, the verdict is given.

In what way? Well Jesus has just finished ruling mankind for a thousand years along with 144,000. They've made the earth a paradise. Mankind is now no longer sinners, they're perfect. All the problems have been healed. So, at this point in time, what does Jesus do?

Does he follow the example of Satan and say, well, you know, I think we did a very, very good job for this thousand years, so, let's just keep everything in place and we'll keep on ruling in the kingdom.

No, we saw what he does. At that point in time there's a marvellous answer in this court case because Jesus hands over the kingdom back to his father. He submits to Jehovah's rule, and it's just as if Jehovah is told by his loving son Jesus, you were right all along, this whole thing has been a terrible travesty of justice. Satan is a despicable liar, and all mankind, including Jesus and 144 000 submit themselves to Jehovah's rulership.

Yes, the end of the universal issue.

Jehovah will then rule directly over perfect mankind. But, is that the point in time when universal peace is restored. Now remember that some other things need to occur. We've already mentioned that Satan will be released from his symbolic prison. He'll have an

opportunity to try and mislead some and those who side with him.

Jehovah morally and ethic doesn't have to wait any longer and say, well, let's have another court case. No, they are executed immediately.

But what about the rest of mankind?

They become Jehovah's sons and daughters. They can talk to him directly without the need of a mediator, and their names will be written permanently in the book of life. They'll be approved to live forever in paradise.

So at this point when we're thinking about all these beautiful things that will occur, let's enjoy the final video of our convention. It highlights the blessings of the thousand year reign and beyond.

And also, we're going to listen to the original song that we'll sing at the conclusion of our program.

### **VIDEO STARTS**

Like an island of calm, In dark stormy seas, God's people are living in peace. With our eyes of faith,  
We see beyond the clouds, And know that the storm soon will cease.

To the ends of the earth, There'll be peace at last For all eternity. From the valleys below To the  
mountaintops, All creation will see Peace at last.

When the new world is here, All will be one On earth and in heaven above. And the peace we'll know  
We've never known before, A world ruled by justice and love.

To the ends of the earth, There'll be peace at last, For all eternity. From the valleys below, To the  
mountaintops, All creation will see, Peace at last.

To the ends of the earth, There'll be peace at last, For all eternity. From the valleys below, To the  
mountaintops, All creation will see.

To the ends of the earth, There'll be peace at last, For all eternity. From the valleys below, To the  
mountaintops, All creation will see, Peace at last, Peace at last!

### **VIDEO ENDS**

What a beautiful song, and what beautiful images to encourage us. So brothers and sisters, we've enjoyed our convention program haven't we. Let us be determined to keep pursuing peace. Not an imitation peace, but the real peace. We can enjoy rich blessings now, by having a peaceful relationship with Jehovah God.

Yes, trying to continue to maintain peace with one another, and also attaining to this inner peace, calmness, and tranquility, because we have friendship with the God who gives us hope. And that hope helps us to look to the future, even though we have difficulties now, and we look forward to the time when universal peace is finally restored.

But in the meantime, may the God of peace be with each one of you now, and forever.

Thank you brother Jackson. Your talk, and this entire convention, has strengthened our

confidence in Jehovah's prophetic word, and helped us to understand how close we are to its fulfillment.

On behalf of the Governing Body and all the hard-working members of our Bethel families and translation offices around the world, we thank you for watching the 2022 convention program.

We have deep appreciation and affection for each one of you, and it is our prayer that Jehovah continue to bless you with peace.

Let's conclude by singing a song that reflects the complete peace that Jehovah will soon bring about. Please join in singing the original song, Peace at Last, which we heard during the concluding talk. After the song, you may have your concluding prayer at your individual locations.

Now, we invite all to sing out along with the Watchtower chorus,

***“Peace At Last”.***