

FEBRUARY 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

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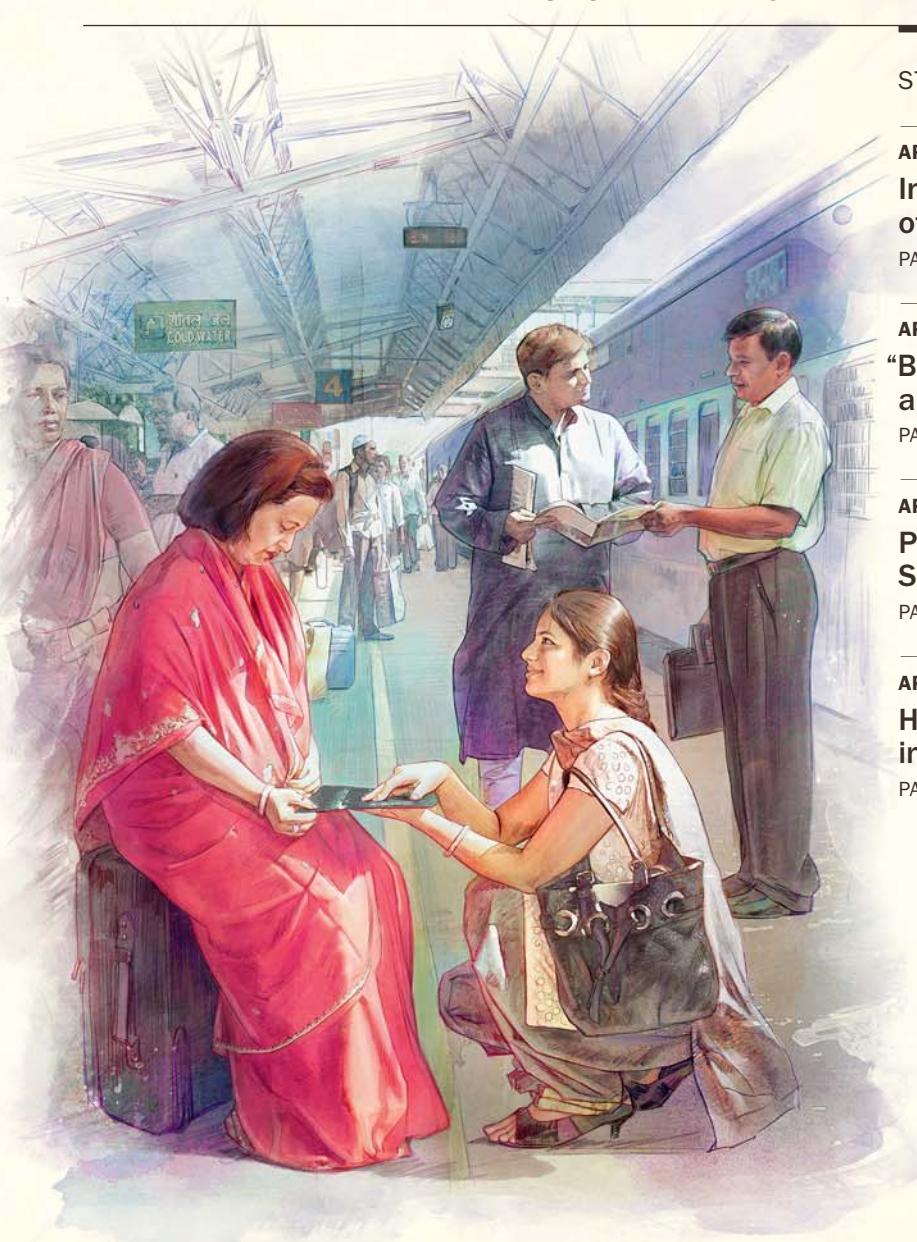
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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

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Why did Jesus urge his followers to remain watchful? This article discusses three ways in which Christ proved watchful during his life on earth, in each case examining practical ways for us to put his example to use.

STUDY ARTICLE 2 PAGES 10-14

Why can we benefit from considering how courage was displayed by Jehovah's servants of Bible times? This question will be considered in this article designed to help us act courageously.

STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 18-22

Each of us displays a certain spirit, or dominant attitude. This article discusses how we can help to preserve a healthy, positive spirit in the congregation.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 26-30

Christians in religiously divided households face daily challenges. This article discusses how believers can cultivate peace in the family and foster conditions that may help unbelieving family members to embrace true worship.

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COVER: At a railway station in New Delhi, India, which handles over 300 trains daily, brothers witness to commuters and travelers from all parts of the country



INDIA

POPULATION
1,224,614,000

PUBLISHERS
33,182

PUBLISHER INCREASE
5 percent



IMITATE JESUS' EXAMPLE OF WATCHFULNESS

"Keep on the watch and pray."—MATT. 26:41.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can our prayers demonstrate that we are on the watch?

In what ways can we show that we are watchful in our ministry?

Why is it important that we keep on the watch when under trial, and how can we do so?

YOU might wonder: 'Is it really possible to imitate Jesus' example of watchfulness? After all, Jesus was perfect! What is more, Jesus was at times able to see clearly into the future—even thousands of years beyond his own day! Did he really need to be watchful?' (Matt. 24:37-39; Heb. 4:15) Let us address those questions first so that we can see just how relevant and urgent this subject is.

² Is a perfect example helpful for sinful humans? Yes, because it is possible to learn from a good teacher and his example. For instance, imagine a man taking his first archery lesson. He cannot shoot an arrow well enough to hit the target at all, but he takes more lessons and keeps on trying. To improve, he carefully studies the example of his instructor, who is an expert archer. The student pays attention to how his teacher stands, positions his arms, and uses his fingers on the bowstring. Little by little, the determined novice learns how much tension to apply to the string; he takes the wind into account, and he keeps on making an effort. By imitating what he sees his instructor do, he eventually aims his arrows so that they strike closer and closer to the center of the target. Similarly, we keep on striving to improve as Christians by following Jesus' instructions and imitating his perfect example.

³ What, though, about watchfulness? Did Jesus actually need this quality? In fact, he did. For

1, 2. (a) What questions might arise concerning Jesus' example of watchfulness? (b) Is Jesus' perfect example useful for sinful humans? Illustrate.

3. (a) How did Jesus indicate that he needed the quality of watchfulness? (b) What will we consider in this article?

instance, on the final night of his earthly life, Jesus urged his faithful apostles: "Keep on the watch *with me.*" He added: "Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation." (Matt. 26:38, 41) Though he had manifested watchfulness all along, in those dire hours Jesus especially wanted to be watchful and as close to his heavenly Father as possible. He knew that his followers needed the same alertness—not just then but in the future. So let us consider why Jesus wants us to keep on the watch. Afterward, we will examine three ways in which we can imitate Jesus' watchfulness in our daily lives.

WHY JESUS WANTS US TO BE WATCHFUL

⁴ In brief, Jesus wants us to remain watchful because of what we do not know and what we do know. When Jesus was a man on earth, did he know all that the future held? No, for he humbly acknowledged: "Concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father." (Matt. 24:36) At that time, Jesus, "the Son," did not know exactly when the end of this wicked world would come. What about us today? Is our knowledge of the future limited? Of course it is! We do not know just when Jehovah will send forth his Son to put an end to this wicked system of things. If we did, would we really need to keep on the watch? As Jesus explained, the end will come suddenly, unexpectedly; so we need to keep ever watchful.—*Read Matthew 24:43.*

4. What is the connection between what we do not know about the future and our need to be watchful?

⁵ On the other hand, Jesus did know many marvelous things about the future—truths that most people around him did not know at all. Our knowledge does not approach that of Jesus, but thanks to him, we do know a great deal about God's Kingdom and what it will accomplish in the near future. As we look around us, whether at school, at work, or in the territory where we carry out our ministry, do we not observe that most people live in utter darkness regarding these glorious truths? So here we find another reason for watchfulness. Like Jesus, we always need to be alert, watching for opportunities to share what we know about God's Kingdom. Each such opportunity is precious, and we do not want to squander any. Lives are at stake! —1 Tim. 4:16.

⁶ Jesus knew something else that led him to remain watchful. He knew that Satan was determined to tempt him, to persecute him, and to break his integrity. That vicious enemy was always watching for "another convenient time" to put Jesus to the test. (Luke 4:13) Jesus never let down his guard. He wanted to be ready for any test, be it temptation, opposition, or persecution. Cannot much the same be said about us? We know that Satan is still "like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." That is why God's Word exhorts all Christians: "Keep your senses, be watchful." (1 Pet. 5:8) How, though, can we do so?

HOW TO BE WATCHFUL IN PRAYER

⁷ The Bible draws a strong connection

5, 6. (a) How does our knowledge of the future and of God's purposes affect our need to be watchful? (b) Why should our knowledge about Satan make us more determined to be watchful?

7, 8. Jesus gave what counsel regarding prayer, and what kind of example did he set?

between spiritual alertness, or watchfulness, and prayer. (Col. 4:2; 1 Pet. 4:7) Not long after asking his followers to keep on the watch with him, Jesus said: “Keep on the watch and pray continually, that you may not enter into temptation.” (Matt. 26:41) Did he mean to limit that counsel to the dire situation they were facing at the moment? No, his counsel is a principle we are to live by every day.

8 Jesus set a sterling example in prayer. You may recall that he once spent an entire night praying to his Father. Let us try to picture the scene. (*Read Luke 6:12, 13.*) It is springtime, likely near the fishing town of Capernaum, Jesus’ home base in the region. As evening falls, Jesus goes up one of the mountains that overlook the Sea of Galilee. As he views the darkening landscape, he perhaps sees the flickering of oil lamps down in Capernaum and other nearby villages. When Jesus addresses Jehovah, though, he focuses intently on his prayer. Minutes—then hours—pass. He takes little note as the lights far below go out one by one or as the moon drifts across the sky or as the nocturnal animals forage in the brush. His prayer likely dwells on the big decision that lies before him—that of choosing his 12 apostles. We can imagine Jesus immersed in telling his Father all his thoughts and concerns about each disciple as he earnestly begs for guidance and wisdom.

9 What can we learn from Jesus’ example? That we must spend long hours in prayer? No, for he kindly acknowledged about his followers: “The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak.” (Matt. 26:41) Nevertheless, we can imitate Jesus. For instance, do we consult

9. What can we learn from Jesus’ example of praying all night?

our heavenly Father before making any decision that may affect us, our family, or our fellow believers spiritually? Do our prayers include concerns about our brothers and sisters in the faith? Do we pray from the heart rather than repeat a set form of expressions? Notice, too, that Jesus valued intimate, private talk with his Father. In today’s busy, hectic world, it is all too easy to get so caught up in the rush of life that we forget what matters most. If we make ample time for in-depth, private prayer, we will be more spiritually alert. (Matt. 6:6, 7) We will draw closer to Jehovah, eager to strengthen our relationship with him and avoid doing anything that might weaken it.—Ps. 25:14.

HOW TO BE WATCHFUL IN THE PREACHING WORK

10 Jesus was watchful in the work that Jehovah assigned him to do. There may be some jobs that allow for the worker’s mind to wander without serious consequences. Many jobs, though, call for keen focus and alertness, and the Christian ministry is certainly like that. Jesus was ever alert in his work, watching for opportunities to share the good news. For example, when he and his disciples arrived at the town of Sychar after a long morning of walking, the disciples went to purchase food. Jesus stayed near the town’s well to rest, but he kept alert, and he saw an opportunity to witness. A Samaritan woman approached to draw water. Jesus could have chosen to take a nap. He could have thought of reasons to avoid a conversation. However, he spoke up, involved the woman in conversation, and gave a powerful witness that affected many lives in that

10. What example shows us how Jesus kept alert to opportunities to give a witness?



Jesus preached to the woman at the well.
What opportunities do you make to preach daily?

city. (John 4:4-26, 39-42) Can we more closely imitate Jesus' watchful example, perhaps by striving to be increasingly alert to opportunities to share the good news with people we meet in our day-to-day life?

11 At times, well-meaning individuals sought to distract Jesus from his work. In Capernaum, the crowds were so moved by Jesus' miracles of healing that they wanted to keep him there with them. That is understandable. However, Jesus' mission was to preach to all "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," not just those in one city. (Matt. 15:24) So he told those people: "Also to other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." (Luke 4:40-44) Clearly, Jesus' life was focused on his ministry. He allowed nothing to sidetrack him.

12 Was Jesus so focused on his work that he was a fanatic or an ascetic? Was

- 11, 12.** (a) How did Jesus respond to those who sought to distract him from his work?
(b) What balance did Jesus display regarding his work?

he so absorbed in his ministry that he was aloof from the practical needs of families? No, Jesus set a perfect example of balance. He enjoyed life, taking pleasure in happy times with his friends. He valued families, showing profound empathy for their needs and problems, and he freely showed his affection for children.—*Read Mark 10:13-16.*

13 As we imitate Jesus' example of watchfulness, how can we strive for a similar balance? We do not let this world distract us from our work. Even well-meaning friends and relatives may urge us to slow down in our ministry or to seek what they see as a normal life. If we imitate Jesus, however, we view our ministry as if it were food. (John 4:34) Our work nourishes us spiritually and brings us delight as well. Yet, we never want to be extremists, displaying a self-righteous or ascetic spirit. Like Jesus, we want to be joyful, balanced servants of "the happy God."—1 Tim. 1:11.

HOW TO BE WATCHFUL IN TIMES OF TRIAL

14 As we have seen, some of Jesus' most urgent exhortations to keep watchful came when he was under severe trial. (*Read Mark 14:37.*) When we face hardships, we need his example more than ever. Under trial, many tend to forget a vital truth, one so important that the book of Proverbs says it twice: "There exists a way that is upright before a man, but the ways of death are the end of it afterward." (Proverbs 14:12; 16:25) If we rely on our own thinking, especially when we face serious problems, we are

13. How can we imitate Jesus' example of watchfulness and balance when it comes to our Kingdom-preaching work?

14. In times of trial, what tendency do we need to resist, and why?

likely to endanger ourselves and those we love.

15 For example, a family head may face severe pressure in providing materially for “those who are his own.” (1 Tim. 5:8) He might be tempted to take a job that repeatedly causes him to miss out on attending Christian meetings, taking the lead in family worship, or participating in the ministry. If he relies solely on human thinking, such a course could seem justifiable, even upright. However, it may well result in spiritual sickness or death. How much better to follow the counsel of Proverbs 3:5, 6! Said Solomon: “Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.”

16 When Jesus was under trial, he resolutely refused to lean on his own understanding. Think of it! The wisest man ever to live on this earth chose not to draw on his own wisdom for answers. For instance, when Satan tempted him, Jesus repeatedly answered with the phrase: “It is written.” (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10) He relied on his Father’s wisdom to ward off temptation, showing the humility that Satan despises and utterly lacks. Do we do the same? A family head who imitates Jesus’ watchfulness lets God’s Word guide him, especially in trialsome times. Around the world, thousands of family heads are doing just that. They are steadfastly putting God’s Kingdom and pure worship first in life, even ahead

15. What temptation may a family head face during hard economic times?

16. (a) What example of trusting Jehovah’s wisdom rather than his own did Jesus set?
(b) How are many family heads imitating Jesus’ example of trusting in Jehovah during hard times?



Caring for your family’s spiritual well-being shows that you are being watchful

of material concerns. Thereby, they take the best care of their families. Jehovah responds by blessing their efforts to provide for material needs, just as his Word promises.—Matt. 6:33.

17 Without question, Jesus set the best possible example of watchfulness. His example is practical, beneficial, and even lifesaving. Remember, Satan is eager to lull you into spiritual sleep—a state of weak faith, lackadaisical worship, and compromised integrity. (1 Thess. 5:6) Do not let him succeed! Remain watchful as Jesus did—watchful in your prayers, in your ministry, and in dealing with trials. By following that course, you will enjoy a rich, happy, fulfilling life even now in the twilight of this dying system of things. A watchful course will also ensure that when your Master comes to bring this system to its end, he will find you alert and active, doing his Father’s will. How delighted Jehovah will be to reward you for your faithful course!—Rev. 16:15.

17. What moves you to imitate Jesus’ watchfulness?



They Courageously Proclaimed God's Word!

Courage—even boldness—in the face of opposition. These qualities are displayed by true Christians, as shown in such publications as "*Bearing Thorough Witness About God's Kingdom*" and *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*. Like our first-century fellow believers, we turn to Jehovah in prayer for his spirit and for help to speak his word with boldness.—Acts 4:23-31.

Regarding our preaching work during the first world war, one brother wrote: "God's servants were energetically distributing the seventh volume of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Finished Mystery*. It was reaching an unprecedented distribution. *Kingdom News* No. 1 was released in 1918. Next came *Kingdom News* No. 2, explaining why *The Finished Mystery* was suppressed by the authorities. This was followed by *Kingdom News* No. 3. These publications were widely distributed by the faithful anointed class. It took faith and courage to put out *Kingdom News*."

Today, new Kingdom publishers usually receive training in the ministry, but that was not always so. Reflecting on his first experience in field service in 1922, one Polish brother in the United States wrote: "Having no knowledge of how to present the literature and speaking very poor English, I stood alone before the office of a doctor and knocked. A nurse opened the door. I will never forget that experience, for I was excited and frightened. As I was opening my satchel, all the books fell out at the feet of the nurse. I do not know what I said, but I placed a publication with her. By the time I left, I had gained courage and felt blessed by Jehovah. I placed many booklets that day on that business street."

"About 1933, many brothers used sound cars to spread the Kingdom message," said a sister. On one occasion, she and a Witness couple were preaching in a mountainous area of California, U.S.A. "The brother took the sound car higher up into the mountains, and we stayed down in town," she recalled. "When he began playing the recorded message, it almost sounded as if it came from heaven. The townspeople tried and tried to find the brother, but they never could. After the record was finished, we called on the people and witnessed to them. I worked with two other sound cars and can assure you that most people did not want to hear the message. But they could not help but hear the talks as the message coming from the sound cars poured into their homes. We could always see that Jehovah



caused the right method to be used at the right time. The method called for all the courage we could muster, but it always accomplished its purpose, and Jehovah's name was glorified."

In the 1930's and early 1940's, phonographs and recorded Bible talks were used in our ministry. One Christian woman recalled: "A young sister was working from door to door with the phonograph. After she started playing the record at one door, the man of the house became so infuriated that he kicked the phonograph right off the porch. Not one record was broken. Three men eating their lunch in a parked truck saw what happened, invited the sister to play the record for them, and obtained literature from her. That made up for the ill-treatment." It took courage to endure such trials.

The same sister added: "I recall the beginning of the magazine street work in 1940. Earlier, there were information marches. In single file, brothers and sisters would make their way down the sidewalk carrying signs that read 'Religion Is a Snare and a Racket' and 'Serve God and Christ the King.' At the same time, free tracts were passed out to the people. It took courage to engage in these features of the work, but they served the purpose of keeping Jehovah's name and people before the eye of the public."

"Doing magazine work in small towns was very hard," said another sister. "This was when opposition was strong against the Witnesses. . . . It took real courage to stand on a corner holding

Courage has always been required to engage in the Kingdom- preaching work

the magazines and calling out the slogans suggested for our use. Yet, we seldom missed a Saturday. Sometimes people would be friendly. At other times ugly groups would form, and occasionally we would have to slip away to avoid mob action."

Despite persecution experienced during World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses courageously carried on their ministry. In a 43-day campaign from December 1, 1940, through January 12, 1941, about 50,000 publishers in the United States distributed almost eight million booklets during what was called the "Courage" Testimony Period.

Many older ones in God's organization vividly remember past challenges that called upon them to muster up courage. Some recall that for years, their courageous spirit was reflected in their oft repeated adage, Press the battle to the gate! What form our God-given message will yet take before the present wicked system ends remains to be seen. With divine help, however, we will continue to proclaim Jehovah's word with faith and courage.



*"Be courageous and
very strong . . .
Jehovah your God
is with you."*

—JOSH. 1:7-9.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

In what ways did Enoch and Noah display courage?

How were certain women of ancient times exemplary in faith and courage?

What examples of youthful courage impress you?

"BE COURAGEOUS AND VERY STRONG"

COUREAGE is the opposite of fear, timidity, and cowardice. We may think of a courageous person as one who is strong, valiant, even bold. At times, however, quiet courage is needed in order to pursue an upright course in daily life.

² Some people of Bible record were fearless under very trying conditions. Others displayed courage in circumstances common to Jehovah's servants in general. What can we learn from Biblical examples of courage? How can we be courageous?

COURAGEOUS WITNESSES IN AN UNGODLY WORLD

³ It took courage to be a witness of Jehovah among wicked ones on earth before the Flood of Noah's day. Yet, Enoch, "the seventh one in line from Adam," boldly delivered this prophetic message: "Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him." (Jude 14, 15) Enoch spoke in the past tense because that prophecy was sure to be fulfilled. And ungodly humans did perish in a global deluge!

⁴ The Flood occurred in 2370 B.C.E., over 650 years after Enoch's prophetic ministry. Meanwhile, Noah was born, raised a family, and with his sons built the ark. Wicked angels had materialized fleshly bodies, mated with good-looking women, and fa-

1, 2. (a) What is sometimes needed to pursue an upright course in life? (b) What are we going to examine?

3. Enoch foretold what for the ungodly?

4. Despite what circumstances did Noah 'walk with God'?

thered the Nephilim. Moreover, man's badness had become abundant, and the earth was filled with violence. (Gen. 6: 1-5, 9, 11) Despite such conditions, "Noah walked with the true God" and witnessed boldly as "a preacher of righteousness." (*Read 2 Peter 2:4, 5.*) We need similar courage in these last days.

THEY DISPLAYED FAITH AND COURAGE

5 Moses had exemplary faith and courage. (Heb. 11:24-27) From 1513-1473 B.C.E., God used him to lead the Israelites out of Egypt and direct them in the wilderness. Moses felt poorly equipped for this assignment, but he accepted it. (Ex. 6:12) He and his brother, Aaron, repeatedly appeared before tyrannical Pharaoh of Egypt and courageously announced the Ten Plagues by which Jehovah disgraced Egyptian gods and delivered His people. (Ex., chaps. 7-12) Moses displayed faith and courage because he had God's unfailing support, even as we do.—Deut. 33:27.

-
5. How did Moses display faith and courage?

Enoch preached courageously in an ungodly world



6 We need courage like that of Moses, for Jesus said: "You will be haled before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and the nations. However, when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you are to speak; for what you are to speak will be given you in that hour; for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you." (Matt. 10:18-20) If we are interrogated by secular authorities, Jehovah's spirit will enable us to bear witness respectfully with faith and courage.—*Read Luke 12:11, 12.*

7 Regular study of God's Law built up the faith and courage of Moses' successor, Joshua. In 1473 B.C.E., Israel was poised to enter the Promised Land. "Be courageous and very strong," God commanded. By complying with the Law, Joshua would act wisely and would be successful. "Do not suffer shock or be terrified," he was told, "for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." (Josh. 1:7-9) How those words must have strengthened Joshua! And God certainly was with him, for the major conquest of the Promised Land was completed in only six years—by 1467 B.C.E.

VALIANT WOMEN WHO TOOK THEIR STAND

8 Through the centuries, many courageous women have taken their stand as valiant worshippers of Jehovah. For instance, the prostitute Rahab of Jericho exercised faith in God, courageously

-
6. If we are interrogated by secular authorities, how will we be able to bear witness with courage?

7. Why was Joshua courageous and successful?

8. What example of faith and courage do we have in Rahab?



Jael was courageous and strong

concealing two spies sent out by Joshua, and then misdirecting the henchmen of that city's king. She and her household were preserved when the Israelites took Jericho. Rahab abandoned her sinful profession, worshipped Jehovah faithfully, and became an ancestress of the Messiah. (Josh. 2:1-6; 6:22, 23; Matt. 1: 1, 5) How she was blessed for her faith and courage!

9 After Joshua's death about 1450 B.C.E., judges administered justice in Israel. Canaanite King Jabin had oppressed the Israelites for 20 years when God had the prophetess Deborah motivate Judge Barak to take action. Barak assembled 10,000 men on Mount Tabor and was ready to engage in battle with Jabin's military chief Sisera, who en-

9. How did Deborah, Barak, and Jael show courage?

tered the torrent valley of Kishon with his army and its 900 war chariots. When the Israelites marched into the valley plain, God caused a flash flood that turned the battlefield into a quagmire and immobilized the Canaanite chariots. Barak's men prevailed, and "all the camp of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword." Sisera himself sought refuge in the tent of Jael, but she killed him while he slept. In line with Deborah's prophetic words to Barak, "the beautifying thing" of this victory went to the woman Jael. Because Deborah, Barak, and Jael acted courageously, Israel "had no further disturbance for forty years." (Judg. 4:1-9, 14-22; 5:20, 21, 31) Many godly men and women have displayed similar faith and courage.

OUR WORDS CAN INSPIRE COURAGE

10 What we say can inspire courage in fellow worshippers of Jehovah. In the 11th century B.C.E., King David told his son Solomon: "Be courageous and strong and act. Do not be afraid nor be terrified, for Jehovah God, my God, is with you. He will not desert you or leave you until all the work of the service of Jehovah's house is finished." (1 Chron. 28:20) Solomon acted courageously and built the splendid temple of Jehovah in Jerusalem.

11 In the tenth century B.C.E., the courageous words of an Israelite girl proved to be a blessing for a leper. She had been captured by a marauding band and became a servant of the leprous Syrian army chief Naaman. Having learned about miracles that Jehovah performed

10. Why can it be said that our words can inspire courage?

11. What effect did the courageous words of an Israelite girl have on one man's life?

through Elisha, she told Naaman's wife that if her husband would go to Israel, God's prophet would cure him. Naaman did go to Israel, was miraculously healed, and became a worshipper of Jehovah. (2 Ki. 5:1-3, 10-17) If you are a young person who loves God as that girl did, he can give you courage to witness to teachers, fellow students, and others.

12 Well-chosen words in times of peril can inspire courage. When the Assyrians marched against Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C.E., King Hezekiah told his subjects: "Be courageous and strong. Do not be afraid nor be terrified because of the king of Assyria and on account of all the crowd that is with him; for with us there are more than there are with him. With him there is an arm of flesh, but with us there is Jehovah our God to help us and to fight our battles." How was that expression received? Why, "the people began to brace themselves upon the words of Hezekiah!" (2 Chron. 32:7, 8) Similar words may bolster our own courage and that of other Christians when we are being hounded by persecutors.

13 Sometimes courage is shown by what we do not say. In the tenth century B.C.E., King Ahab's steward Obadiah courageously hid a hundred prophets of Jehovah "by fifties in a cave" so that they would not be killed at the order of wicked Queen Jezebel. (1 Ki. 18:4) Like God-fearing Obadiah, many of Jehovah's loyal present-day servants have courageously protected fellow believers by not giving persecutors information about them.

12. How did the words of King Hezekiah affect his subjects?

13. What example of courage do we have in King Ahab's steward Obadiah?

ESTHER—A COURAGEOUS QUEEN

14 Queen Esther displayed great faith and courage when a genocide plot hatched by wicked Haman imperiled the Jews throughout the Persian Empire in the fifth century B.C.E. No wonder they mourned and fasted and undoubtedly prayed with all their heart! (Esther 4:1-3) Queen Esther was greatly distressed. Her cousin Mordecai sent her a copy of the law authorizing the massacre and commanded her to appear before the king to implore favor for her fellow Jews. But anyone going in to the king when not summoned was put to death.—Esther 4:4-11.

15 Yet, Mordecai told Esther: 'If you are silent, deliverance will come from another place. But who knows whether it is for a time like this that you attained royal dignity?' Esther urged Mordecai to gather the Jews in Shushan and fast in her behalf. "I shall fast likewise," she said, "and upon that I shall come in to the king, which is not according to the law; and in case I must perish, I must perish." (Esther 4:12-17) Esther acted courageously, and the book bearing her name shows that God delivered his people. In our day, anointed Christians and their dedicated associates display similar courage under trial—and the "Hearer of prayer" is always on their side.—*Read Psalm 65:2; 118:6.*

"TAKE COURAGE"

16 On one occasion in the first century C.E., 12-year-old Jesus was found at the temple, "sitting in the midst of the teachers and listening to them

14, 15. How did Queen Esther display faith and courage, and with what result?

16. What example do our youngsters have in Jesus?

and questioning them." Moreover, "all those listening to him were in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers." (Luke 2:41-50) Although he was young, Jesus had the faith and courage needed to question older teachers at the temple. Bearing in mind Jesus' example will help youngsters in the Christian congregation to take full advantage of opportunities to 'make a defense before everyone demanding a reason for their hope.'—1 Pet. 3:15.

17 Jesus urged others to "take courage." (Matt. 9:2, 22) He told his disciples: "Look! The hour is coming, indeed, it has come, when you will be scattered each one to his own house and you will leave me alone; and yet I am not alone, because the Father is with me. I have said these things to you that by means of me you may have peace. In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world." (John 16:32, 33) Like Jesus' early followers, we face the world's hatred, but let us not become like the world. Reflecting on the courageous course of God's Son can give us courage to remain undefiled by this world. He triumphed over the world, and so can we.—John 17:16; Jas. 1:27.

"BE OF GOOD COURAGE!"

18 The apostle Paul endured many tests. On one occasion, Jews in Jerusalem would have torn him to pieces had Roman soldiers not rescued him. During the night, "the Lord stood by him and said: 'Be of good courage! For as you

17. Why did Jesus urge his disciples to "take courage," and why do we need to act courageously?

18, 19. The apostle Paul gave what evidence of faith and courage?

have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome.'" (Acts 23:11) Paul did just that.

19 Paul fearlessly rebuked the "superfine apostles," who sought to corrupt the congregation in Corinth. (2 Cor. 11:5; 12:11) Unlike them, he could point to proof of his apostleship—to imprisonment, beatings, perilous journeys, other dangers, hunger, thirst, and sleepless nights, as well as deep concern for fellow believers. (*Read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28.*) What a record of faith and courage—all of it proof of God-given strength!

20 Not all Christians will experience severe persecution. Yet, all need to muster up boldness in order to meet the challenges of life. To illustrate: A young person in Brazil belonged to a gang. After studying the Bible, he saw the need to make changes, but usually anyone leaving the gang was killed. He prayed, and he used scriptures to show the leader why he could not stay in the gang. The young man was released without reprisals and became a Kingdom publisher.

21 Courage is required to preach the good news. Christian youths need this quality if they are to maintain integrity at school. It may take courage to request time off from secular work in order to attend all sessions of a convention. The list could go on and on. Regardless of the challenges we face, however, Jehovah will hear our 'prayers of faith.' (Jas. 5:15) And surely he can give us his holy spirit so that we can "be courageous and very strong"!

20, 21. (a) Give an example showing that we must keep on mustering up courage. (b) Under what circumstances may we need to display courage, and of what can we be certain?



A Trait
That Can Poison
Our Minds

Envy

Napoleon Bonaparte had it. Julius Caesar had it. Alexander the Great had it. Despite all their power and glory, these men harbored in their heart a trait that can poison one's mind. All three envied someone else.

"Napoleon envied Caesar, Caesar envied Alexander [the Great], and Alexander, I daresay, envied Hercules, who never existed," wrote English philosopher Bertrand Russell. Envy can plague anyone, regardless of how much wealth he has, whatever virtues he possesses, and how successful he is in life.

Envy is a feeling of resentment toward others because of their belongings, prosperity, advantages, and so forth. Distinguishing envy from jealousy, a Biblical reference work says: "Jealousy' . . . refers to the desire to be as well off as another, and the word 'envy' refers to the desire to deprive another of what he has." Not only does the envious man begrudge what others have but he wants to take it from them.

We are wise to examine how envy can arise in us and what its consequences are. Especially do we need to know what measures we can take to prevent envy from controlling our lives.

A SPIRIT THAT CAN FAN THE FLAME OF ENVY

While imperfect humans have "a tendency to envy," various factors can feed and strengthen this inclination. (Jas. 4:5) Identifying one of them,

the apostle Paul wrote: "Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another." (Gal. 5:26) The spirit of competition can make our imperfect leanings toward envy even worse. Two Christians named Cristina and José* discovered this to be true.

Cristina, a regular pioneer, says: "I often find myself looking enviously at others. I compare what they have with what I don't have." On one occasion, Cristina was sharing a meal with a couple who have the privilege of serving in the traveling work. Aware that she and her husband, Eric, were about the same age as the traveling overseer and his wife and had had similar assignments in the past, Cristina said: "My husband too is an elder! So how is it that you are in the traveling work and we are nothing?" The flame of envy, fanned by a competitive spirit, blinded her to the fine work she and her husband were doing and made her feel dissatisfied with their life.

José desired to serve as a ministerial servant in the congregation. When he was not appointed but others were, he became envious of them and harbored ill feelings toward the coordinator of the

* Names have been changed.



body of elders. "Envy caused me to nurse a hatred for this brother and to misinterpret his intentions," confesses José. "When envy takes control of your life, you become self-centered and cannot think clearly."

WHAT SCRIPTURAL EXAMPLES TEACH US

The Bible contains many warning examples. (1 Cor. 10:11) Some of these show not only how envy develops but also how it poisons those who allow it to overpower them.

For instance, Adam and Eve's firstborn son, Cain, felt angry when Jehovah accepted Abel's sacrifice but not his. Cain could have remedied this situation, but he became so blinded by envy that he killed his brother. (Gen. 4:4-8) No wonder the Bible speaks of Cain as one "who originated with the wicked one," Satan!—1 John 3:12.

Joseph's ten brothers envied the special relationship Joseph had with their father. Their ha-

tred for Joseph grew when he told them about his prophetic dreams. They even wanted to kill him. Finally, they sold him as a slave and cruelly led their father to believe that Joseph was dead. (Gen. 37:4-11, 23-28, 31-33) Years later, they admitted their sin, saying to one another: "Unquestionably we are guilty with regard to our brother, because we saw the distress of his soul when he implored compassion on our part, but we did not listen." —Gen. 42:21; 50:15-19.

In the case of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, envy arose when they compared their privileges with those of Moses and Aaron. They accused Moses of 'playing the prince' and of lifting himself up above others. (Num. 16:13) This accusation was false. (Num. 11:14, 15) Jehovah himself had appointed Moses. But these rebels envied Moses' position. Finally, envy led to their destruction at Jehovah's hand.—Ps. 106:16, 17.

King Solomon witnessed the lengths to which envy can go. A woman whose own newborn baby had died attempted to deceive her companion into thinking that it was her baby who had died. During the subsequent trial, the liar even consented to the idea of killing the surviving baby. However, Solomon saw to it that the child was given to the real mother.—1 Ki. 3:16-27.

Envy can have devastating consequences. The aforementioned Scriptural examples show that it can lead to hatred, injustice, and murder. Moreover, in each case the victim had done nothing to deserve what was unleashed upon him or her. Is there anything we can do to ensure that envy does not control our lives? What measures can we take as antidotes to envy?

POWERFUL ANTIDOTES!

Develop love and brotherly affection. The apostle Peter admonished Christians: "Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to

the truth with unhypocritical brotherly affection as the result, love one another intensely from the heart." (1 Pet. 1:22) And what is love? The apostle Paul wrote: "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests." (1 Cor. 13:4, 5) Would not developing such love for others in our heart stifle a negative tendency to envy? (1 Pet. 2:1) Instead of envying David, Jonathan 'loved him as his own soul.'—1 Sam. 18:1.

Associate with godly people. The composer of Psalm 73 felt envious of the wicked who enjoyed a problem-free life of luxury. However, he conquered his envy by going to "the grand sanctuary of God." (Ps. 73:3-5, 17) Association with fellow worshippers helped the psalmist to recognize the blessings he derived from "drawing near to God." (Ps. 73:28) Regularly associating with fellow believers at Christian meetings can do the same for us.

Seek to do good. After observing that envy and hatred had developed in Cain, God told him: "Turn to doing good." (Gen. 4:7) What does "doing good" entail for Christians? Jesus said that we 'must love Jehovah our God with our whole heart and with our whole soul and with our whole mind and must love our neighbor as ourselves.' (Matt. 22:37-39) The satisfaction we derive from centering our lives on serving Jehovah and helping others is a strong antidote to feelings of envy. Having a meaningful share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work is a fine way to serve God and our neighbor and brings us "the blessing of Jehovah."—Prov. 10:22.

"Rejoice with people who rejoice." (Rom. 12:15) Jesus rejoiced at the success of his disciples, and he pointed out that they would accomplish even more than he had in the preaching work. (Luke 10:17, 21; John 14:12) We are united as Jehovah's



"Rejoice with people who rejoice"

servants; hence, the success of any one of us is a blessing to all. (1 Cor. 12:25, 26) Should we not, then, rejoice rather than feel envious when others receive greater responsibility?

NOT AN EASY FIGHT!

The fight against envy can be a long one. Cristina admits: "I still have a strong tendency toward envy. Even though I hate it, the feeling is there, and I have to suppress it constantly." José has had a similar fight. "Jehovah helped me to appreciate the good qualities of the coordinator of the body of elders," he says. "A good relationship with God has proved invaluable."

Envy is one of "the works of the flesh," against which every Christian should fight. (Gal. 5:19-21) By not allowing envy to control us, we can make our lives happier and can please our heavenly Father, Jehovah.



*"The undeserved
kindness of the Lord
Jesus Christ be with
the spirit you show."*

—PHIL. 4:23.

HOW CAN WE PROMOTE
A HEALTHY SPIRIT IN THE
CONGREGATION . . .

while associating with our
brothers?

by our zeal in the field
ministry?

by reporting serious
wrongdoing?

PRESERVE THE POSITIVE SPIRIT OF THE CONGREGATION

THE first-century Christians in Philippi were materially poor. However, they were generous and showed exemplary love for their fellow believers. (Phil. 1:3-5, 9; 4:15, 16) In closing his inspired letter to them, the apostle Paul could therefore write: "The undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ be with the spirit you show." (Phil. 4:23) Because a similar spirit was shown by the Christians in Thyatira, the glorified Jesus Christ told them: "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and ministry and endurance, and that your deeds of late are more than those formerly."—Rev. 2:19.

² Each congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses today likewise manifests a certain spirit, or dominant attitude. Some congregations are especially known for showing a warm, loving spirit. Others are exceptional in their zealous support of the Kingdom-preaching work and in showing high regard for the full-time ministry. When we as individuals cultivate a positive spirit, we contribute to the unity of the congregation and further its spiritual advancement in general. (1 Cor. 1:10) On the other hand, a negative spirit on our part can contribute to spiritual drowsiness, a lukewarm attitude, and even the toleration of wrongdoing in the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:1; Rev. 3:15, 16) What is the spirit of your congregation? How can you personally help to promote a positive spirit in the congregation?

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1. For what were the congregations in Philippi and Thyatira commended?
 2. What part do we play in cultivating the spirit that our congregation displays?

ENCOURAGE A POSITIVE SPIRIT

³ The psalmist sang: “I will laud you [Jehovah] in the big congregation; among a numerous people I shall praise you.” (Ps. 35:18) The psalmist did not hold back from praising Jehovah when he was with other servants of God. Weekly congregation meetings, including the *Watchtower Study*, present fine opportunities for us to display a zealous spirit when we comment and make expressions of faith. All of us may well ask ourselves: ‘Am I taking full advantage of the privilege to participate in meetings? Do I prepare well for them and make meaningful comments? As a family head, do I help my children to prepare comments in advance and teach them to answer in their own words?’

⁴ The psalmist David associated the steadfastness of our heart with our singing. “My heart is steadfast, O God,” he said, “my heart is steadfast. I will sing and make melody.” (Ps. 57:7) The songs used at Christian meetings provide us a fine opportunity to “sing and make melody” to Jehovah with a steadfast heart. If we are not familiar with some of the songs, why not practice singing them during Family Worship evening? May we be determined to ‘sing to Jehovah throughout our life and make melody to him as long as we are.’—Ps. 104:33.

⁵ Showing hospitality to our brothers and sisters is another way to engender a loving spirit in the congregation. In the final chapter of his letter to the Hebrews, Paul includes this exhortation: “Let your brotherly love continue. Do

3, 4. How can we “laud [Jehovah] in the big congregation”?

5, 6. How may we be hospitable and generous to others, and what does doing so engender in the congregation?



Do you contribute to a positive spirit by preparing meaningful comments?

not forget hospitality.” (Heb. 13:1, 2) Providing a meal for traveling overseers and their wives or for full-time servants in the congregation is an excellent way to display hospitality. Think also of widows, single-parent families, or other individuals who may benefit from occasionally joining us for a meal or during our family worship.

⁶ Paul directed Timothy to admonish others “to work at good, to be rich in fine works, to be liberal, ready to share, safely treasuring up for themselves a



Contribute to a positive spirit by becoming familiar with our songs

fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life.” (1 Tim. 6:17-19) Paul was recommending that his fellow worshippers cultivate the spirit of generosity. Even in difficult economic times, we can promote a generous spirit. A fine way to do this is to provide transportation in the field ministry and to and from the meetings for those needing it. And what about those who benefit from such acts of loving-kindness? They would be encouraging a positive spirit in the congregation if they showed appreciation, perhaps by offering what they can to help defray the increasingly high cost of fuel. Moreover, would not our arranging to spend more time with our spiritual brothers and sisters make them feel needed and loved? When we abound in good deeds “toward those related to us in the faith” and are ready to share our time and resources with them, we not

only deepen our love for them but also help to build a warm and positive spirit in the congregation.—Gal. 6:10.

7 Consider yet other factors that strengthen the bond of love with our fellow believers: friendship and confidentiality. (*Read Proverbs 18:24.*) True friends keep personal matters confidential. When our brothers reveal their innermost thoughts and feelings to us and are sure that these will not become public knowledge, the bond of love that may already exist will grow stronger. May we promote a loving, family-like spirit in the congregation by being a trustworthy friend who can keep things confidential.—Prov. 20:19.

BE ZEALOUS IN THE MINISTRY

8 When addressing the congregation in Laodicea, Jesus said: “I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were cold or else hot. So, because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth.” (Rev. 3:15, 16) The Laodiceans lacked zeal for the Christian ministry. Such an attitude likely affected their personal relationships as well. So Jesus lovingly counseled them: “All those for whom I have affection I reprove and discipline. Therefore be zealous and repent.”—Rev. 3:19.

To promote a healthy, positive spirit in the congregation, we should give attention to our zeal for the field service. The congregation is organized for the

7. How does keeping the personal matters of others confidential help to preserve a good spirit in the congregation?
8. What counsel did the Laodiceans receive, and why?
9. How does our attitude toward the field ministry affect the spirit of the congregation?

purpose of searching out sheeplike individuals in the territory and building them up spiritually. Hence, we need to share in the disciple-making work with enthusiasm, as Jesus did. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Luke 4:43) The greater our zeal for the ministry, the more united we will be as "God's fellow workers." (1 Cor. 3:9) As we observe others in the field service defending their faith and expressing appreciation for spiritual things, we are moved to love and respect them more. Also, serving "shoulder to shoulder" in the ministry produces a united spirit in the congregation.—*Read Zephaniah 3:9.*

10 Our efforts to improve the quality of our ministry also have a good effect on others. As we show greater concern for the people we meet, and as we endeavor to improve our effectiveness in reaching the hearts of our listeners, our enthusiasm for the ministry increases. (Matt. 9:36, 37) Enthusiasm tends to rub off on our companions. Jesus sent his disciples out to preach in twos rather than individually. (Luke 10:1) This not only provided encouragement and training but also heightened their zeal for the ministry. Do we not appreciate working with zealous Kingdom publishers? Their enthusiastic spirit encourages us and spurs us on in the preaching work.—Rom. 1:12.

GUARD AGAINST MURMURING AND WRONGDOING

11 Within just several weeks of their existence as a new nation, the Israelites developed a spirit of discontent

10. What effect does improving the quality of our field service have on the spirit of others in the congregation?

11. What kind of spirit did some Israelites in Moses' day develop, and what effect did this have on them?

and murmuring. This led to rebellion against Jehovah and his representatives. (Ex. 16:1, 2) Only a small number of the Israelites who left Egypt lived to see the Promised Land. Why, even Moses was denied entry to that land because of his reaction to the bad spirit of the congregation of Israel! (Deut. 32:48-52) What can we do today to keep from falling prey to a negative spirit?

12 We must guard against developing a spirit of murmuring. While cultivating humility and respect for authority will help us, we need to be concerned about those with whom we associate. A poor choice of entertainment or spending too much time with workmates or school associates who have no regard for righteous principles takes its toll. We are wise to limit our association with people who are negative or who are promoting an independent attitude. —Prov. 13:20.

13 The corruptive influence of murmuring can lead to other spiritually damaging developments. For example, murmuring can disrupt a congregation's peace and unity. Moreover, voicing complaints against fellow believers may not only cause them pain but may also deteriorate into the sins of slander and reviling. (Lev. 19:16; 1 Cor. 5:11) Some murmurers in the first-century congregation were "disregarding lordship and speaking abusively of glorious ones." (Jude 8, 16) Such murmuring against responsible men in the congregation certainly did not have God's approval.

12. How can we guard against developing a complaining spirit?

13. The corruptive influence of murmuring can lead to what other spiritually damaging developments in a congregation?

14 What if we become aware that someone is involved in a secret sin, perhaps abusing alcohol, viewing pornography, or living an immoral life? (Eph. 5:11, 12) Our turning a blind eye to gross wrongdoing can hinder the free flow of Jehovah's holy spirit and threaten the peace of the entire congregation. (Gal. 5:19-23) Just as the early Christians in Corinth had to clear out badness, so today any corrupting influence must be kept out of the congregation in order to preserve its healthy, positive spirit. What can you do to contribute to the congregation's peace?

15 As was previously mentioned, it is important to maintain confidentiality in certain matters, especially when others share with us their feelings and thoughts. How wrong and hurtful it is to spread confidential information about someone! Even so, when serious sin has been committed, those Scripturally obligated to handle the matter—the elders in the congregation—should be informed. (*Read Leviticus 5:1.*) So if we know that a brother or a sister has fallen into such wrongdoing, we should encourage that one to approach the elders and seek their help. (Jas. 5:13-15) If he or she does not do so within a reasonable period of time, though, we should report the wrongdoing.

16 The Christian congregation is a spiritual haven, and we must help to protect it by reporting serious wrongdoing. If the elders bring the wrongdoer

to his senses and he repentantly accepts reproof and correction, he no longer endangers the spirit of the congregation. But what if the practitioner of gross sin is unrepentant and does not respond to the loving counsel of the elders? His expulsion from the congregation results in "the destruction," or removal, of the corrupting element from among us, and the spirit of the congregation is preserved. (*Read 1 Corinthians 5:5.*) Yes, preserving the spirit of the congregation requires that each of us take proper action, cooperate with the body of elders, and protect the welfare of fellow believers.

ENCOURAGE “THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT”

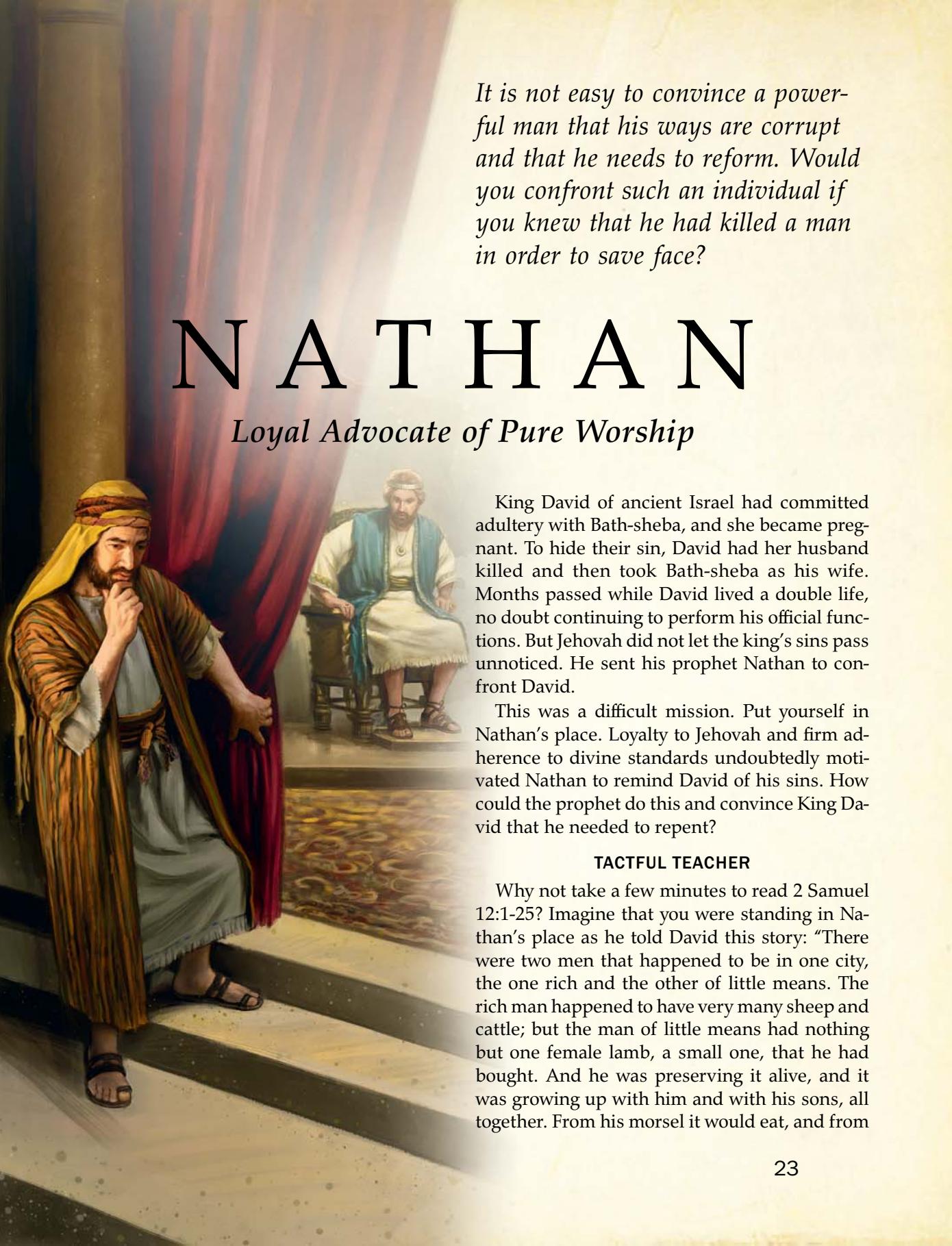
17 By "devoting themselves to the teaching of the apostles," Jesus' early followers helped to develop a spirit of unity within the congregation. (Acts 2:42) They valued the Scriptural counsel and direction received from the older men. Because present-day elders cooperate with the faithful and discreet slave class, all in the congregation are encouraged and assisted to remain united. (1 Cor. 1:10) When we submit to the Bible-based instruction from Jehovah's organization and follow the direction of the elders, we give proof that we are "earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace."—Eph. 4:3.

18 By all means, then, let us work to preserve a healthy, positive spirit in the congregation. If we do so, we are assured that 'the undeserved kindness of the Lord Jesus Christ will be with the spirit we show.'—Phil. 4:23.

14, 15. (a) Allowing wrongdoing to go on unchecked can have what effect on the entire congregation? (b) What should we do if we become aware that someone is involved in a secret sin?

16. How does our reporting serious wrongdoing help to preserve the spirit of the congregation?

17, 18. What will help us to "observe the oneness of the spirit"?



It is not easy to convince a powerful man that his ways are corrupt and that he needs to reform. Would you confront such an individual if you knew that he had killed a man in order to save face?

NATHAN

Loyal Advocate of Pure Worship

King David of ancient Israel had committed adultery with Bath-sheba, and she became pregnant. To hide their sin, David had her husband killed and then took Bath-sheba as his wife. Months passed while David lived a double life, no doubt continuing to perform his official functions. But Jehovah did not let the king's sins pass unnoticed. He sent his prophet Nathan to confront David.

This was a difficult mission. Put yourself in Nathan's place. Loyalty to Jehovah and firm adherence to divine standards undoubtedly motivated Nathan to remind David of his sins. How could the prophet do this and convince King David that he needed to repent?

TACTFUL TEACHER

Why not take a few minutes to read 2 Samuel 12:1-25? Imagine that you were standing in Nathan's place as he told David this story: "There were two men that happened to be in one city, the one rich and the other of little means. The rich man happened to have very many sheep and cattle; but the man of little means had nothing but one female lamb, a small one, that he had bought. And he was preserving it alive, and it was growing up with him and with his sons, all together. From his morsel it would eat, and from

his cup it would drink, and in his bosom it would lie, and it came to be as a daughter to him. After a while a visitor came to the rich man, but he spared taking some from his own sheep and his own cattle to get such ready for the traveler that had come in to him. So he took the female lamb of the man of little means and got it ready for the man that had come in to him.”—2 Sam. 12:1-4.

David—who had been a shepherd himself—evidently believed that this was a real situation. “Perhaps,” suggests one expositor, “Nathan had been accustomed to come to him to plead the cause of the injured who could obtain no redress otherwise, and David imagined this to be his errand now.” Even if that was the case, it took loyalty to God as well as courage in order for Nathan to speak to the king as he did. Nathan’s story made David furious. “As Jehovah is living, the man doing this deserves to die!” he exclaimed. Then came Nathan’s crushing declaration: “You yourself are the man!”—2 Sam. 12:5-7.

Consider why Nathan addressed the problem as he did. It is not easy for a person who has become emotionally entangled with someone to view his situation objectively. All of us tend to make excuses in an attempt to justify ourselves if our actions are questionable. But Nathan’s illustration moved David unwittingly to condemn his own actions. The king saw clearly that the conduct Nathan described was deplorable. Only after David himself had condemned it, however, did Nathan reveal that the illustration applied to the king. Then David could see the magnitude of his sin. This put him in the right frame of mind to accept reproof. He acknowledged that he had indeed “despised” Jehovah by his conduct in connection with Bath-sheba, and he accepted the deserved reproof.—2 Sam. 12:9-14; Ps. 51, superscription.

What can we learn from this? A Bible teacher’s objective is to help his listeners arrive at the right conclusion. Nathan respected David and therefore approached him tactfully. Nathan knew that at heart David loved righteousness and justice.

With his illustration, the prophet appealed to these godly qualities. We too can help sincere individuals to understand Jehovah’s point of view. How? By appealing to their sense of what is right, doing so without assuming any air of moral or spiritual superiority. The Bible, not our personal opinion, is our authority regarding what is right and what is wrong.

More than anything else, loyalty to God enabled Nathan to reprove a powerful king. (2 Sam. 12:1) Similar loyalty will give us the courage to stand firm for Jehovah’s righteous principles.

PROMOTER OF PURE WORSHIP

Apparently, David and Nathan were good friends, for David named one of his sons Nathan. (1 Chron. 3:1, 5) The first time Nathan appears in the Biblical record, he is in David’s company. Both of them loved Jehovah. The king evidently trusted Nathan’s judgment, for he revealed to the prophet his desire to build a temple to Jehovah. “‘See, now,’ said David, ‘I am dwelling in a house of cedars while the ark of the true God is dwelling in the middle of tent cloths.’ Upon that Nathan said to the king: ‘Everything that is in your heart—go, do, because Jehovah is with you.’”—2 Sam. 7:2, 3.

As a faithful worshipper of Jehovah, Nathan enthusiastically endorsed David’s plan to construct the first permanent center of pure worship on earth. On that occasion, however, Nathan apparently expressed his own feelings instead of speaking in Jehovah’s name. That night, God instructed his prophet to take a different message to the king: David would not build Jehovah’s temple. The person to do so would be one of David’s sons. But Nathan announced that God was making a covenant with David to the effect that his throne would become “firmly established to time indefinite.”—2 Sam. 7:4-16.

God’s will did not harmonize with Nathan’s judgment with respect to temple construction. Without murmuring, however, this humble prophet acquiesced to Jehovah’s purpose and cooperated with it. What a fine example to fol-

low if God should correct us in some way! Nathan's subsequent acts as a prophet show that he did not lose God's favor. In fact, it appears that Jehovah inspired Nathan, together with Gad the visionary, to direct David in organizing 4,000 musicians in temple service.—1 Chron. 23:1-5; 2 Chron. 29:25.

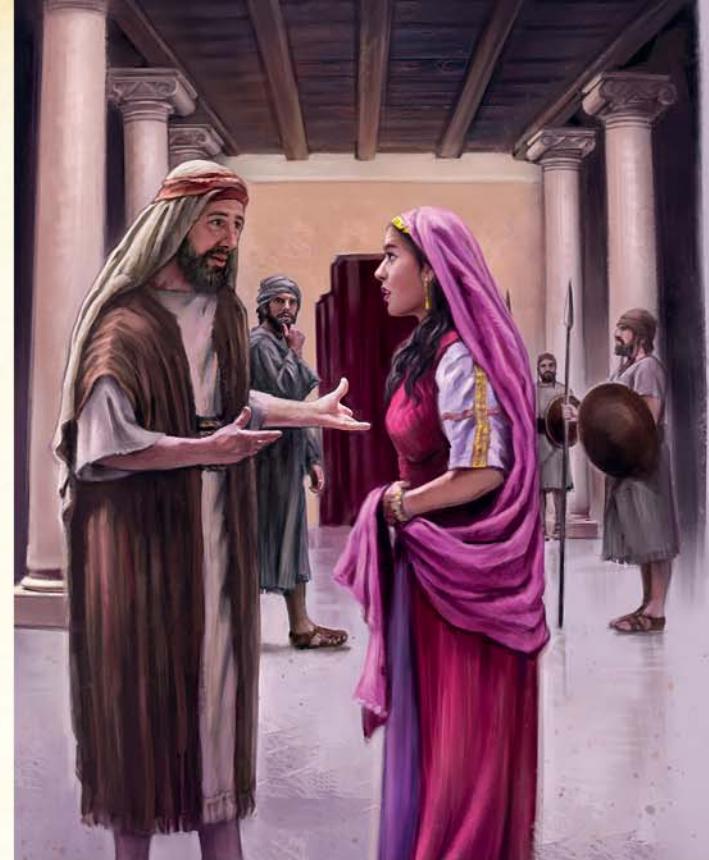
DEFENDER OF THE KINGSHIP

Nathan was aware that Solomon was to succeed elderly David as king. So Nathan acted decisively when Adonijah attempted to usurp the throne during David's waning years. Tact and loyalty again characterized Nathan's actions. First he urged Bath-sheba to remind David of his sworn intention to make their son Solomon king. Then Nathan himself entered the king's presence to ask whether David had authorized Adonijah's succession. Realizing the gravity of the situation, the aged king instructed Nathan and other loyal servants to have Solomon anointed and proclaimed king. Adonijah's coup was thwarted.—1 Ki. 1:5-53.

UNASSUMING HISTORIAN

Nathan and Gad are generally credited with writing 1 Samuel chapters 25 to 31 as well as all of 2 Samuel. With regard to the inspired histories recorded in those books, it is stated: "As for the affairs of David the king, the first ones and the last, there they are written among the words of Samuel the seer and among the words of Nathan the prophet and among the words of Gad the visionary." (1 Chron. 29:29) Nathan is also identified with the composition of an account regarding "the affairs of Solomon." (2 Chron. 9:29) Very likely, this means that Nathan continued to be active in affairs of the royal court even after David's death.

Much of what we know about Nathan may have been written by the prophet himself. Yet, his silence regarding certain matters tells us much about him. Nathan evidently was an unassuming historian. He was not ambitious, wanting to make a name for himself. In the words of



As a defender of the kingship,
Nathan tactfully spoke to Bath-sheba

one Bible dictionary, he appears in the inspired record "with no introduction and no pedigree." We know nothing about Nathan's ancestry or personal life.

MOTIVATED BY LOYALTY TO JEHOVAH

From the few glimpses of Nathan given to us in the Scriptures, it is clear that he was a humble but vigorous defender of divine arrangements. Jehovah God assigned him weighty responsibilities. Meditate on Nathan's qualities, such as loyalty to God and deep appreciation for divine requirements. Strive to imitate such qualities.

You are unlikely to be called upon to reprove adulterous kings or to thwart coups. With God's help, however, you can be loyal to God and can uphold his righteous standards. You can also be a courageous, yet tactful, teacher of truth and a promoter of pure worship.



*"How do you know
but that you will
save your [mate]?"*

—1 COR. 7:16.

CAN YOU FIND THE ANSWERS?

What can believers do to cultivate peace in a religiously divided home?

How might a Christian help unbelieving family members to embrace true worship?

What can others do to help fellow believers who live in religiously divided households?

HAPPINESS IS POSSIBLE IN A DIVIDED HOUSEHOLD

WHEN Jesus sent out his apostles on one occasion, he said: "As you go, preach, saying, 'The kingdom of the heavens has drawn near.'" (Matt. 10:1, 7) This good news would bring peace and happiness to those accepting it with true appreciation. However, Jesus warned his apostles that many would oppose their Kingdom-preaching work. (Matt. 10:16-23) An especially painful form of opposition is experienced when family members reject the Kingdom message.—*Read Matthew 10:34-36.*

² Does this mean that happiness is out of reach for Christ's followers who live in religiously divided households? Not at all! Though family opposition can sometimes be severe, that is not always the case. Then, too, family opposition is not necessarily permanent. Much depends on how believers respond to opposition or indifference. Moreover, Jehovah blesses those who are loyal to him, making them joyful despite unfavorable circumstances. Believers can add to their own happiness (1) by endeavoring to cultivate peace in the home and (2) by sincerely trying to help unbelieving family members to embrace true worship.

CULTIVATE PEACE IN THE HOME

³ For the seed of righteousness to bear fruit in a family environment, peaceful conditions in the home are essential. (*Read James 3:18.*) Even if a

1. What effect can acceptance of the Kingdom message have on a family?
2. Why is happiness not out of reach for Christians who live in religiously divided households?
3. Why should a Christian in a divided household cultivate peace?

Christian's family is not yet unified in pure worship, he must make an earnest effort to cultivate peace in the home. How can this be done?

4 Christians must maintain their inner peace. This calls for heartfelt prayer, which can bring us the incomparable "peace of God." (Phil. 4:6, 7) Happiness and peace result from taking in knowledge of Jehovah and applying Scriptural principles in life. (Isa. 54:13) Participation in congregation meetings and zealous activity in the field ministry are also vital if we are to enjoy peace and happiness. Sharing in Christian activities in some way is generally possible for believers living in divided households. For example, consider Enza,* whose husband is violently opposed. She engages in the disciple-making work after taking care of her household duties. Enza says, "Jehovah richly blesses me with good results each time I make the effort to share the good news with others." Such blessings certainly result in peace, satisfaction, and happiness.

5 We need to make an earnest effort to cultivate a peaceful relationship with unbelieving family members. This may present a challenge because what they want us to do may at times conflict with Bible principles. Our holding firmly to right principles may upset some unbelieving family members, but such a stand promotes peace in the long run. Of course, being unyielding when something does not violate Scriptural principles may cause unnecessary friction.

* Names have been changed.

4. How may Christians maintain their inner peace?

5. What challenge do believers in divided households often face, and what help is available?

(*Read Proverbs 16:7.*) When facing a challenge, it is important to seek Scriptural counsel from publications of the faithful and discreet slave class and from the elders.—Prov. 11:14.

6 Cultivating peace in a household calls for trust in Jehovah and insight into the feelings of unbelieving family members. (Prov. 16:20) Even new Bible students can show discernment in this regard. Some unbelieving husbands or wives may not object to having their mate study the Bible. They may even acknowledge that this could be good for the family. Others, however, may manifest hostility. Esther, who is now a Witness, admits that she reacted in "pure anger" when her husband began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. "I either threw out his literature or burned it," she says. Howard, who at first opposed his wife's Bible study, remarks: "Many husbands are afraid that their wives are being tricked into joining a religious sect. A husband may not know how to react to this supposed threat and may become antagonistic."

7 A student whose mate is opposed should be helped to see that he does not have to discontinue his Bible study. Often he will be able to resolve matters by being mild-tempered and showing respect for his unbelieving mate. (1 Pet. 3:15) Howard says, "I am so grateful that my wife stayed calm and did not overreact!" His wife explains: "Howard demanded that I give up studying the Bible. He said that I was being brainwashed. Instead of arguing, I said that

6, 7. (a) Why do some oppose family members who begin to study with Jehovah's Witnesses? (b) How should a Bible student or a believer respond to family opposition?

he could be right, but I also told him that I could not honestly see how. So I asked him to read the book I was studying. He did so and could not disagree with what it said. This deeply affected him." It is good to remember that unbelieving spouses may feel abandoned or threatened when their mate leaves to participate in Christian activities, but loving reassurances can go a long way in allaying such feelings.

HELP THEM TO EMBRACE TRUE WORSHIP

8 The apostle Paul advises Christians not to leave a marriage partner just because that individual is an unbeliever.* (*Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-16.*) Keeping in mind the possibility that an unbelieving marriage mate may become a Christian can help a believer to maintain his or her happiness although living in a divided household. In trying to reach the unbeliever with the message of the truth, though, a certain caution is in order, as the following experiences bear out.

9 Reflecting on his reaction to learning Bible truth, Jason says, "I wanted to tell everyone!" When a Bible student comes to appreciate the truthfulness of what he has been taught from the Scriptures, he may be so happy that he talks about it almost all the time. He may expect unbelieving family members to accept the Kingdom message immediately, but the good news could be met with an adverse response. How did Jason's

* Paul's counsel does not rule out legal separation in extreme situations. That is a serious personal decision. See "Keep Yourselves in God's Love," pages 220-221.

8. What counsel did the apostle Paul give to Christians who have unbelieving mates?

9. When introducing Bible truth to unbelieving family members, what caution is in order?

initial enthusiasm affect his wife? "I felt overwhelmed," she recalls. One woman who accepted the truth 18 years after her husband did says, "I, for one, needed to learn it gradually." If you are presently conducting a Bible study with a student whose mate has no desire to take part in true worship, why not hold regular practice sessions to help the student to approach issues tactfully? Moses said: "My instruction will drip as the rain, my saying will trickle as the dew, as gentle rains upon grass." (Deut. 32:2) A few well-placed droplets of truth will often do more good than a spiritual downpour would.

10 The apostle Peter provided inspired counsel for Christian wives living in religiously divided households. "Be in

- 10-12.** (a) What counsel did the apostle Peter give to Christians who have unbelieving mates?
(b) How did one Bible student learn to apply the counsel recorded at 1 Peter 3:1, 2?

Choose the right time to explain your beliefs





Show concern for unbelieving mates

subjection to your own husbands," he wrote, "in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) A wife may be able to win her husband over to true worship by being in subjection and showing deep respect for him, even if he treats her harshly. Likewise, a believing husband should conduct himself in a godly way and be a loving head of the household despite any opposition he may encounter from his unbelieving wife.—1 Pet. 3:7-9.

11 Many modern-day examples illustrate the value of applying Peter's counsel. Consider the case of Selma. When she began to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, her husband, Steve, was not pleased. He admits, "I be-

came angry, jealous, possessive, and insecure." Selma observes: "Even before I got the truth, living with Steve was like walking on eggshells. He was hot-tempered. When I started studying the Bible, this characteristic intensified." What helped?

12 Selma recalls a lesson she learned from the Witness who studied with her. "On one particular day," says Selma, "I didn't want to have a Bible study. The night before, Steve had hit me as I had tried to prove a point, and I was feeling sad and sorry for myself. After I told the sister what had happened and how I felt, she asked me to read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7. As I did, I began to reason, 'Steve never does any of these loving things for me.' But the sister made me think differently by asking, 'How many of those acts of love do you show toward your husband?' My answer was, 'None, for he is so difficult to live with.' The sister softly said, 'Selma, who is trying to be a Christian here? You or Steve?' Realizing that I needed to adjust my thinking, I prayed to Jehovah to help me be more loving toward Steve. Slowly, things started to change." After 17 years, Steve accepted the truth.

HOW OTHERS CAN HELP

13 Like gentle drops of rain that soak the ground and help plants to grow, many individuals in the congregation contribute to the happiness of Christians in divided households. "The love of my brothers and sisters was what helped me to stand firm in the truth," says Elvina in Brazil.

14 Kindness and interest on the part of others in the congregation can do much

13, 14. How can others in the congregation assist those who live in a religiously divided household?

to affect the heart of an unbelieving family member. A husband in Nigeria who accepted the truth 13 years after his wife did states: "While I was traveling with a Witness, his vehicle broke down. He sought out fellow Witnesses in a neighboring village, and they gave us accommodations for the night. They cared for us as if we had known them from childhood. Right away, I felt the Christian love that my wife had always spoken about." In England, a wife who came into the truth 18 years after her husband did recalls: "The Witnesses invited both of us for meals. I always felt welcome."* Says a husband in the same land who eventually became a Witness: "Brothers and sisters would visit us, or we were invited to their homes, and I found that they had a caring attitude. This was especially noticeable when I was in the hospital and many came to visit me." Can you find ways to show similar interest in unbelieving family members?

15 Of course, not all unbelieving spouses, children, parents, or other relatives embrace true worship, even after years of faithful conduct and tactful witnessing on the part of the believer. Some remain indifferent or become unrelenting opposers. (Matt. 10:35-37) When Christians display godly traits, however, this can have a very good effect. A former unbelieving husband states: "When the believing mate starts to let those lovely qualities shine, you do not know what is going on in the unbeliever's mind and heart. So don't ever give up on your unbelieving mate."

* Eating with unbelievers is not forbidden in the Scriptures.—1 Cor. 10:27.

15, 16. What can help a believer to maintain happiness when others in the family remain unbelievers?

16 Even if a family member remains an unbeliever, happiness is possible for the believer. Although her husband has not responded to the Kingdom message after 21 years of effort on her part, one sister says: "I am able to maintain my joy by striving to please Jehovah, by maintaining my loyalty to him, and by working to strengthen my spirituality. Immersing myself in spiritual activities—personal study, meeting attendance, the field ministry, and helping others in the congregation—has drawn me closer to Jehovah and has safeguarded my heart."—Prov. 4:23.

DO NOT GIVE UP!

17 If you are a faithful Christian living in a religiously divided household, do not give up. Remember that "Jehovah will not desert his people for the sake of his great name." (1 Sam. 12:22) He is with you as long as you cling to him. (*Read 2 Chronicles 15:2.*) So "take exquisite delight in Jehovah." Indeed, "roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him." (Ps. 37:4, 5) "Persevere in prayer," and have faith that our loving heavenly Father can help you to endure hardships of all kinds.—Rom. 12:12.

18 Petition Jehovah for his holy spirit to help you promote peace in the home. (Heb. 12:14) Yes, it is possible to foster peaceful conditions that may eventually touch the heart of unbelieving family members. You will experience happiness and peace of heart and mind as you "do all things for God's glory." (1 Cor. 10:31) In these endeavors, how heartening it is to know that you have the loving support of your brothers and sisters in the Christian congregation!

17, 18. How can a Christian remain hopeful even in a religiously divided household?

'It Made Me a Little Conspicuous'

When full-time preacher Charlotte White arrived in Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., rolling a suitcase on wheels, she caused quite a stir.



THE year was 1908, and Sister White certainly got the attention of the townspeople with a brand new invention—the Dawn-Mobile. “It caused some comment,” she reported, “and made me a little conspicuous.”

The Bible Students, as Jehovah’s Witnesses were then called, saw the need to share the precious truths they had learned from a diligent study of the Scriptures. Many had gained Bible knowledge by means of a series of books entitled *Millennial Dawn* (later also called *Studies in the Scriptures*). Those Christians who were willing and able traveled far and wide—through towns, villages, and rural areas—offering these books described as “Helping Hands for Bible Students” to other eager readers.

In 1908, Sister White and other zealous Kingdom proclaimers would have offered the six-volume, clothbound set for \$1.65 (U.S.). Instead of placing the *Dawns* on the spot, they would take orders and return later—usually on payday—to deliver them for the modest printing cost. One opposer complained about how little money people contributed when receiving the books!

Malinda Keefer remembered taking orders for two hundred to three hundred books a week. But the great interest shown in the *Dawns* brought with it a dilemma. Why, the sixth volume alone





Sister Keefer typically made three or four trips across a bridge on delivery day

consisted of 740 pages! "Fifty books weigh forty pounds," (18 kg) admitted *The Watch Tower*, making deliveries "too great a strain," especially for sisters.

To solve the *Dawn* delivery dilemma, Brother James Cole invented a foldable, two-wheeled frame to which a suitcase could be attached by screws. No longer obliged to carry heavy cartons full of books, the inventor himself remarked: "I am not breaking my shoulders." He introduced the new apparatus to a delighted audience at the 1908 Bible Students convention in Cincinnati, Ohio. On buttons at each end of the crossbar was engraved the name Dawn-Mobile, since its main cargo consisted of volumes of *Millennial Dawn*. With a little practice, transporting a suitcase filled with dozens of books became an easy, one-handed operation. The height could be adjusted, and the wheels could roll along wagon-wheel tracks. After a day in the ministry, the rubber wheels could be folded up against the side of the suitcase for the trip home on foot or by streetcar.

Sisters in full-time service could have a Dawn-Mobile free of charge. Otherwise, it cost \$2.50 (U.S.). Sister Keefer, pictured here, mastered the Dawn-Mobile technique so well that she could wheel a full suitcase with one hand and carry an additional satchel of books in the other. Finding many receptive individuals in one Pennsylvania, U.S.A., mining town, she typically made three or four trips across a bridge on delivery day.

In the late 1980's, an airline pilot invented the wheeled luggage that is now such a common sight in airports and on busy city streets. But some one hundred years ago, zealous Bible Students likely enjoyed the stares of curious onlookers as they conspicuously wheeled their Dawn-Mobiles to and fro while scattering precious seeds of Bible truth.



*It solved
the Dawn
delivery
dilemma*