

- Song 88 and Prayer
- Opening Comments (3 min. or less)

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD

- “Keep Training Your Conscience”: (10 min.)

[Play the video Introduction to Romans.]

2:14, 15

Our conscience will serve us well if we

1. train it according to Bible principles
2. listen to it when it reminds us of those principles
3. pray for holy spirit to help us overcome the influence of our imperfect flesh.—Ro 9:1

- (Romans 9:1) 9 I am telling the truth in Christ; I am not lying, as my conscience bears witness with me in holy spirit,

[Box on page 2]

What Bible principles should I consider . . .

- when deciding whether or not to drink alcoholic beverages?

- when choosing my dress and grooming?

Ro 2:14, 15—Every person has a conscience (lvs 18 ¶6)

(Romans 2:14, 15) 14 For when people of the nations, who do not have law, do by nature the things of the law, these people, although not having law, are a law to themselves. 15 They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.

*** lvs chap. 2 p. 18 par. 6 A Good Conscience With God ***

6 Even people who do not know Jehovah usually realize that there are things that are right and things that are wrong. The Bible says: “By their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.” (Romans 2:14, 15) For example, most people know that it is wrong to murder or to steal. Though they may not realize it, they are actually listening to their conscience, the sense of right and wrong that Jehovah put inside of them. They are also following God’s principles, or the basic truths Jehovah has provided to help us to make good choices in life.

Ro 2:15—We must train our conscience for it to be a reliable guide (lvs 19-20 ¶8-9)

(Romans 2:15) 15 They are the very ones who demonstrate the matter of the law to be written in their hearts, while their conscience is bearing witness with them, and by their own thoughts they are being accused or even excused.

*** lvs chap. 2 pp. 19-20 pars. 8-9 A Good Conscience With God ***

8 Some people think that listening to their conscience simply means following their feelings. They think that they can do whatever they want as long as they feel good about it.

But our feelings are imperfect, and they can mislead us. Our feelings can be so powerful that they affect our conscience. The Bible says: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) So we may begin to think that something is right even though it is wrong. For example, before Paul became a Christian, he viciously persecuted God's people and believed that what he was doing was right. In his opinion, he had a good conscience. But he later said: "The one who examines me is Jehovah." (1 Corinthians 4:4; Acts 23:1; 2 Timothy 1:3) When Paul learned how Jehovah felt about what he was doing, he realized that he needed to change. Clearly, before we do something, we need to ask ourselves, 'What does Jehovah want me to do?'

9 When you love someone, you don't want to displease him or her. Because we love Jehovah, we don't want to do anything that will displease him. Our fear of displeasing Jehovah needs to be very strong. We see this from Nehemiah's example. He refused to use his position as governor to get rich. Why? He explained that it was "because of the fear of God." (Nehemiah 5:15) Nehemiah did not want to do anything that would displease Jehovah. Like Nehemiah, we too are afraid of displeasing Jehovah by doing something wrong. We can learn what pleases Jehovah by reading the Bible.—See Endnote 6.

- Paragraph 8
- (Jeremiah 17:9) The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?
- (1 Corinthians 4:4) For I am not conscious of anything against myself. But by this I am not proved righteous; the one who examines me is Jehovah.
- (Acts 23:1) 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 Timothy 1:3) I am grateful to God, to whom I am rendering sacred service as my forefathers did, and with a clean conscience, never ceasing to remember you in my supplications night and day.
- Paragraph 9
- (Nehemiah 5:15) But the former governors who were before me had burdened the people and had been taking from them 40 silver shekels for bread and wine each day. Also, their attendants had oppressed the people. But I did not do that because of the fear of God.

Digging for Spiritual Gems:

Ro 3:4—How do we "let God be found true"? (w08 6/15 30 ¶5)

(Romans 3:4) 4 Certainly not! But let God be found true, even if every man be found a liar, just as it is written: "That you might be proved righteous in your words and might win when you are being judged."

*** w08 6/15 p. 30 par. 5 Highlights From the Letter to the Romans ***

3:4. When man's word conflicts with what God says in his Word, we "let God be found true" by trusting in the message of the Bible and acting in harmony with God's will. By having a zealous share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work, we can help others find God to be true.

Ro 3:24, 25—How could “the ransom paid by Christ Jesus” cover “the sins that occurred in the past”? (w08 6/15 29 ¶6)

(Romans 3:24, 25) 24 and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness, because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past.

*** w08 6/15 p. 29 par. 6 Highlights From the Letter to the Romans ***

3:24, 25—How could “the ransom paid by Christ Jesus” cover “the sins that occurred in the past” before it was paid? The first Messianic prophecy, recorded at Genesis 3:15, found fulfillment in 33 C.E. when Jesus was put to death on a torture stake. (Gal. 3:13, 16) The moment Jehovah uttered that prophecy, however, the ransom price was as good as paid from his viewpoint, for nothing can prevent God from fulfilling what he purposes. So on the basis of the future sacrifice of Jesus Christ, Jehovah could forgive the sins of descendants of Adam who exercised faith in that promise. The ransom also makes possible a resurrection of those of pre-Christian times.—Acts 24:15.

- Paragraph 6 on Page 29
- (Romans 3:24, 25) and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus. 25 God presented him as an offering for propitiation through faith in his blood. This was to demonstrate his own righteousness, because God in his forbearance was forgiving the sins that occurred in the past.
- (Genesis 3:15) And I will put enmity between you and the woman and

between your offspring and her offspring. He will crush your head, and you will strike him in the heel.”

- (Galatians 3:13) Christ purchased us, releasing us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse instead of us, because it is written: “Accursed is every man hung upon a stake.”
- (Galatians 3:16) Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “and to your descendants,” in the sense of many. Rather, it says, “and to your offspring,” in the sense of one, who is Christ.
- (Acts 24:15) And I have hope toward God, which hope these men also look forward to, that there is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous.

What has this week’s Bible reading taught you about Jehovah?

What other spiritual gems have you discovered in this week’s Bible reading?

Bible Reading:) Ro 1:1-17

(4 min. or less) •

(Romans 1:1-17) 1 Paul, a slave of Christ Jesus and called to be an apostle, set apart for God's good news, 2 which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning his Son, who came to be from the offspring of David according to the flesh, 4 but who with power was declared God's Son according to the spirit of holiness by means of resurrection from the dead—yes, Jesus Christ our Lord. 5 Through him we received undeserved kindness and an apostleship with a view to obedience by faith among all the nations respecting his name, 6 among which nations you also have been called to belong to Jesus Christ— 7 to all those who are in Rome as God's beloved ones, called to be holy ones:

May you have undeserved kindness and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

8 First of all, I give thanks to my God through Jesus Christ concerning all of you, because your faith is talked about throughout the whole world. 9 For God, to whom I render sacred service with my spirit in connection with the good news about his Son, is my witness of how without ceasing I always mention you in my prayers, 10 begging that if at all possible I may now at last succeed in coming to you by God's will. 11 For I am longing to see you, that I may impart some spiritual gift to you for you to be made firm; 12 or, rather, that we may have an interchange of encouragement by one another's faith, both yours and mine.

13 But I do not want you to be unaware, brothers, that many times I have intended to come to you—but I have been prevented until now—in order that I might acquire some fruitage also among you just as among the rest of the nations. 14 Both to Greeks and to foreigners, both to wise and to senseless ones, I am a debtor; 15 so I am eager to declare the

good news also to you there in Rome. 16 For I am not ashamed of the good news; it is, in fact, God's power for salvation to everyone having faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it God's righteousness is being revealed by faith and for faith, just as it is written: "But the righteous one will live by reason of faith."

APPLY YOURSELF TO THE FIELD MINISTRY

• **Apply Yourself to Reading and Teaching: (10 min.) Discussion. Play the video Conversational Manner, and then discuss study 2 of the Teaching brochure.**

*** th study 2 p. 5 Conversational Manner ***

STUDY 2

Conversational Manner

2 Corinthians 2:17

SUMMARY: Speak in a natural, sincere way that conveys how you feel about the topic and your listeners.

HOW TO DO IT:

- Prepare prayerfully and carefully. Pray for help to concentrate, not on yourself, but on your message. Fix in your mind the main points you need to convey. Express thoughts in your own words; do not simply recite expressions word for word as they appear in print.

If you plan to read from the Bible or another publication, get to know the passage well so that your reading will be fluent. If people are quoted, read their words with feeling, without being overly dramatic.

- Speak from the heart. Think about why your listeners need to hear the message. Focus on

them. Then your posture, gestures, and facial expressions will convey warm sincerity and friendliness.

Do not confuse naturalness with casualness. Maintain the dignity of your message by using clear speech and proper grammar.

- Look at your listeners. Maintain eye contact where it is not offensive to do so. When you give a discourse, look at one individual in the audience at a time, rather than looking at or scanning over the entire group.

**• Talk: (5 min. or less) w06 6/1 12-13—
Theme: Maintain a Realistic View of Your
Limitations and Those of Others. (th study 7)**

** w06 6/1 pp. 12-13 Find Contentment by Applying Bible Principles ***

Maintain a Realistic View

To find contentment, we must maintain a realistic view of our own limitations and those of others. In his letter to the Romans, the apostle Paul points out: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) Many facets of Jehovah’s glory lie far beyond our comprehension. One example is the simple fact stated at Genesis 1:31: “God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good.” Whenever Jehovah chooses to look back on what he has done, he can always say that “it was very good.” No human can always claim that. Acknowledging our limitations is the first step toward gaining contentment. However, there is more to it. We need to understand and accept Jehovah’s view of the matter.

The Greek word translated “sin” comes from a root that means “to miss the mark.” (Romans 3:9, footnote) To illustrate: Envision someone who is hoping to win a prize by hitting a target with an arrow. He has three arrows at his disposal. He shoots the first one and misses by a yard. He aims better with the second arrow

but still misses by a foot [30 cm]. With full concentration he lets the last arrow go and misses by only an inch [2 cm]. It was so close, but a miss is a miss.

We are all like that disappointed archer. Sometimes we seem to “miss the mark” by much. Other times we come close but still miss the mark. We are frustrated because we tried so hard, but it was still not good enough. Now, let us go back to the archer.

He is slowly turning away, dejected because he really wanted that prize. Suddenly, the man in charge calls him back and hands him a prize, saying: “I want to give you this because I like you, and I saw how hard you tried.” The archer is elated!

Elated! Everyone who receives from God “the gift” of everlasting life in perfection will feel this way. (Romans 6:23) Thereafter, everything they do will be good—they will never miss the mark again. They will be perfectly content. In the meantime, if we keep this view in mind, we will feel better about ourselves and those around us.

- (Romans 3:23) For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,
- (Genesis 1:31) After that God saw everything he had made, and look! it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, a sixth day.
- (Romans 3:9) What then? Are we in a better position? Not at all! For above we have made the charge that Jews as well as Greeks are all under sin;
- (Romans 6:23) For the wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord.

LIVING AS CHRISTIANS

Song 6

• **“Do You Perceive God’s Invisible Qualities?”: (15 min.) Discussion. Play the video The Wonders of Creation Reveal God’s Glory—Light and Color.**

When you look at a colorful flower, a starry sky, or a thundering waterfall, do you see the handiwork of the Creator? The creation around us clearly reveals Jehovah’s invisible qualities. (Ro 1:20) By pausing to reflect on what we see with our eyes, we are able to perceive God’s power, love, wisdom, and justice, as well as his generosity.—Ps 104:24.

What are some of Jehovah’s creative works that you notice each day? Even if you live in a city, you may see birds or trees. Observing intently Jehovah’s creation can help us to reduce anxiety, put our problems in proper perspective, and increase our faith in Jehovah’s ability to care for us throughout eternity. (Mt 6:25-32) If you have children, help them to perceive Jehovah’s matchless qualities. As we grow in appreciation for the creation around us, we will draw closer to the Creator.—Ps 8:3, 4. (Romans 1:20) For his invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable.

- (Psalm 104:24) How many your works are, O Jehovah! You have made all of them in wisdom. The earth is full of what you have made.
- (Matthew 6:25-32) “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? 26 Observe intently the birds of heaven; 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? 27 Who of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his life span? 28 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; 29 but I tell you that not even Sol’o·mon in all his glory was arrayed as one of these. 30 Now if this is how God clothes the vegetation of the field that is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much rather clothe you, you with little faith? 31 So never be anxious and say, ‘What are we to eat?’ or, ‘What are we to drink?’ or, ‘What are we to wear?’ 32 For all these are the things the nations are eagerly pursuing. Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.

- (Psalm 8:3, 4) When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, The moon and the stars that you have prepared, 4 What is mortal man that you keep him in mind, And a son of man that you take care of him?

WATCH THE VIDEO THE WONDERS OF CREATION REVEAL GOD’S GLORY—LIGHT AND COLOR, AND THEN ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

- How do pigments enable us to see colors?

• What causes iridescence?

• Why do we see different colors in the sky?

• What striking colors in creation have you seen near your home?

• Why should we take time to observe intently the natural world?

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

Congregation Bible Study: (30 min.)

ly chap. 53

CHAPTER 53

A Ruler Who Can Control the Elements

(Matthew 14:22-36) Then, without delay, he made his disciples board the boat and go ahead of him to the opposite shore, while he sent the crowds away. 23 After sending the crowds away, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone. 24 By now the boat was many hundreds of yards away from land, struggling against the waves because the wind was against them. 25 But in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 When they caught sight of him walking on the sea, the disciples were troubled, saying: "It is an apparition!" And they cried out in their fear. 27 But at once Jesus spoke to them, saying: "Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter answered him: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you over the waters." 29 He said: "Come!" So Peter got out of the boat and walked over the waters and went toward Jesus. 30 But looking at the windstorm, he became afraid. And when he started to sink, he cried out: "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately stretching out his hand, Jesus caught hold of him and said to him: "You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?" 32 After they got up into the boat, the windstorm abated. 33 Then those in the boat did obeisance to him, saying: "You really are God's Son." 34 And they crossed over and came to land in Gen-nes'a-ret. 35 On recognizing him, the men of that place sent word into all that surrounding country, and people brought him all those who were ill. 36 And they pleaded with him that they might just touch the fringe of his outer garment, and all those who touched it were made completely well.

(Mark 6:45-56) Then, without delay, he made his disciples board the boat and go on ahead

to the opposite shore toward Beth-sa'i-da, while he himself sent the crowd away. 46 But after saying good-bye to them, he went to a mountain to pray. 47 When evening had fallen, the boat was in the middle of the sea, but he was alone on the land. 48 So when he saw them struggling to row, for the wind was against them, about the fourth watch of the night he came toward them, walking on the sea; but he was inclined to pass them by. 49 On catching sight of him walking on the sea, they thought: "It is an apparition!" And they cried out. 50 For they all saw him and were troubled. But immediately he spoke to them and said: "Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid." 51 Then he got up into the boat with them, and the wind abated. At this they were utterly amazed, 52 for they had not grasped the meaning of the loaves, but their hearts continued dull in understanding. 53 When they got across to land, they came to Gen-nes'a-ret and anchored the boat nearby. 54 But as soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized him. 55 They ran around all that region and started to bring on stretchers those who were ailing to where they heard he was. 56 And wherever he would enter into villages or cities or the countryside, they would place the sick ones in the marketplaces, and they would plead with him that they might touch just the fringe of his outer garment. And all those who touched it were made well.

(John 6:14-25) When the people saw the sign he performed, they began to say: "This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world." 15 Then Jesus, knowing that they were about to come and seize him to make him king, withdrew again to the mountain all alone. 16 When evening fell, his disciples went down to the sea, 17 and boarding a boat, they set out across the sea for Ca-per'na-um. By now it had grown dark, and Jesus had not yet come to them. 18 Also, the sea was getting rough because a strong wind was blowing. 19 However, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and getting near the boat, and they became fearful. 20 But he said to them: "It is I;

do not be afraid!" 21 Then they were willing to take him into the boat, and right away the boat arrived at the land to which they had been heading. 22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there except a small one, and that Jesus had not boarded the boat with his disciples, but his disciples had left by themselves. 23 Boats from Ti-be'ri-as, however, arrived near the place where they ate the bread after the Lord had given thanks. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they boarded their boats and came to Ca-per'na-um to look for Jesus. 25 When they found him across the sea, they said to him: "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

Paragraph 1 on Page 131

(John 6:14) When the people saw the sign he performed, they began to say: "This really is the Prophet who was to come into the world."

(Deuteronomy 18:18) I will raise up for them from the midst of their brothers a prophet like you, and I will put my words in his mouth, and he will speak to them all that I command him.

Paragraph 3 on Page 131

(Mark 6:48) So when he saw them struggling to row, for the wind was against them, about the fourth watch of the night he came toward them, walking on the sea; but he was inclined to pass them by.

(John 6:19) However, when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and getting near the boat, and they became fearful.

(Mark 6:49) On catching sight of him walking on the sea, they thought: "It is an apparition!" And they cried out.

Paragraph 4 on Page 131

(Matthew 14:27-31) But at once Jesus spoke to them, saying: "Take courage! It is I; do not be afraid." 28 Peter answered him: "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you over the waters." 29 He said: "Come!" So Peter got out of the boat and walked over the waters and

went toward Jesus. 30 But looking at the windstorm, he became afraid. And when he started to sink, he cried out: "Lord, save me!" 31 Immediately stretching out his hand, Jesus caught hold of him and said to him: "You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?"

Paragraph 5 on Page 131

(Mark 6:52) for they had not grasped the meaning of the loaves, but their hearts continued dull in understanding.

(Matthew 14:33) Then those in the boat did obeisance to him, saying: "You really are God's Son."

Paragraph 7 on Page 131

(John 6:25) When they found him across the sea, they said to him: "Rabbi, when did you get here?"

◇After Jesus feeds the thousands, what do the people want to do to him?

◇Why should the disciples not be amazed that Jesus can walk on water and calm the wind?

◇What happens after Jesus reaches the shore near Capernaum?

· Review Followed by Preview of Next Week (3 min.)

- Song 142 and Prayer