

References for *Life and Ministry Meeting Workbook*

NOVEMBER 6-12

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | AMOS 1-9

"Search for Jehovah, and Keep Living"

(Amos 5:4) "For this is what Jehovah says to the house of Israel: 'Search for me and keep living.

(Amos 5:6) Search for Jehovah, and keep living, So that he does not burst out like a fire on the house of Joseph, Consuming Beth'el, with no one to extinguish it.

w04 11/15 24 ¶20

Search for Jehovah, the Examiner of Hearts

²⁰ It must not have been easy for anyone living in Israel in those days to remain faithful to Jehovah. It is difficult to swim against the current, so to speak, as Christians today, young and old, well know. Yet, love for God and a desire to please him did motivate some Israelites to practice true worship. Jehovah extended to them the warm invitation recorded at Amos 5:4: "Search for me, and keep living." Today, God similarly shows mercy to those who repent and search for him by taking in accurate knowledge of his Word and then doing his will. It is not easy to pursue this course, but doing so leads to everlasting life.—John 17:3.

(Amos 5:14, 15) Search for what is good, and not what is bad, So that you may keep living. Then Jehovah the God of armies may be with you, Just as you say he is. ¹⁵ Hate what is bad, and love what is good, Let justice prevail in the city gate. It may be that Jehovah the God of armies Will show favor to the remaining ones of Joseph.'

jd 90-91 ¶16-17

Serve Jehovah According to His High Standards

¹⁶ The first man, Adam, made a foolish choice as to whose standards of good and bad were best. Will we choose more wisely? Amos admonished us to have strong feelings about this, urging: "Hate what is bad, and love what is good." (Amos 5:15) William Rainey Harper, late professor of Semitic languages and literatures at the University of Chicago, noted about this verse: "The standard of good and evil, in [Amos'] mind, is conformity with Yahweh's will." This is a central concept that we can learn from the 12 prophets. Are we willing to accept Jehovah's standards of good and bad? Those high standards

are revealed to us in the Bible and explained by mature, experienced Christians who make up "the faithful and discreet slave."—Matthew 24:45-47.

¹⁷ Our hating what is bad helps us to refrain from things that displease God. For example, a man may be aware of the dangers of Internet pornography and try to turn away from viewing it. Yet, how does 'the man he is inside' feel about the content of pornographic Web sites? (Ephesians 3:16) By applying the divine exhortation found at Amos 5:15, he will find it easier to cultivate hatred for what is bad. He may thus be victorious in his spiritual struggle.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Amos 2:12) 'But you kept giving the Naz'i-rites wine to drink, And you commanded the prophets: "You must not prophesy."

w07 10/1 14 ¶8

Highlights From the Books of Joel and Amos

2:12. We should not discourage hardworking pioneers, traveling overseers, missionaries, or members of the Bethel family by urging them to give up their full-time service for a so-called normal way of life. On the contrary, we should encourage them to keep up their good work.

(Amos 8:1, 2) This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah showed me: Look! There was a basket of summer fruit. ² Then he said, "What do you see, A'mos?" I replied, "A basket of summer fruit." Then Jehovah said to me: "The end has come for my people Israel. I will no longer pardon them.

w07 10/1 14 ¶6

Highlights From the Books of Joel and Amos

8:1, 2—What did "a basket of summer fruit" signify? It signified that the day of Jehovah was near. Summer fruit is picked toward the end of the harvest season, that is, toward the end of the agricultural year. When Jehovah caused Amos to see "a basket of summer fruit," it meant that the end was near for Israel. Therefore, God told Amos: "The end has come to my people Israel. I shall no more do any further excusing of them."

Bible Reading

(Amos 4:1-13) "Hear this word, you cows of Ba'shan, Who are on the mountain of Sa-mar'i-a,

You women who are defrauding the lowly and crushing the poor, Who say to their husbands, 'Bring us something to drink!' ² The Sovereign Lord Jehovah has sworn by his holiness, "Look! The days are coming upon you when he will lift you up with butcher hooks And the rest of you with fishhooks. ³ You will go out through the breaches in the wall, each one straight ahead; And you will be cast out to Har'mon," declares Jehovah.' ⁴ 'Come to Beth'el and commit transgression, To Gil'gal and transgress even more! Bring your sacrifices in the morning, And your tithes on the third day. ⁵ Burn a thanksgiving sacrifice of leavened bread; Loudly proclaim your voluntary offerings! For that is what you love to do, O people of Israel,' declares the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. ⁶ 'And for my part, I made your teeth clean of food in all your cities And caused a lack of bread in all your houses; But you did not come back to me,' declares Jehovah. ⁷ 'I also withheld rain from you three months before the harvest; I made it rain on one city but not on another city. One plot of land would have rain, But another plot of land where there was no rain would dry up. ⁸ People of two or three cities staggered to one city to drink water, And they would not get satisfied; But you did not come back to me,' declares Jehovah. ⁹ 'I struck you with scorching heat and mildew. You multiplied your gardens and vineyards, But the locust would devour your fig trees and olive trees; And you still did not come back to me,' declares Jehovah. ¹⁰ 'I sent among you a pestilence like that of Egypt. With the sword I killed your young men and captured your horses. I made the stench of your camps rise up into your nostrils; But you did not come back to me,' declares Jehovah. ¹¹ 'I caused an overthrow among you Like God's overthrow of Sod'om and Go-mor'rah. And you were like a log snatched out of the fire; But you did not come back to me,' declares Jehovah. ¹² So that is what I will do to you, O Israel. Because this is what I will do to you, Get ready to meet your God, O Israel. ¹³ For look! he is the One who formed the mountains and created the wind; He tells man what His thoughts are, He turns the dawn into darkness, And he treads on earth's high places; Jehovah the God of armies is his name."

NOVEMBER 13-19

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | OBADIAH 1-JONAH 4

"Learn From Your Mistakes"

(Jonah 3:1-3) Then the word of Jehovah came to Jo'nah a second time, saying: ² "Get up, go to Nin'e-veh the great city, and proclaim to her the message that I tell you." ³ So Jo'nah got up and went to Nin'e-veh in obedience to the word of Jehovah. Now Nin'e-veh was a very large city—a walking distance of three days.

ia 114 ¶22-23

He Learned From His Mistakes

²² What about Jonah? Did he learn to show his gratitude to Jehovah through obedience? He did. After three days and three nights, the fish brought Jonah right to the shore and "vomited out Jonah onto the dry land." (Jonah 2:10) Imagine—after all that, Jonah did not even have to swim ashore! Of course, he did have to find his way from that beach, wherever it was. Before long, though, his spirit of gratitude was put to the test. Jonah 3:1, 2, says: "Then the word of Jehovah occurred to Jonah the second time, saying: 'Get up, go to Nineveh the great city, and proclaim to her the proclamation that I am speaking to you.'" What would Jonah do?

²³ Jonah did not hesitate. We read: "At that, Jonah got up and went to Nineveh in accord with the word of Jehovah." (Jonah 3:3) Yes, he obeyed. Clearly, he had learned from his mistakes. In this too we need to imitate Jonah's faith. We all sin; we all make mistakes. (Rom. 3:23) But do we give up, or do we learn from our mistakes and turn to a course of obedient service to God?

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Obadiah 10) Because of the violence done to your brother Jacob, Shame will cover you, And you will perish forever.

w07 11/1 13 ¶5

Highlights From the Books of Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah

10—How was Edom "cut off to time indefinite"? As foretold, the nation of Edom, with a government and people in a specific region of the earth, became extinct. Babylonian King Nabonidus conquered Edom about the middle of the sixth century B.C.E. By the fourth century B.C.E., Edom's territory was inhabited by the Nabataeans, and the Edomites had to take up residence in the southern part of Judea, the

area of the Negeb that later came to be known as Idumea. After the Romans destroyed Jerusalem in 70 C.E., the Edomites ceased to exist.

(Obadiah 12) You should not gloat over your brother's day on the day of his misfortune, You should not rejoice over the people of Judah on the day of their perishing, And you should not speak so arrogantly on the day of their distress.

jd 112 ¶4-5

Dealing With Others as God Desires

⁴ You can find a lesson in God's condemnation of Edom, a land near Israel: "You ought not to watch the sight in the day of your brother, in the day of his misfortune; and you ought not to rejoice at the sons of Judah in the day of their perishing." (Obadiah 12) The Tyrians may have been "brothers" as to commercial activities, but the Edomites were in a real sense "brothers" to Israel, for they had descended from Esau, Jacob's twin. Even Jehovah called the Edomites Israel's "brothers." (Deuteronomy 2:1-4) Hence, it was truly hateful of the Edomites to rejoice when the Jews met calamity at the hands of the Babylonians.—Ezekiel 25:12-14.

⁵ Clearly, God did not approve of how the Edomites dealt with their Jewish brothers. We might ask, though, 'How would God evaluate the way I deal with my brothers?' One area of concern is how we view and treat a brother when things have not gone smoothly. For example, imagine that a Christian offended you or had a problem with one of your relatives. If you have "a cause for complaint," will you harbor resentment, not putting the matter behind you or not attempting to settle it? (Colossians 3:13; Joshua 22:9-30; Matthew 5:23, 24) Doing so could affect your actions toward the brother; you might act coolly, avoiding his company or speaking negatively about him. Extending the example, imagine that this brother later erred, perhaps even needing counsel or correction from the congregation elders. (Galatians 6:1) Would you reflect the Edomites' spirit and rejoice over the brother's difficulty? How would God want you to act?

Bible Reading

(Jonah 3:1-10) Then the word of Jehovah came to Jo'nah a second time, saying: ² "Get up, go to Nin'e-veh the great city, and proclaim to her the message that I tell you." ³ So Jo'nah got up and went to Nin'e-veh in obedience to the word of Jehovah. Now Nin'e-veh was a very large city—a walking distance of three days. ⁴ Then Jo'nah en-

tered the city, and walking a day's journey, he was proclaiming: "In just 40 days more, Nin'e-veh will be overthrown." ⁵ And the men of Nin'e-veh put faith in God, and they proclaimed a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. ⁶ When the message reached the king of Nin'e-veh, he rose up from his throne and took off his royal garment and covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the ashes. ⁷ Furthermore, he issued a proclamation throughout Nin'e-veh, "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No man or beast, herd or flock, should eat anything at all. They should not take food, nor should they drink any water. ⁸ Let them be covered with sackcloth, both man and beast; and let them call out earnestly to God and turn from their evil ways and from the violence they practice. ⁹ Who knows whether the true God may reconsider what he intends to do and turn from his burning anger, so that we may not perish?" ¹⁰ When the true God saw what they did, how they had turned back from their evil ways, he reconsidered the calamity that he said he would bring on them, and he did not bring it.

NOVEMBER 20-26

TREASURES FROM GOD'S WORD | MICAH 1-7

"What Does Jehovah Require of Us?"

(Micah 6:6, 7) With what will I come before Jehovah? With what will I bow before God on high? Will I come before him with whole burnt offerings, With year-old calves? ⁷ Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, With tens of thousands of torrents of oil? Will I give my firstborn son for my revolt, The fruit of my body for my sin?

w08 5/15 6 ¶20

How Should We Treat Others?

²⁰ From God's standpoint, our relationship with our brothers is an important part of true worship. Animal sacrifices were meaningless to Jehovah if those offering them did not treat their fellow man properly. (Mic. 6:6-8) Hence, Jesus urged his disciples to "be about settling matters quickly." (Matt. 5:25) Along similar lines, Paul wrote: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil." (Eph. 4:26, 27) If we do become justifiably angry, we should act to settle matters quickly so that we do not remain in a provoked state and thus allow the Devil to take advantage of us.—Luke 17:3, 4.

(Micah 6:8) He has told you, O man, what is good. And what is Jehovah requiring of you? Only to exercise justice, to cherish loyalty, And to walk in modesty with your God!

w12 11/1 22 ¶4-7

“What Is Jehovah Asking Back From You?”

“Exercise justice.” The Hebrew word for “justice,” according to one reference work, “involves right and fair relationships in the community.” God asks us to treat others according to what is right and fair by *his* standards. We exercise justice by being impartial, upright, and honest in our dealings with others. (Leviticus 19:15; Isaiah 1:17; Hebrews 13:18) When we act justly toward others, they may be moved to act justly toward us in return.—Matthew 7:12.

“To love kindness.” God asks us not merely to *show* kindness but to *love* it. The Hebrew word rendered “kindness” (*che’sedh*) may also be rendered “loving-kindness” or “loyal love.” Says one Bible scholar: “Love, mercy, and kindness are inadequate translations of [*che’sedh*]; it is no one of these virtues, but all of them together.” If we love kindness, we show it willingly; we find pleasure in helping those in need. As a result, we experience the happiness that comes from giving.—Acts 20:35.

“To be modest in walking with your God.” In the Bible, the phrase “to walk” means “to follow a certain course of action.” We walk with God by following the life course he has outlined in the Bible. We need “to be modest” in pursuing such a course. How so? When we are modest before God, we realistically evaluate our position before him and recognize our limitations. Therefore, “to walk modestly with” means to have a realistic view of what he requires and of what we can give.

Thankfully, Jehovah never requires more than we can give. He is pleased with our best efforts to serve him. (Colossians 3:23) He understands our limitations. (Psalm 103:14) When we, with due modesty, learn to accept them as well, we can find joy in walking with him. Why not learn how you can begin walking with God? Such a course brings rich blessings from him.—Proverbs 10:22.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Micah 2:12) I will certainly gather all of you, O Jacob; I will surely collect the remaining ones of Israel together. In unity I will place them, like sheep in the pen, Like a flock in its pasture; It will be noisy with people.’

w07 11/1 15 ¶6

Highlights From the Books of Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah

2:12—When was the prophecy about ‘collecting the remaining ones of Israel’ fulfilled? Its first fulfillment was in 537 B.C.E. when a Jewish remnant returned to their homeland from Babylonian exile. In modern times, the prophecy finds its fulfillment in “the Israel of God.” (Galatians 6:16) Since 1919, anointed Christians have been collected together “like a flock in the pen.” Being joined by the “great crowd” of “other sheep,” especially since 1935, they have become “noisy with men.” (Revelation 7:9; John 10:16) Together, they zealously promote true worship.

(Micah 7:7) But as for me, I will keep on the lookout for Jehovah. I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me.

w03 8/15 24 ¶20

What Does Jehovah Expect of Us?

²⁰ Experiencing Jehovah’s blessing moves us to imitate Micah’s spirit. He declares: “I will show a waiting attitude for the God of my salvation.” (Micah 7:7) How do these words relate to our walking modestly with God? Having a waiting attitude, or patience, helps us to avoid feeling disappointed that Jehovah’s day has not yet come. (Proverbs 13:12) Frankly, we all long for the end of this wicked world. However, every week thousands of people are just beginning to walk with God. Knowing that gives us a reason for showing a waiting attitude. One long-time Witness said in this connection: “Looking back over 55 years in the preaching work, I am convinced that I have not lost anything by waiting on Jehovah. On the contrary, I have been spared many heartaches.” Have you had a similar experience?

Bible Reading

(Micah 4:1-10) In the final part of the days, The mountain of the house of Jehovah Will become firmly established above the top of the mountains, And it will be raised up above the hills, And to it peoples will stream. ² And many nations will go and say: “Come, let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah And to the house of the God of Jacob. He will instruct us about his ways, And we will walk in his paths.” For law will go out of Zion, And the word of Jehovah out of Jerusalem. ³ He will render judgment among many peoples And set matters straight respecting mighty nations far away. 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. ⁴ They will sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, And no one will make them afraid, For the mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken. ⁵ For all the peoples will walk, each in the name of its god, But we will walk in the name of Jehovah our God forever and ever. ⁶ “In that day,” declares Jehovah, “I will gather the one who was limping, And collect together the dispersed one, Along with those I treated harshly. ⁷ I will make the one who was limping a remnant, And the one far removed a mighty nation; And Jehovah will rule as king over them in Mount Zion, From now on and forever. ⁸ As for you, O tower of the flock, The mound of the daughter of Zion, To you it will come, yes, the first dominion will come, The kingdom belonging to the daughter of Jerusalem. ⁹ Now why are you shouting loudly? Have you no king, Or has your adviser perished, So that pain has seized you like a woman giving birth? ¹⁰ Writhe and groan, O daughter of Zion, Like a woman giving birth, For now you will go from the city and reside in the field. You will go as far as to Babylon, And there you will be rescued; There Jehovah will buy you back from the hand of your enemies.

NOVEMBER 27–DECEMBER 3

TREASURES FROM GOD’S WORD | NAHUM 1–HABAKKUK 3

“Remain Spiritually Alert and Active”

(Habakkuk 2:1-4) At my guardpost I will keep standing, And I will station myself on the rampart. I will keep watch to see what he will speak by means of me And what I will reply when I am reproved. ² Jehovah then answered me: “Write down the vision, and inscribe it clearly on tablets, So that the one reading aloud from it may do so easily. ³ For the vision is yet for its appointed time, And it is rushing toward its end, and it will not lie. Even if it should delay, keep in expectation of it! For it will without fail come true. It will not be late! ⁴ Look at the one who is proud; He is not upright within himself. But the righteous one will live by his faithfulness.

w07 11/15 10 ¶3-5

Highlights From the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

2:1. Like Habakkuk, we should remain spiritually

alert and active. We should also be ready to adjust our thinking in line with any “reproof,” or correction, we may receive.

2:3; 3:16. As we wait in faith for the coming of Jehovah’s day, let us not lose the sense of urgency.

2:4. To survive the coming day of Jehovah’s judgment, we must endure in faithfulness.—Hebrews 10:36-38.

Digging for Spiritual Gems

(Nahum 1:8) With a sweeping flood he will make a complete extermination of her place, And darkness will pursue his enemies.

(Nahum 2:6) The gates of the rivers will be opened, And the palace will be dissolved.

w07 11/15 9 ¶2

Highlights From the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

2:6—What “gates of the rivers” were opened?

These gates referred to the opening made in the walls of Nineveh by the waters of the Tigris River. In 632 B.C.E. when the joint forces of the Babylonians and the Medes came up against Nineveh, she did not feel particularly threatened. Secure behind her high walls, she considered herself to be an impenetrable city. However, heavy rains caused the Tigris to overflow. According to historian Diodorus, this “both inundated a portion of the city and broke down the walls for a distance.” The river gates were thus opened, and as foretold, Nineveh was taken as quickly as fire devours dry stubble.—Nahum 1:8-10.

(Habakkuk 3:17-19) Although the fig tree may not blossom, And there may be no fruit on the vines; Although the olive crop may fail, And the fields may produce no food; Although the flock may disappear from the pen, And there may be no cattle in the stalls; ¹⁸ Yet, as for me, I will exult in Jehovah; I will be joyful in the God of my salvation. ¹⁹ The Sovereign Lord Jehovah is my strength; He will make my feet like those of a deer And cause me to tread on high places.

w07 11/15 10 ¶10

Highlights From the Books of Nahum, Habakkuk, and Zephaniah

3:17-19. Even though hardship may befall us before and during Armageddon, we can be confident that Jehovah will supply us with “vital energy” as we joyfully continue serving him.

Bible Reading

(Habakkuk 2:15–3:6) Woe to the one who gives his companions something to drink, Adding to it rage and anger, to make them drunk, In order to look on their nakedness! ¹⁶ You will be glutted with dishonor rather than glory. You too—drink and expose your uncircumcised condition. The cup in the right hand of Jehovah will come around to you, And disgrace will cover over your glory; ¹⁷ For the violence done to Leb'a-non will cover you, And the destruction that terrified the beasts will come upon you, Because of your shedding men's blood And your violence to the earth, To the cities and those living in them. ¹⁸ Of what benefit is a carved image When its maker has carved it? Of what benefit is a metal statue and a teacher of lies, Even though its maker trusts in it, Making worthless gods that are speechless? ¹⁹ Woe to the one who says to a piece of wood, "Awake!" Or to a speechless stone, "Wake up! Instruct us!" Look! It is overlaid in gold and silver, And there is no breath at all within it. ²⁰ But Jehovah is in his holy temple. Be silent before him, all the earth!"

3 The prayer of Ha·bak'kuk the prophet, in dirges:
² O Jehovah, I have heard the report about you. I am in awe, O Jehovah, of your activity. In the midst of the years bring it to life! In the midst of the years make it known. May you remember to show mercy during the turmoil. ³ God came from Te'man, The Holy One from Mount Pa'-ran. (*Selah*) His majesty covered the heavens; With his praise the earth was filled. ⁴ His brightness was like the light. Two rays flashed from his hand, Where his strength was hidden. ⁵ Before him went pestilence, And burning fever followed at his feet. ⁶ He stood still and shook the earth. With a look, he made nations leap. The eternal mountains were smashed, And the ancient hills bowed down. The paths of long ago are his.