

AUGUST 15, 2002

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## To Whom Should You Be Loyal?

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 27, 2002

Is God the Greatest for You?

September 20, 2002, to October 25, 2002

SEPTEMBER 24-GLOBE

What's Wrong with the World?

September 27, 2002

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 A World With Distorted Views on Loyalty
- 4 To Whom Should You Be Loyal?
- 8 Delighted That They Learned to Read!
- 10 "I Set the Pattern for You"
- 15 "Follow Me Continually"
- 21 How Can Thinking Ability Safeguard You?
- 25 Would You Maintain Your Integrity?
- 29 Do You Remember?
- 30 Questions From Readers
- 32 "Do You Know Why I'm Returning Your Money?"

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

### SEPTEMBER 23-29:

"I Set the Pattern for You."

Page 10. Songs to be used: 205, 156.

### SEPTEMBER 30-OCTOBER 6:

"Follow Me Continually."

Page 15. Songs to be used: 107, 162.

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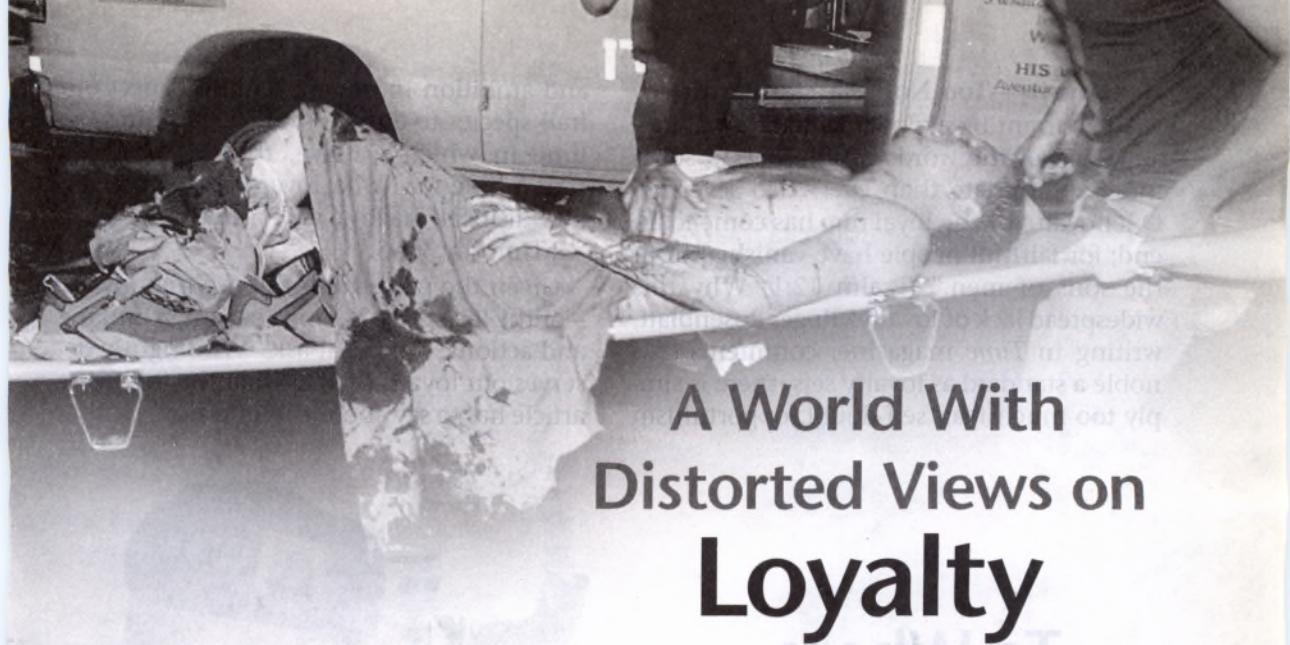
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## A World With Distorted Views on Loyalty

**O**N A warm Friday evening in Tel Aviv, Israel, a young man joined a group of youths waiting outside a nightclub. Moments later a devastating blast ripped through the crowd.

Another suicide bomber had given his life and had violently taken the lives of 19 other youths. "Body parts everywhere, all of them youths, so young—the most horrendous scene I've ever seen," a medic later told reporters.

"It's qualities that everyone admires, like loyalty . . . , that can make wars both more likely to start and more difficult to end," wrote Thurstan Brewin in *The Lancet*. Yes, from the Crusades of Christendom to the pogroms of Nazi Germany, human history is bloodied by carnage committed in the name of loyalty.

### Mounting Casualties of Disloyalty

Undeniably, fanatic loyalty can be destructive, but a lack of loyalty can also tear society apart. To be loyal, states *Webster's New Encyclopedic Dictionary*, means to be 'faithful to a person or cause' and "implies personal stead-

fast adherence in the face of any temptation to desert or betray." While most people say that they admire this kind of loyalty, society is suffering from an immense lack of loyalty at the most fundamental level—within the family circle. The divorce rate has skyrocketed, fueled by the emphasis on personal fulfillment, the stresses and strains of daily life, and the effects of rampant sexual infidelity. And like the casualties of the bombing in Tel Aviv, youths are often the innocent victims.

"A child's education is often one of the casualties of family instability arising from divorce, separation, and sole parenthood," states one report. Boys in single-mother families seem to be especially at risk of educational disadvantage, suicide, and juvenile crime. Each year, one million children in the United States experience the divorce of their parents, and in any given year, half of all children born to married parents in that country will likely be victims of divorce by the time such children are 18 years old. Statistics show that the outlook is similarly heartbreaking for many youths in other parts of the world.

### Loyalty—Too Noble a Standard?

The current breakdown in traditional loyalties makes the words of King David seem more appropriate than ever: "Do save me, O Jehovah, for the loyal one has come to an end; for faithful people have vanished from the sons of men." (Psalm 12:1) Why this widespread lack of loyalty? Roger Rosenblatt, writing in *Time* magazine, comments: "As noble a standard as loyalty sets, there is simply too much fear, self-doubt, opportunism

and ambition in our makeup to expect our frail species to adhere to it." Describing the time in which we live, the Bible frankly states: "Men will be lovers of themselves, . . . disloyal, having no natural affection." —2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Given the powerful influence that loyalty—or the lack of it—has on a person's thinking and actions, we might ask, 'Who rightly deserves our loyalty?' Note what the following article has to say about this question.

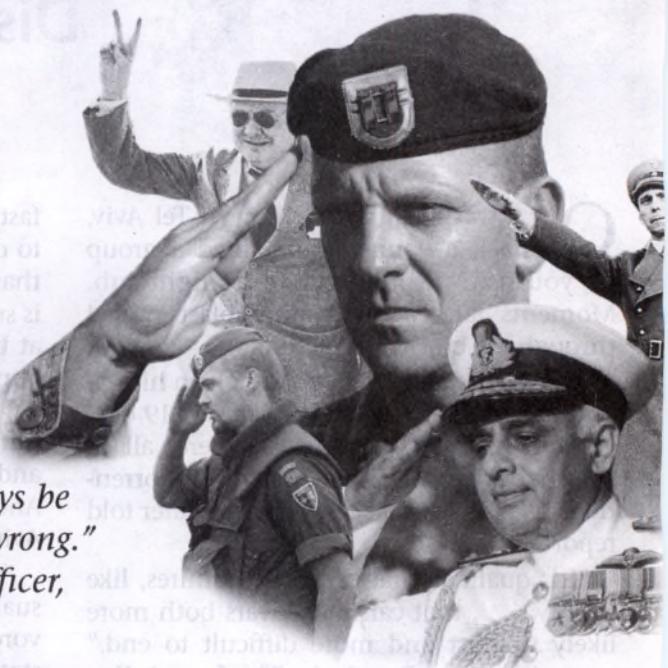
## To Whom Should You Be Loyal?

*"Our country: . . . May she always be right; but our country, right or wrong."*

—Stephen Decatur, U.S. naval officer, 1779-1820.

UNQUESTIONING loyalty to one's country is seen by many as their paramount obligation. Others would rephrase Stephen Decatur's words, 'My religion, may she always be right; but my religion, right or wrong.'

Realistically, the country or religion that demands our loyalty is often determined by the place of our birth, but the decision about whom we should be loyal to is too important



to leave in the hands of chance. However, questioning the loyalties with which one is raised takes courage and creates challenges.

### A Test of Loyalties

A woman who grew up in Zambia says: "I was religiously inclined from a young age. Daily prayer in the family shrine room, observance of religious days, and regular attendance at the temple were part of my upbringing

ing. My religion and worship were closely intertwined with my culture, community, and family."

Yet, when she was in her late teens, she started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and shortly thereafter decided to change her religion. Was this an act of disloyalty?

Zlatko was raised in Bosnia, and for a time he fought in the conflict that engulfed his home country. He too started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Now he refuses to take up arms against anyone. Is he being disloyal?

The way you answer those questions depends on your viewpoint. The woman mentioned earlier says: "In my community, changing one's religion carried with it an unforgivable stigma; it was considered an act of disloyalty, a betrayal of one's family and community." Likewise, Zlatko's former military associates viewed as traitors any who refused to fight on their side. But both that woman and Zlatko feel that a higher form of loyalty—loyalty to God—motivates their actions. More important, how does God view those who want to be loyal to him?

### True Loyalty—An Expression of Love

King David said to Jehovah God: "With someone loyal you will act in loyalty." (2 Samuel 22:26) The Hebrew word translated "loyalty" here conveys the idea of kindness that lovingly attaches itself to an object until its purpose in connection with that object is realized. With an attitude like that of a mother with a suckling child, Jehovah lovingly attaches himself to those who are loyal to him. To his loyal servants in ancient Israel, Jehovah said: "Can a wife forget her sucking so that she should not pity the son of her belly? Even these women can forget, yet I myself shall not forget you." (Isaiah 49:15) Those who are willing to put loyalty to God above

all else are assured of his loving care.

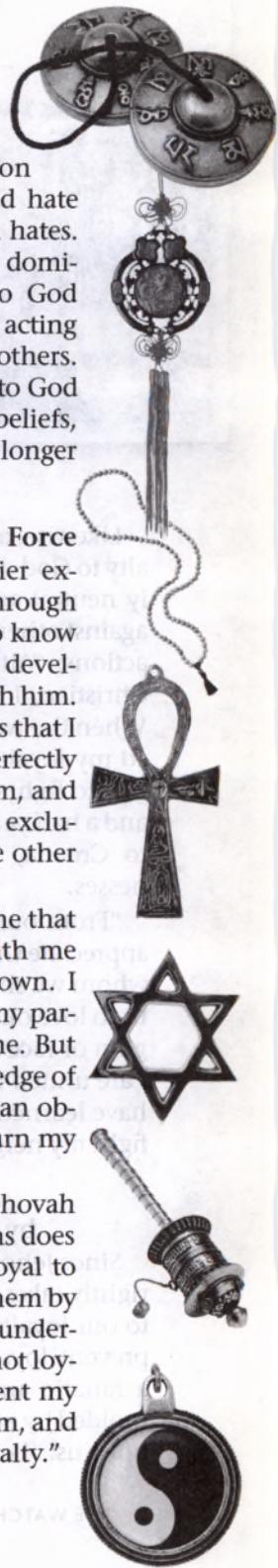
Loyalty to Jehovah is based on love. It motivates a person to love what Jehovah loves and hate the wicked things that Jehovah hates. (Psalm 97:10) Since Jehovah's dominant quality is love, loyalty to God helps to prevent a person from acting in an unloving way toward others. (1 John 4:8) So if out of loyalty to God a person changes his religious beliefs, it does not mean that he no longer loves his family.

### Loyalty to God—A Beneficial Force

The woman mentioned earlier explains her actions this way: "Through my study of the Bible, I came to know Jehovah as the true God, and I developed a personal relationship with him. Jehovah is unlike any of the gods that I previously worshiped; he is perfectly balanced in love, justice, wisdom, and power. Since Jehovah requires exclusive devotion, I had to leave the other gods behind.

"My parents repeatedly told me that they were highly displeased with me and that I was letting them down. I found this very difficult, since my parents' approval means a lot to me. But as I progressively grew in knowledge of Bible truth, the choice became an obvious one for me. I could not turn my back on Jehovah.

"Choosing to be loyal to Jehovah rather than to religious traditions does not mean that I am being disloyal to my family. I endeavor to show them by my words and actions that I understand how they feel. But if I am not loyal to Jehovah, then I may prevent my family from coming to know him, and that would be a real act of disloyalty."





### *Accurate knowledge moved Saul to change the object of his loyalty*

your mind, and . . . put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in *true . . . loyalty.*" (Ephesians 4:23, 24) The famous man who wrote those inspired words had

the courage to question the loyalties with which he was raised. His examination led to a beneficial transformation.

Yes, Saul faced a test of loyalties, as have many in our time. Saul was raised in the strict traditions of his family, and he became outstandingly loyal to the religion of his birth. Loyalty to his cause even motivated him to commit acts of violence against those who did not agree with his viewpoint. Saul was noted for invading the homes of Christians and dragging them away for punishment and even death.—Acts 22:3-5; Philippians 3:4-6.

Yet, once Saul gained accurate knowledge of the Bible, he did what many of his peers viewed as unthinkable. He changed his religion. Saul, who later became known as the apostle Paul, chose to be loyal to God rather than to tradition. Loyalty to God based on accurate knowledge motivated Saul to be tolerant, loving, and encouraging, in contrast with his former destructive, fanatic behavior.

### **Why Be Loyal?**

Allowing our loyalties to be molded by God's standards brings obvious benefits. For example, a 1999 report from the Australian Institute of Family Studies stated that among the fundamentals for long-lasting and satisfying marriages are "trust and fidelity . . . [and] a sense of spirituality." The same study

Likewise, a person is not a traitor when loyalty to God demands that he remain politically neutral and refrain from taking up arms against others. This is how Zlatko explains his actions: "Although I was raised a nominal Christian, I married someone who was not. When the war broke out, both sides demanded my loyalty. I was forced to choose which side to fight on. I fought in the war for three and a half years. My wife and I eventually fled to Croatia, where we met Jehovah's Witnesses.

"From our study of the Bible, we came to appreciate that Jehovah is the primary one to whom we should be loyal and that he wants us to love our neighbor no matter which religion or race he belongs to. Now my wife and I are united in our worship of Jehovah, and I have learned that I can't be loyal to God and fight my neighbor."

### **Loyalty Molded by Accurate Knowledge**

Since Jehovah is our Creator, loyalty to him rightly takes precedence over all other claims to our loyalty. (Revelation 4:11) However, to prevent loyalty to God from mutating into a fanatic and destructive force, it must be molded by accurate knowledge. The Bible exhorts us: "Be made new in the force actuating

found that "stable and satisfying marriages" contribute to men and women being happier, healthier, and living longer and that stable marriages give children a better chance of enjoying a happy life.

In today's uncertain world, loyalty is like a lifeline that attaches a struggling swimmer to a rescue vessel. If the "swimmer" has no loyalties, he will find himself tossed about as by waves and wind. But if his loyalty is misplaced, it is as if his lifeline were attached to a sinking ship. Like Saul, he could find himself dragged into a destructive course of action. However, loyalty to Jehovah, based on accurate knowledge, is a lifeline that gives us stability and leads to our salvation.—Ephesians 4:13-15.

Jehovah makes this promise to those who are loyal to him: "Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones. To time indefinite they will certainly be guarded." (Psalm 37:28) Soon, all those loyal to Jehovah will be ushered into a paradise earth, where they will enjoy freedom from sorrow and

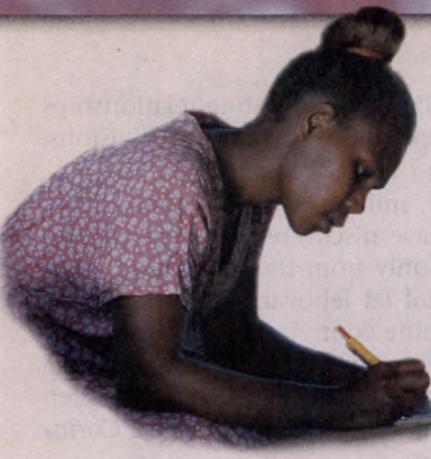
pain and will delight in lasting relationships free from religious and political divisions. —Revelation 7:9, 14; 21:3, 4.

Even now, millions of individuals across the globe have discovered that true happiness comes only from their loyalty to Jehovah. Why not let Jehovah's Witnesses help you to examine your view on loyalty in the light of Bible truth? The Bible tells us: "Keep testing whether you are in the faith, keep proving what you yourselves are."—2 Corinthians 13:5.

It takes courage to question our faith and why we are loyal to it, but the rewards can be well worth the effort when the result brings us closer to Jehovah God. The woman quoted earlier expresses the feelings of many people when she says: "I have learned that being loyal to Jehovah and to his standards helps us to be balanced in our dealings with our families and to become better members of the community. No matter how difficult the tests are, if we are loyal to Jehovah, he will always prove loyal to us."

***Why not examine your loyalties  
in the light of Bible truth?***





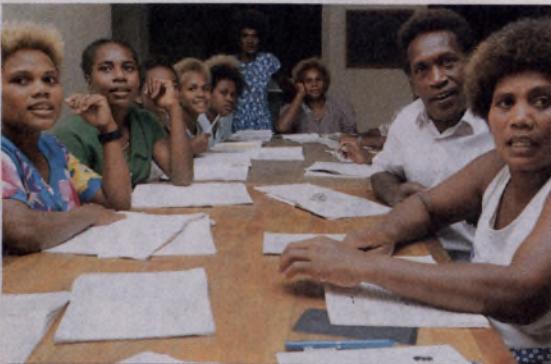
# Delighted That They Learned to Read!

**I**N SOME parts of the Solomon Islands, up to 80 percent of those who are now Jehovah's Witnesses have had to struggle with illiteracy. This has not only limited their participation at weekly congregation meetings but also made it more difficult for them to teach Kingdom truths to others. Is it really possible for adults who have never even held a pencil to become literate?

The brochure *Apply Yourself to Reading and Writing*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, has been used in literacy classes in nearly every congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the Solomon Islands. The following experiences illustrate how hundreds have been helped to a new level of ability through this program. More important, learning to read has enabled them to give a better witness about their faith.—1 Peter 3:15.

A missionary who was assigned to a congregation with over a hundred Kingdom publishers noticed that at the weekly Bible study using *The Watchtower*, few had their own copy of the magazine and even fewer commented. The reason? Illiteracy. When the congregation announced the formation of a school to teach reading and writing, the missionary gladly volunteered to be a teacher. At first, only a few students came, but soon over 40 people of all ages began to attend.

What were the results? The missionary relates: "A short time after the literacy class began, I went to the market at six o'clock in the morning to buy food for the missionary home. There I saw some of the students, even the very young ones, selling coconuts and vegetables. Why? Because they wanted to have enough money to purchase a pen and a



notebook for use in the literacy class! Also, attending that class was an incentive to have a personal copy of the *Watchtower* magazine." She adds: "Now during the congregation *Watchtower* Study, young and old alike participate, and our discussions are lively." This missionary was particularly happy when four members of the class asked if they could share in the public preaching work because, as they put it, they were "not afraid anymore."

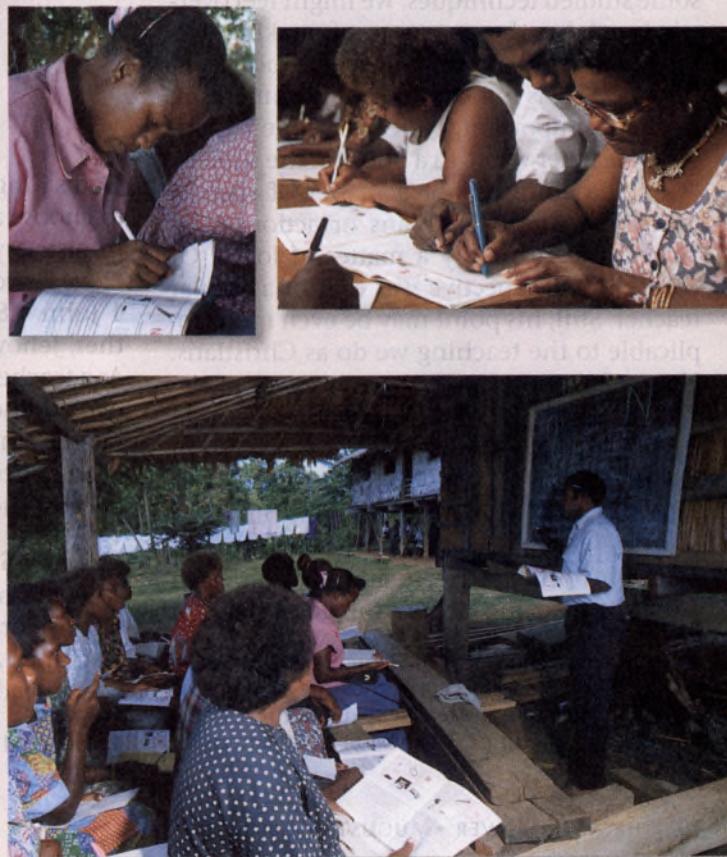
The positive effects on the students in the literacy classes have extended far beyond learning to read and write. For instance, for many years the unbelieving wife of one Witness was a source of concern to the congregation. She hurled stones at people at the slightest provocation and even attacked other women with a piece of timber. When she occasionally attended Christian meetings with her husband, she was so jealous of him that he resorted to wearing dark glasses so that she could not accuse him of looking at other women.

Shortly after the literacy classes began, however, this woman quietly asked: "May I join the class?" The answer was yes. From then on she never missed a class or a congregation meeting. She worked hard at her reading lessons and made amazing progress, which made her very happy. Her next request was: "May I have a Bible study?" Her husband gladly began to study with her, and she continues to progress in her ability to read and write and in her knowledge of the Bible.

*Both young and old appreciate the literacy classes*

For a 50-year-old who has never touched a pencil, just to hold a pen and to form the letters of the alphabet can be a mountainlike obstacle. Some develop blisters on their fingers from the pressure they apply to the pencil and paper during the early stages of learning. After weeks of struggling to hold and control the pencil, some students exclaim with a big grin: "I can move my hand lightly over the paper!" Seeing the students' progress also makes the instructors happy. One instructor said: "Teaching a class is sheer joy, and the students' genuine appreciation for this provision from Jehovah is often expressed with applause at the end of a class."

Along with the missionaries, these now literate Witnesses rejoice. Why? Because they can now use their ability to read and write to honor Jehovah.



# "I SET THE PATTERN FOR YOU"

*"You ought to be teachers in view of the time."*—HEBREWS 5:12.

AS YOU read the inspired words of our theme text, do you feel a measure of concern about yourself? If so, you are not alone. As followers of Christ, we know that we must be teachers. (Matthew 28:19, 20) We know that the times in which we live make it urgent that we teach as well as we can. And we know that our teaching can even make a life-or-death difference to those whom we teach! (1 Timothy 4:16) Naturally, then, we may ask ourselves: 'Am I really the teacher I ought to be? How can I improve?'

<sup>2</sup> Such concerns need not discourage us. If we think of teaching solely in terms of some studied techniques, we might feel overwhelmed by the prospect of making improvements. The foundation of good teaching, though, is not technique but something far more important. Note what one experienced teacher wrote in a book on the subject: "Good teaching is not a matter of specific techniques or styles, plans or actions. . . . Teaching is primarily a matter of love." Of course, his perspective was that of a secular teacher. Still, his point may be even more applicable to the teaching we do as Christians. How so?

<sup>3</sup> Our Exemplar of a teacher is none other than Jesus Christ, who told his followers: "I set the pattern for you." (John 13:15) He was referring to his example in showing humility, but the pattern Jesus set for us certainly includes his principal work as a man on earth—that of teaching people the good news of

1. Why might the words of Hebrews 5:12 naturally cause a Christian to feel some measure of concern?
- 2, 3. (a) How did one teacher explain the foundation of good teaching? (b) Jesus set what pattern for us as to teaching?



God's Kingdom. (Luke 4:43) Now, if you had to choose a single word to characterize Jesus' ministry, you would likely select the word "love," would you not? (Colossians 1:15; 1 John 4:8) Jesus' love for his heavenly Father, Jehovah, was paramount. (John 14:31) As a teacher, though, Jesus manifested love in two additional ways. He loved the truths he taught, and he loved the people he taught. Let us focus more closely on these two aspects of the pattern he set for us.

## A Long-Standing Love of Divine Truths

<sup>4</sup> A teacher's attitude toward his subject has a considerable bearing on the quality of his teaching. Any indifference will likely show and spread to his students. Jesus felt no apa-

4. How did Jesus form a love for Jehovah's teachings?

thy toward the precious truths he taught about Jehovah and His Kingdom. Jesus' love for this subject was profound. He had formed that love as a student. Throughout the long ages of his prehuman existence, the only-begotten Son was an avid learner. Isaiah 50:4, 5 records these fitting words: "The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones, that I may know how to answer the tired one with a word. He awakens morning by morning; he awakens my ear to hear like the taught ones. The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has opened my ear, and I, for my part, was not rebellious. I did not turn in the opposite direction."

<sup>5</sup> While growing up as a human on earth, Jesus continued to love divine wisdom. (Luke 2:52) Then, at the time of his baptism, he went through a unique experience. "The heaven was opened up," says Luke 3:21. Evidently, Jesus was then able to recall his prehuman existence. Thereafter he spent 40 days fasting in the wilderness. He must have found intense delight in meditating on the many heavenly sessions of instruction he had received from Jehovah. Before long, though, his love of God's truths was put to the test.

<sup>6</sup> When Jesus was fatigued and hungry, Satan sought to tempt him. What a contrast we find between these two sons of God! Both quoted from the Hebrew Scriptures—but with a completely different spirit. Satan twisted God's Word, disrespectfully using it to serve his own selfish ends. Really, that rebel had nothing but contempt for divine truths. On the other hand, Jesus quoted the Scriptures with obvious love, using God's Word carefully in each reply. Jesus had been in existence long before those inspired words were first written down, yet he held them in

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5, 6. (a) What experience did Jesus evidently have at his baptism, with what effect upon him? (b) What contrast do we find between Jesus and Satan as to using God's Word?

reverence. They were precious truths from his heavenly Father! He told Satan that such words from Jehovah were more vital than food. (Matthew 4:1-11) Yes, Jesus loved all the truths that Jehovah had taught him. How, though, did he display that love as a teacher?

### Love for the Truths He Taught

<sup>7</sup> Jesus' love for the truths he taught was always apparent. After all, he might easily have developed his own ideas. He possessed a vast repository of knowledge and wisdom. (Colossians 2:3) Nevertheless, he reminded his listeners again and again that everything he taught originated, not with himself, but with his heavenly Father. (John 7:16; 8:28; 12:49; 14:10) He loved divine truths far too much to replace them with his own thinking.

<sup>8</sup> When Jesus began his public ministry, he quickly set a pattern. Consider the way he first declared to God's people that he was the promised Messiah. Did he simply appear before crowds, proclaim himself Christ, and then perform spectacular miracles to prove his point? No. He went to a synagogue, where God's people habitually read from the Scriptures. There he read aloud the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1, 2 and explained that these prophetic truths applied to him. (Luke 4:16-22) His many miracles helped to establish that he had Jehovah's backing. Still, he always relied on God's Word in his teaching.

<sup>9</sup> When Jesus was challenged by religious opponents, he did not engage them in a duel of wits, although he could easily have outdone them in such a contest. Rather, he let God's Word refute them. Recall, for instance, when the Pharisees charged that

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7. Why did Jesus refrain from inventing his own teachings?
  8. At the start of his ministry, how did Jesus set a pattern of relying on God's Word?
  9. In his dealings with the Pharisees, how did Jesus show his loyal love for God's Word?

Jesus' followers had violated the Sabbath law by plucking a few heads of grain in a field and eating them while passing through. Jesus replied: "Have you not read what David did when he and the men with him got hungry?" (Matthew 12:1-5) Of course, those self-righteous men may well have read that inspired account recorded at 1 Samuel 21:1-6. If so, they had failed to discern an important lesson that it contained. Jesus, however, had done more than read the account. He had thought about it and taken its message to heart. He loved the principles that Jehovah taught by means of that passage. So he used that account, as well as an example from the Mosaic Law, to reveal the balanced spirit of the Law. Similarly, Jesus' loyal love moved him to defend God's Word against the efforts of religious leaders to twist it to their own ends or bury it under a morass of human traditions.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus' love of his subject would never allow him to teach merely by rote, in a manner that was tired or mechanical. Inspired prophecies had suggested that the Messiah would speak with 'charm on his lips,' using "words of elegance." (Psalm 45:2; Genesis 49:21) Jesus fulfilled those prophecies by keeping his message fresh and alive, using "winsome words" as he taught the truths he so loved. (Luke 4:22) No doubt his enthusiasm animated his features, and his eyes shone with a lively interest in his subject. What a pleasure it must have been to listen to him, and what a

10. How did Jesus fulfill prophecies regarding the quality of his teaching?

fine pattern for us to follow when we talk to others about what we have learned!

<sup>11</sup> Did Jesus' immense grasp of divine truths and his winning way with words induce him to become puffed up with pride? That often happens in the case of human teachers. Remember, though, that Jesus was wise in a godly way. Such wisdom does not allow for haughtiness, for "wisdom is with the modest ones." (Proverbs 11:2) There was something else that kept Jesus from turning proud or haughty.

### **Jesus Loved the People He Taught**

<sup>12</sup> Jesus' deep love for people always showed through in his teaching. His teaching was never intimidating to people, unlike that of prideful humans. (Ecclesiastes 8:9) After witnessing one of Jesus' miracles, Peter was overwhelmed with astonishment, and he fell down at Jesus' knees. But Jesus did not want his followers to be in morbid fear of him. He kindly said, "Stop being afraid" and then told Peter of the exciting work of disciple-making in which he would take part. (Luke 5:8-10) Jesus wanted his disciples to be moved by their own love of precious truths regarding God, not by dread of their instructor.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus' love for the people he taught was

11. Why did Jesus' abilities as a teacher never cause him to become puffed up with pride?

12. How did Jesus show that he did not want his followers to feel intimidated by him?

13, 14. In what ways did Jesus display empathy for people?

***How did Jesus show that he loved the principles found in God's Word?***

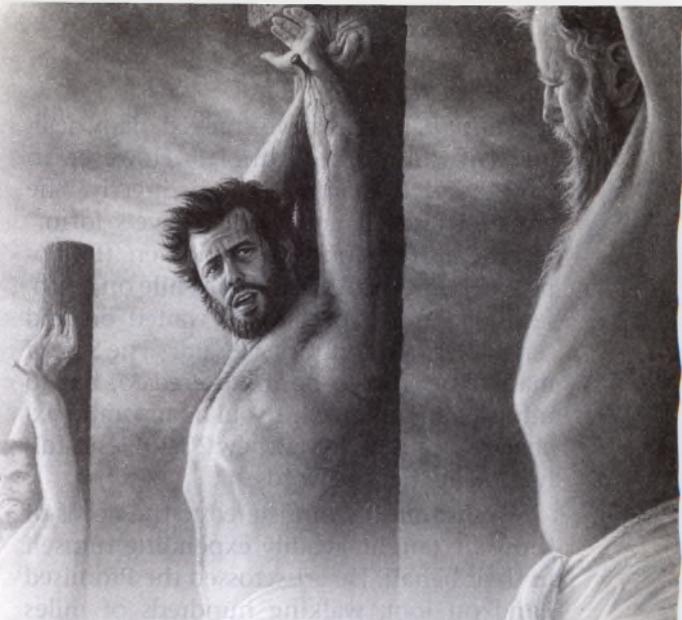


also evident in the empathy he felt for them. "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9: 36) He felt for them in their miserable condition and was moved to help them.

<sup>14</sup> Note Jesus' empathy on another occasion. When a woman with a flow of blood approached him in a crowd and touched the fringe of his garment, she was miraculously healed. Jesus felt power flow from him, but he did not see who had been cured. He insisted on finding the woman. Why? Not to berate her for violating the Law or the rules of the scribes and Pharisees, as she might have feared. Rather, he said to her: "Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be in good health from your grievous sickness." (Mark 5:25-34) Note the empathy in those words. He did not merely say, "Be healed." Rather, he said: "Be in good health from your grievous sickness." Mark here uses a word that can literally mean "scourging," a form of whipping often used as torture. Thus, Jesus acknowledged that her illness had caused her suffering, perhaps severe physical and emotional pain. He felt for her.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus also showed love for people by looking for the good in them. Consider what happened when he met Nathanael, who later became an apostle. "Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward him and said about him: 'See, an Israelite for a certainty, in whom there is no deceit.'" Miraculously, Jesus had looked into Nathanael's heart, thereby learning much about him. Of course, Nathanael was far from perfect. He had his faults, as do all of us. In fact, when he heard about Jesus, he made a rather blunt remark: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" (John 1: 45-51) However, of all the things that could be said about Nathanael, Jesus chose something positive to focus on, the man's honesty.

<sup>15, 16. What incidents in Jesus' ministry demonstrate that he looked for the good in people?</sup>



<sup>16</sup> Similarly, when an army officer—perhaps a Gentile, a Roman—approached and asked Jesus to cure an ailing slave, Jesus knew that the soldier had faults. An army officer of those days would likely have a past littered with many acts of violence, bloodshed, and false worship. Yet, Jesus focused on something good—the man's outstanding faith. (Matthew 8:5-13) Later, when Jesus spoke to the evildoer who was hanging on the torture stake next to him, Jesus did not rebuke the man for his criminal past but encouraged him with a hope for the future. (Luke 23:43) Jesus knew well that taking a negative, critical view of others would only serve to discourage them. No doubt his efforts to find the good in others encouraged many to do even better.

### Willingness to Serve People

<sup>17</sup> Another powerful evidence of Jesus' love for the people he taught was his willingness to serve them. In his prehuman life, God's Son had always been fond of mankind. (Proverbs 8:30, 31) As Jehovah's "Word," or

<sup>17, 18. In accepting the assignment to come to earth, how did Jesus show a willingness to serve others?</sup>

spokesman, he may have enjoyed many dealings with humans. (John 1:1) However, in part to teach mankind more directly, "he emptied himself and took a slave's form," leaving his lofty position in heaven. (Philippians 2:7; 2 Corinthians 8:9) While on earth, Jesus did not expect to be waited on and served. On the contrary, he said: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) Jesus fully lived up to those words.

<sup>18</sup> Jesus humbly ministered to the needs of those he taught, readily expending himself in their behalf. He crisscrossed the Promised Land on foot, walking hundreds of miles on preaching tours in an effort to reach as many people as possible. Unlike the proud Pharisees and scribes, he remained humble and approachable. All manner of people—dignitaries, soldiers, lawyers, women, children, the poor, the sick, even society's outcasts—approached him eagerly, unafraid. Though perfect, Jesus was human, subject to fatigue and hunger. Even when he was tired or was in need of rest or quiet time to pray, however, he put the needs of others ahead of his own.—Mark 1:35-39.

<sup>19</sup> Jesus was equally willing to serve his own disciples. He did so by teaching them kindly

19. How did Jesus set a pattern of dealing humbly, patiently, and kindly with his disciples?

### How Would You Answer?

- What is the foundation of good teaching, as exemplified by whom?
- In what ways did Jesus display love for the truths he taught?
- How did Jesus show love for the people he taught?
- What examples show Jesus' humble willingness to serve those he taught?

and patiently. When they were slow to grasp some vital lessons, he did not give up, lose his temper, or berate them. He continued to find new ways to get his point across. For example, just think of how often the disciples bickered over who was the greatest among them. Again and again, right up to the night before his execution, Jesus found new ways to teach them to deal humbly with one another. In this matter of humility, as in all other things, Jesus could rightly say: "I set the pattern for you."—John 13:5-15; Matthew 20:25; Mark 9:34-37.

<sup>20</sup> Notice that Jesus did not merely *tell* the disciples what the pattern was; he "set the pattern." He taught them by example. He did not speak down to them from a lofty height, as if considering himself above carrying out the things he was telling them to do. That was the way of the Pharisees. "They say but do not perform," Jesus said of them. (Matthew 23:3) Jesus humbly showed his students exactly what his teachings meant by living them, putting them into practice. So when he urged his followers to lead a simple life unencumbered by materialism, they did not have to guess at what he meant. They could see the reality of his words: "Foxes have dens and birds of heaven have roosts, but the Son of man has nowhere to lay down his head." (Matthew 8:20) Jesus served his disciples by humbly setting the pattern for them.

<sup>21</sup> Without question, Jesus was the greatest Teacher ever to walk the earth! His love for what he taught and his love for the people he taught were evident to all honesthearted ones who saw and heard him. It is just as evident to those of us today who study the pattern he set. How, though, can we follow Christ's perfect example? The following article will take up that question.

20. What teaching method set Jesus apart from the Pharisees, and why was the method effective?  
21. What will be considered in the next article?

# “FOLLOW ME CONTINUALLY”

*“To this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely.”—1 PETER 2:21.*

JESUS CHRIST was by far the greatest Teacher ever to walk the earth. Furthermore, he was perfect, never sinning during his whole life course as a man. (1 Peter 2:22) Does that mean, though, that Jesus' example as a teacher is too lofty for us imperfect humans to imitate? Not at all.

<sup>2</sup> As we saw in the preceding article, the foundation of Jesus' teaching was love. And love is something that all of us can cultivate. God's Word often urges us to grow and improve in our love for others. (Philippians 1:9; Colossians 3:14) Jehovah never expects from his creatures what they are unable to do. In fact, since “God is love” and has made us in his own image, it can be said that he designed us to show love. (1 John 4:8; Genesis 1:27) So when we read the apostle Peter's

1, 2. Why is Jesus' perfect example as a teacher not too lofty for us to imitate?

words recorded in our theme text, we may respond with confidence. We can follow Christ's footsteps closely. In fact, we can obey Jesus' own command: “Follow me continually.” (Luke 9:23) Let us consider how we may imitate the love Christ showed, first for the truths he taught, then for the people he taught.

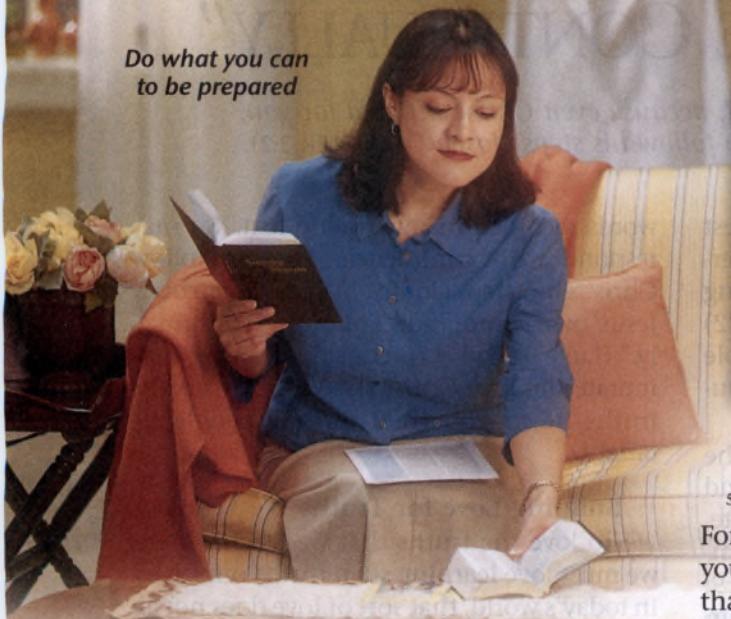
## Building Love for Truths We Learn

<sup>3</sup> To love the truths that we teach others, we must love learning such truths ourselves. In today's world, that sort of love does not always come easily. Such factors as deficient schooling and bad habits developed in youth leave many with an abiding dislike of studying. It is essential, however, that we learn from Jehovah. Proverbs 2:1-5 says: “My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your

3. Why do some find it difficult to study, but what exhortation is found at Proverbs 2:1-5?



**Do what you can  
to be prepared**



ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God."

<sup>4</sup> Notice that in verses 1 through 4, we are repeatedly urged to put forth effort not only to "receive" and "treasure up" but also to "keep seeking" and "keep searching." What, though, is to motivate us to do all of this? Well, note the phrase "incline your heart to discernment." One reference work says that this exhortation "is not an appeal for attention only; it is a demand for a certain attitude: an eager receptivity toward the teachings." And what can make us receptive and eager to learn what Jehovah teaches us? Our viewpoint. We need to view "the very knowledge of God" as "silver" and as "hid treasures."

4. What does it mean to "incline" the heart, and what viewpoint will help us to do so?

<sup>5</sup> It is not hard to acquire such a viewpoint. For example, the "knowledge of God" that you have taken in likely includes the truth that Jehovah purposed that faithful mankind live forever in Paradise on earth. (Psalm 37:28, 29) When you first learned that truth, you no doubt viewed it as a genuine treasure, a piece of knowledge that filled your mind and heart with hope and joy. What about now? Over time, has appreciation for your treasure become faded or tarnished? Try, then, to do two things. First, renew your appreciation, that is, refresh your mind regularly as to why you value each truth that Jehovah has taught you, even those you learned many years ago.

<sup>6</sup> Second, keep adding to your treasure. After all, if you happened to dig up a precious gem, would you simply pocket it and walk away contented? Or would you dig to see if there were more? God's Word is full of gems and nuggets of truth. No matter how many you have found, you can find more. (Romans 11:33) As you unearth a nugget of truth, ask yourself: 'What makes it a treasure? Does it

5, 6. (a) What might happen in time, and how can we prevent that? (b) Why should we keep adding to the treasures of knowledge we have found in the Bible?



*If you treasure the "knowledge of God," you can use the Bible effectively*

give me deeper insight into Jehovah's personality or his purposes? Does it offer some practical guidance that can help me to follow in Jesus' footsteps?" Meditating on such questions will help you to build up your love for the truths Jehovah has taught you.

### **Showing Love for Truths We Teach**

<sup>7</sup> As we teach others, how can we show that we love the truths we have learned from God's Word? Following Jesus' example, we rely heavily on the Bible in our preaching and teaching. In recent times, God's people around the world have been encouraged to make greater use of the Bible in their public ministry. As you apply that suggestion, seek ways to let the householder know that you yourself value what you are sharing from the Bible.—Matthew 13:52.

<sup>7, 8</sup> What are some ways in which we can show others that we love the truths we have learned from the Bible? Give an example.



<sup>8</sup> For example, in the wake of last year's terrorist attack in New York City, one Christian sister was sharing Psalm 46:1, 11 with the people she met in her ministry. She first asked people how they were coping in the aftermath of the tragedy. She listened carefully to their response, acknowledged it, then said: "May I share a scripture with you that has really comforted *me* during this difficult time?" Very few refused, and many excellent discussions resulted. In talking with young people, the same sister often says: "I have been teaching the Bible for 50 years now, and do you know what? I have never come across a single problem that this book can't help to solve." By using a sincere, enthusiastic approach, we show people that we value and love what we have learned from God's Word.  
—Psalm 119:97, 105.

<sup>9</sup> When people ask us questions about our beliefs, we have a choice opportunity to show them the love that motivates us to teach the Word. Why is it important to use the Bible when replying to questions about our beliefs?

that we love God's Word. Following Jesus' example, we do not simply base our answers on our own ideas. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Rather, we make use of the Bible in replying. Do you fear that someone might ask you a question that you will not be able to answer? Consider two positive steps you can take.

<sup>10</sup> *Do what you can to be prepared.* The apostle Peter wrote: "Sanctify the Christ as Lord in your hearts, always ready to make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you, but doing so together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) Are you ready to defend your beliefs? For example, if someone wants to know why you do not take part in some unscriptural custom or practice, do not be satisfied with saying, "It's against my religion." Such an answer may suggest that you let others make your decisions for you and that you must therefore be a member of a cult. It might be better to say, "God's Word, the Bible, forbids it" or, "It would displease my God." Then give a reasonable explanation as to why.—Romans 12:1.

<sup>11</sup> If you feel unprepared, why not spend some time studying the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures* if it is available in your language?\* Pick out a few subjects that seem likely to arise, and commit some Scriptural points to memory. Keep your *Reasoning* book and your Bible handy. Do not hesitate to use them both, saying that you have a research tool that you like to use to help find the Bible's answer to questions.

<sup>12</sup> *Try not to worry unduly.* No imperfect human has all the answers. So when asked a Bible question that you cannot answer, you

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

11. What research tool may help us to be ready to answer questions about the truths of God's Word?
12. How might we respond if we do not know the answer to a Bible question?



*We show love for people by sharing  
the good news with them*

can always reply to this effect: "Thank you for raising such an interesting question. To be honest, I don't know the answer, but I'm sure the Bible addresses the matter. I love doing Bible research, so I'll look into your question and get back to you." Such a candid, modest approach may well pave the way for further discussions.—Proverbs 11:2.

#### **Love for the People We Teach**

<sup>13</sup> Jesus showed love for the people he taught. How may we imitate him in this regard? Never should we develop a callous attitude toward the people around us. Granted, "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" is looming ever nearer, and many among mankind's billions will be destroyed. (Revelation 16:14; Jeremiah 25:33) Yet, we do

13. Why should we maintain a positive outlook regarding those to whom we preach?

not know who will live and who will die. That judgment lies in the future and belongs to the one Jehovah has appointed, Jesus Christ. Until the judgment is passed, we view each individual as having the potential to become a servant of Jehovah.—Matthew 19:24-26; 25:31-33; Acts 17:31.

<sup>14</sup> Like Jesus, then, we seek to empathize with people. We may ask ourselves: 'Do I feel for people who have been deceived by the clever lies and deceptions of this world's religious, political, and commercial elements? If they seem apathetic toward the message we bring them, do I seek to understand why they feel as they do? Do I recognize that I, or others currently serving Jehovah faithfully, once felt similarly? Have I adapted my approach accordingly? Or do I dismiss these people as being beyond hope?' (Revelation 12:9) When people sense our genuine empathy, they are more likely to respond to our message. (1 Peter 3:8) Empathy may also move us to take more of an interest in the people we meet in our ministry. We might take note of their questions and concerns. When we return, we may show them that we have been thinking about remarks they made on a previous visit. And if they have some pressing need at the moment, we may be in a position to offer some practical help.

<sup>15</sup> Like Jesus, we look for the good in people. Perhaps a single parent is making an admirable effort to raise her children. A man is struggling to support his family. An elderly person shows an interest in spiritual matters. Do we notice such factors in the people we meet and commend them accordingly? In doing so, we stress the common ground be-

14. (a) How might we examine ourselves as to whether we are empathetic toward people? (b) In what practical ways may we show empathy and personal interest in others?

15. Why should we look for the good in people, and how might we do so?

tween us and may open the way for giving a witness about the Kingdom.—Acts 26:2, 3.

### Humility Essential in Showing Love

<sup>16</sup> Love for the people we teach will move us to heed the Bible's wise warning: "Knowledge puffs up, but love builds up." (1 Corinthians 8:1) Jesus had great knowledge, yet he was never overbearing. So as you share your beliefs, avoid an argumentative tone or an air of superiority. Our goal is to reach hearts and attract people to the truths we so love. (Colossians 4:6) Remember, when Peter counseled Christians to be ready to make a defense, he included the reminder that we should do so "together with a mild temper and deep respect." (1 Peter 3:15) If we are mild and respectful, we are more likely to draw people to the God we serve.

<sup>17</sup> There is no need to impress people with our knowledge or education. If some in your territory refuse to listen to anyone who does not have certain university degrees or titles, do not let their attitude discourage you. Jesus paid no heed to the objection that he had not attended the prestigious rabbinic schools of his day; nor did he bow to popular prejudices by trying to impress people with his vast learning.—John 7:15.

<sup>18</sup> Humility and love are far more important to Christian ministers than is any amount of secular education. The Great Educator, Jehovah, qualifies us for the ministry. (2 Corinthians 3:5, 6) And regardless of what some of Christendom's clergy say, we do not need to learn ancient Biblical languages in order to become teachers of God's Word. Jehovah inspired the Bible to be written

16. Why is it important to remain mild and respectful toward those to whom we preach?

17, 18. (a) How should we respond to critical attitudes about our qualifications as ministers? (b) Why is a knowledge of ancient Biblical languages not essential for Bible students?

in such clear, concrete terms that virtually everyone can grasp its precious truths. Those truths remain intact even when translated into hundreds upon hundreds of languages. So a knowledge of ancient languages, while occasionally useful, is not essential. Furthermore, pride in having linguistic ability can cause one to lose a trait that is essential to true Christians—teachableness.—1 Timothy 6:4.

<sup>19</sup> There can be no doubt that our Christian ministry is a work that requires a humble attitude. We regularly expose ourselves to opposition, indifference, even persecution. (John 15:20) Yet, by faithfully carrying out our ministry, we are performing a vital service. If we keep humbly serving others in this work, we are imitating the love Jesus Christ showed toward people. Consider: If we had to preach to a thousand indifferent or opposed people in order to reach a single sheeplike individual, would that not be worth the effort? Certainly! So by persisting in the work, never giving up, we are faithfully serving the sheeplike ones we have yet to reach. No doubt Jehovah and Jesus will make sure that many more such precious individuals will be

19. In what sense is our Christian ministry a service?

### How Would You Answer?

- What assurance do we have that Jesus' example as a teacher is not too lofty for us to imitate?
- How may we show that we love the truths we have learned from the Bible?
- Why is it important to remain humble as we grow in knowledge?
- What are some ways in which we may show love for the people we endeavor to teach?

found and helped before the end comes.—Haggai 2:7.

<sup>20</sup> Teaching by example is another way to show our willingness to serve others. For instance, we want to teach people that serving Jehovah, “the happy God,” is the best, most fulfilling way of life possible. (1 Timothy 1:11) As they observe our conduct and our dealings with our neighbors, schoolmates, and workmates, can they see that we are happy and fulfilled? Similarly, we teach Bible students that the Christian congregation is an oasis of love in a cold, fierce world. Can our students readily see that we love all in the congregation and work hard at preserving peace with one another?—1 Peter 4:8.

<sup>21</sup> A willing attitude toward our ministry may, at times, motivate us to reexamine ourselves. Doing so honestly, many find that they are in a position to expand their service by taking up the full-time ministry or by moving to serve where the need is greater. Others have decided to learn a foreign language to serve a growing immigrant community right in their home territory. If such options are open to you, give them careful and prayerful consideration. A life of service brings great joy, satisfaction, and peace of mind.—Ecclesiastes 5:12.

<sup>22</sup> By all means, let us continue to imitate Jesus Christ by building up our love for the truths we teach and for the people we teach. Developing and manifesting love in these two respects will help us to lay a fine foundation for being Christlike teachers. How, though, can we build upon that foundation? In the next issue of *The Watchtower*, a series of articles will discuss some of the specific teaching methods that Jesus used.

20. What are some ways in which we may teach by example?

21, 22. (a) Self-examination regarding our ministry can lead us to take advantage of what opportunities? (b) What will be discussed in articles in the next issue of *The Watchtower*?

# How Can Thinking Ability Safeguard You?



TOWERING waves are an awesome sight, but for sailors they spell danger. Those surging waters could cost them their lives.

In a similar way, God's servants might face mounting pressures that threaten to overwhelm them. You may have recognized that wave after wave of trials and temptations bear down on Christians. You certainly want to counter them decisively, being determined to avoid spiritual shipwreck. (1 Timothy 1:19) Thinking ability is a vital part of your defense. What is it, and how is it acquired?

The Hebrew word rendered "thinking ability," *mezim-mah'*, comes from a root word that means "to plan or plot." (Proverbs 1:4) Thus, some Bible versions translate *mezim-mah'* as "prudence" or "foresight." Biblical scholars Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown describe *mezim-mah'* as a "wariness by which to escape evil and find good." This implies taking into account the long-term as well as the immediate consequences of our actions. Having thinking ability, we will carefully consider our options before we act, especially when important decisions must be made.

When a man with thinking ability makes decisions about the future or about situations in which he finds himself now, he first

analyzes the likely hazards or pitfalls. Once possible dangers are identified, he works out how he can avoid them, taking into account the effect of his environment and associations. He can thus map out a course that will bring a good outcome, perhaps even divine blessings. Let us consider some practical examples that illustrate this process.

## Avoid the Snare of Sexual Immorality

When the wind drives powerful waves toward the bow of a boat, the condition is described as a head sea. Sailors risk having their boat capsize unless they maneuver to meet the waves head-on.

We face a similar situation, living as we do in a world obsessed with sex. Every day, waves of sensual ideas and images head our way. We cannot ignore the effect they can have on our normal sexual desires. We must use thinking ability and meet the temptation decisively rather than just drift into dangerous situations.

Christian men, for example, often work alongside those who have little respect for women, considering them as mere sexual objects. Workmates may pepper their conversations with lewd jokes and sexual innuendos. This atmosphere could eventually plant immoral ideas in a Christian's mind.

A Christian woman may also have to be employed and thus may experience difficulties. She may work alongside men and women who do not share her moral standards. Perhaps one of her male colleagues shows an interest in her. Initially, he may treat her considerately, even respecting her for her religious views. His persistent attention and close proximity could move her to want closer association.

As Christians, how can thinking ability help us in such circumstances? First, it can alert us to the spiritual dangers, and second, it can motivate us to plan an appropriate course. (Proverbs 3:21-23) In cases such as these, a clear message may have to be sent to fellow workers that our standards are different because of our Scriptural beliefs. (1 Corinthians 6:18) Our speech and conduct can reinforce that message. Furthermore, dealings with certain colleagues may need to be restricted.

Immoral pressures, however, are not limited to the workplace. They may also arise if a married couple allow problems to undermine their unity. A traveling minister observed: "The breakup of a marriage does not just happen. The couple may gradually grow apart, rarely talking to each other or spending time together. They may pursue material possessions to fill the emptiness of their marriage. And because they seldom compliment each other, they may feel drawn to other members of the opposite sex."

This experienced minister continued: "Periodically, marriage mates should sit down and consider whether anything is harming their relationship. They should plan how they can study, pray, and preach together. They would benefit considerably by talking to each other 'in the house, on the road, when they lie down, and when they get up,' just as parents and children do."—Deuteronomy 6:7-9.

## Coping With Unchristian Behavior

Apart from helping us to face moral temptations successfully, thinking ability can also help us cope with problems with fellow Christians. When the wind drives the waves toward the stern of the boat, it produces what is known as a following sea. The waves can lift the stern and carry it sideways. This leaves the boat broadside to the direction of the waves and vulnerable to them.

We too could be susceptible to danger that comes from an unexpected direction. We serve Jehovah "shoulder to shoulder" alongside our many faithful Christian brothers and sisters. (Zephaniah 3:9) If one of them acts in an unchristian manner, it may seem like a breach of trust and may cause us deep distress. How might thinking ability prevent us from being thrown off balance and unduly hurt?

Recall that "there is no man that does not sin." (1 Kings 8:46) It should not surprise us, therefore, that on occasion a Christian brother might annoy or offend us. Knowing this, we can prepare for that eventuality and meditate on how we should react. How did the apostle Paul respond when some of his Christian brothers spoke about him in a hurtful, contemptuous manner? Rather than losing his spiritual balance, he concluded that gaining Jehovah's approval was more important than gaining man's. (2 Corinthians 10:10-18) Such an attitude will help us to avoid a hasty reaction when provoked.

It is somewhat like stubbing our toe. When this happens, we might not think clearly for a minute or two. But after the pain subsides, we can reason and act normally. Similarly, we should not react immediately to an unkind remark or action. Instead, pause and consider the consequences of thoughtless retaliation.

Malcolm, a missionary for years, explains what he does when he is offended. "My first step is to go through a checklist of questions: Am I angry with this brother because our personalities clash? Is what he said really important? Is the effect that malaria has on my nerves exacerbating my feelings? Will I see things differently in a few hours?" Often, as Malcolm has found, the disagreement is unimportant and can be overlooked.\*

Malcolm adds: "Occasionally, despite all my efforts to clear up the situation, the other brother's attitude remains unfriendly. I try not to allow this to upset me. Once I have done all I can, I see the matter in a different way. I mentally put the matter in a 'pending file,' rather than a personal one. I will not al-

\* Christians should try to make peace, in line with the counsel at Matthew 5:23, 24. If the matter involves serious sins, they should try to gain their brother, as outlined at Matthew 18:15-17. See *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1999, pages 17-22.

low it to drag me down spiritually or affect my relationship with Jehovah and with my brothers."

Like Malcolm, we should not allow the misconduct of one individual to disturb us excessively. In every congregation there are many delightful, faithful brothers and sisters. It is a pleasure to walk the Christian way "side by side" with them. (Philippians 1:27) Remembering the loving support of our heavenly Father will also help us keep matters in perspective.—Psalm 23:1-3; Proverbs 5:1, 2; 8:12.

### Not Loving the Things of the World

Thinking ability can help us to face another subtle pressure. When the wind drives the waves toward the beam, or the side, of the ship, it is known as a beam sea. In normal conditions, such a sea may slowly push the vessel off course. During a storm, however, a beam sea can cause the boat to capsize.



Regular communication  
builds up the marriage

Similarly, if we succumb to the pressure to enjoy all that the wicked world has to offer, this materialistic life-style can push us off course spiritually. (2 Timothy 4:10) Left unchecked, the love of the world could eventually cause us to abandon our Christian course altogether. (1 John 2:15) How can thinking ability come to our aid?

First, it will help us gauge just what dangers we are up against. The world uses every marketing ploy imaginable to entice us. It incessantly promotes a whole package that supposedly everyone should pursue—the showy life-style of the rich, the glamorous, and the “successful.” (1 John 2:16) We are promised the admiration and approval of everyone, especially of our peers and neighbors. Thinking ability will help to counteract this propaganda, reminding us of the importance of ‘keeping free from the love of money,’ since Jehovah has promised that ‘he will by no means leave us.’—Hebrews 13:5.

Second, thinking ability will prevent us from following those who have “deviated from the truth.” (2 Timothy 2:18) It is so difficult to contradict those we have liked and trusted. (1 Corinthians 15:12, 32-34) Even if we are influenced only minimally by those who have abandoned the Christian course, it could hinder our spiritual progress and eventually put us in danger. We could be like a ship that steers just one degree from its proper course. Over a long journey, it could miss its destination by a huge distance.—Hebrews 3:12.

Thinking ability can help us to determine where we are in a spiritual sense and where we are going. Perhaps we recognize the need to have a fuller share in Christian activities. (Hebrews 6:11, 12) Note how one young Witness used thinking ability to help him pursue spiritual goals: “I had the chance to pursue a career in journalism. This had a real appeal for me, but I remembered the verse

in the Bible that said that the ‘world is passing away,’ whereas ‘he that does the will of God remains forever.’ (1 John 2:17) I reasoned that what I did with my life should reflect my beliefs. My parents had abandoned the Christian faith, and I did not want to follow their example. So I determined to live a life of purpose and enrolled in the full-time ministry as a regular pioneer. After four satisfying years, I know that I made the right choice.”

### Facing Spiritual Storms Successfully

Why is it urgent that we exercise thinking ability today? Sailors have to be sensitive to danger signs, especially when storms are brewing. If the temperature drops and the winds freshen, they batten down the hatches and prepare for the worst. In like manner, we must prepare to face pressures of gale-force intensity as this wicked system nears its end. The moral fabric of society is unraveling, and ‘wicked men advance from bad to worse.’ (2 Timothy 3:13) Just as sailors regularly listen to weather forecasts, we must heed the prophetic warnings of God’s inspired Word.—Psalm 19:7-11.

When we use thinking ability, we apply the knowledge that leads to everlasting life. (John 17:3) We can anticipate problems and decide how to overcome them. Thus we will resolve not to be swayed from the Christian course, and we can lay “a fine foundation for the future” by establishing and pursuing spiritual goals.—1 Timothy 6:19.

If we safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability, we do not need “to be afraid of any sudden dreadful thing.” (Proverbs 3:21, 25, 26) Rather, we can take comfort in God’s promise: “When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you.”—Proverbs 2:10, 11.

# Would You Maintain YOUR INTEGRITY?

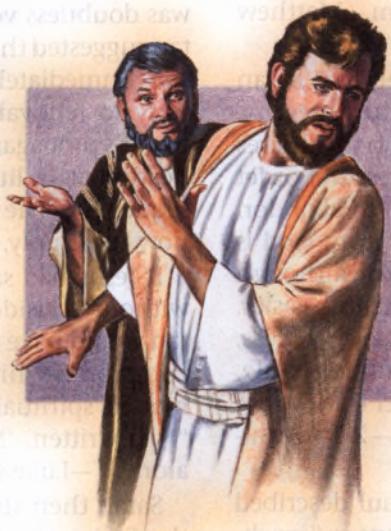
HOW many sparrows died yesterday? Nobody knows, and probably few people care—there are so many birds. Jehovah, however, does care. Referring to these apparently insignificant birds, Jesus told his disciples: “Not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge.” He added: “Have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows.”—Matthew 10: 29, 31.

Later the disciples understood more clearly how much Jehovah valued them. One of them, the apostle John, wrote: “By this the love of God was made manifest in our case, because God sent forth his only-begotten Son into the world that we might gain life through him.” (1 John 4:9) Jehovah not only provides the ransom but also assures every one of his servants: “I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.”—Hebrews 13:5.

Clearly, Jehovah’s love for his people is unshakable. However, the question arises, ‘Are we so attached to Jehovah that we will never leave him?’

## Satan’s Attempts to Break Our Integrity

When Jehovah drew Satan’s attention to Job’s course of integrity, Satan retorted: “Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it?” (Job 1:9, *Today’s English Version*) He implied that humans’ loyalty to



God depends exclusively on ‘what they can get out of it.’ If this were true, any Christian’s integrity could be compromised—provided the offer was sufficiently tempting.

In Job’s case, Satan initially claimed that Job’s loyalty to God would vanish if he lost his most cherished possessions. (Job 1: 10, 11) When this slur proved to be false, Satan alleged: “A man will give up everything in order to stay alive.” (Job 2:4, *TEV*) While Satan’s claim may be true of some, Job refused to compromise his integrity. The historical record bears that out. (Job 27:5; 42:10-17) Do you have similar loyalty? Or would you let Satan break your integrity? Think about yourself as we examine some truths that involve every Christian.

The apostle Paul believed that true Christian loyalty can be very strong. He wrote: “I am convinced that neither death nor life . . . nor things now here nor things to come . . . nor any other creation will be able to separate us from God’s love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Romans 8:38, 39) We can have a similar conviction if our love for Jehovah is strong. Such love is an indestructible bond that not even death can conquer.

If we have such a relationship with God, we will never ask, ‘Will I still be serving Jehovah in a few years’ time?’ Such uncertainty would suggest that our loyalty to God

depends on what might happen to us during the course of our life. True integrity is impervious to external circumstances. It depends on the sort of person we are inside. (2 Corinthians 4:16-18) If we love Jehovah with all our heart, we will never fail him.—Matthew 22:37; 1 Corinthians 13:8.

We must remember, however, that Satan is constantly seeking to break our integrity. He might tempt us to succumb to the desires of the flesh, cave in to peer pressure, or let adversity of some sort cause us to abandon the truth. The world alienated from God is Satan's principal ally in this attack, although our own imperfections make his task easier. (Romans 7:19, 20; 1 John 2:16) Nevertheless, we do have several advantages in this battle, not the least of which is the fact that we are not ignorant of Satan's designs.—2 Corinthians 2:11.

What are Satan's designs? Paul described them in his letter to the Ephesians as "machinations," or "crafty acts."\* (Ephesians 6:11; footnote) Satan places cunning devices in our way in order to break our integrity. Thankfully, we can recognize these crafty acts, since the Devil's methods have been recorded for us in God's Word. Satan's attempts to destroy the integrity of Jesus and Job exemplify some of the ways he seeks to break our Christian integrity.

\* Bible scholar W. E. Vine says that the original Greek word can also be rendered "a cunning device."

### Jesus' Integrity Could Not Be Broken

At the outset of Jesus' ministry, Satan had the audacity to tempt the Son of God by challenging him to turn a stone into bread. How crafty! Jesus had not eaten for 40 days, so he was doubtless very hungry. (Luke 4:2, 3) Satan suggested that Jesus satisfy his natural desire immediately, in a way that was contrary to Jehovah's will. Likewise today, the world's propaganda encourages instant gratification, with little or no thought to the consequences. The message is, 'You deserve it now,' or simply, 'Just do it!'

If Jesus had satisfied the pangs of hunger without considering the repercussions, Satan would have succeeded in getting Jesus to compromise his integrity. Jesus looked at matters spiritually, and he firmly responded: "It is written, 'Man must not live by bread alone.'"—Luke 4:4; Matthew 4:4.

Satan then shifted direction. Misapplying the Scriptures, from which Jesus had been quoting, the Devil encouraged Jesus to throw himself off the temple battlement. 'An angel will have to preserve you,' Satan claimed. Jesus had no intention of demanding miraculous protection from his Father simply to draw attention to himself. "You must not put Jehovah your God to the test," Jesus said.—Matthew 4:5-7; Luke 4:9-12.

The final tactic that Satan used was more straightforward. He tried to strike a deal with Jesus by offering him all the world and its



glory for just one act of worship. It was practically all that Satan had to offer. But how could Jesus perform an act of worship before his Father's chief enemy? Unthinkable! "It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service," Jesus replied.—Matthew 4:8-11; Luke 4:5-8.

After those three attempts had failed, Satan 'retired from Jesus *until another convenient time.*' (Luke 4:13) This indicates that Satan was constantly on the lookout for an opportunity to put Jesus' integrity to the test. A convenient time arose some two and a half years later when Jesus began preparing his disciples for his imminent death. The apostle Peter said: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all."—Matthew 16:21, 22.

Might such well-meant but misguided advice have sounded appealing to Jesus, coming as it did from one of his disciples? Jesus immediately recognized that those words reflected Satan's wishes, not Jehovah's. Christ firmly responded: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men."—Matthew 16:23.

Because of Jesus' undying love for Jehovah, Satan was unable to break his integrity. Nothing the Devil could offer, no trial, however severe, could weaken Jesus' loyalty to his heavenly Father. Will we have similar determination when circumstances make it difficult for us to keep our integrity? The example of Job will help us to understand better the challenges we may face.

### Loyalty in the Face of Adversity

As Job discovered, adversities can befall us at any time. He was a happily married man with ten children and had a good spiritual routine. (Job 1:5) But unknown to Job, his integrity to God became an issue in the heav-

only court, and Satan resolved to break him in any way he could.

In no time, Job lost his material wealth. (Job 1:14-17) Nevertheless, Job's integrity withstood the test because he had never put his trust in money. Recalling the time when he was rich, Job stated: "If I have put gold as my confidence, . . . if I used to rejoice because my property was much, . . . that too would be an error . . . , for I should have denied the true God above."—Job 31:24, 25, 28.

Today, it is also possible to lose practically everything we possess overnight. A businessman who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses was cheated out of a very large sum of money, leaving him practically bankrupt. He frankly admits: "I nearly had a heart attack. In fact, I think I would have had one had it not been for my relationship with God. Nevertheless, this experience brought home to me the fact that spiritual values were not in first place in my life. The thrill of making money tended to overshadow everything else." This Witness has since reduced his business activity to a minimum, and he regularly serves as an auxiliary pioneer, devoting 50 hours or more a month in the Christian ministry. Other problems, however, can be even more devastating than the loss of one's possessions.

Job had scarcely assimilated the news regarding the loss of his riches when he received word that his ten children had died. He still insisted: "Let the name of Jehovah continue to be blessed." (Job 1:18-21) Would we maintain our integrity if we suddenly lost several members of our family? Francisco, a Christian overseer in Spain, lost his two children in a tragic bus accident. He found comfort by drawing closer to Jehovah and increasing his activity in the Christian ministry.

Even after the shocking loss of his children, Job's ordeal was far from over. Satan struck him with a repugnant, painful disease.

At that moment, Job received bad advice from his wife. "Curse God and die!" she urged him. Job ignored her advice, and he did not "sin with his lips." (Job 2:9, 10) His integrity depended, not on the support of his family, but on his personal relationship with Jehovah.

Flora, whose husband and eldest son abandoned the Christian way more than ten years ago, understands the feelings Job must have had. "When you suddenly lose the support of your family, it can be traumatic," she admits. "But I knew I wouldn't find happiness outside Jehovah's organization. So I stood firm and put Jehovah in first place while endeavoring to continue to be a good wife and mother. I prayed constantly, and Jehovah strengthened me. I'm a happy person because, despite my husband's determined opposition, I've learned to depend entirely on Jehovah."

Satan's next device to break Job's integrity involved three of his companions. (Job 2:11-13) How distressing it must have been when they began to criticize him. If he had accepted their arguments, he would have lost his confidence in Jehovah God. Their discouraging counsel could have broken his spirit and his integrity, and thus Satan's design would have succeeded.

Instead, Job insisted: "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" (Job 27:5) He did not say, 'I shall not let *you men* take away my integrity!' Job knew that his integrity depended on him and his love for Jehovah.

### An Old Ploy to Capture New Prey

Satan still makes use of misguided counsel or thoughtless remarks from friends and fellow believers. Discouragement from within the congregation can undermine our morale more easily than persecution from without. A Christian elder who formerly saw active

combat in the army contrasted that with the pain he suffered because of the thoughtless words and actions of some fellow Christians. About the latter, he said: "It's the hardest thing I have ever been through."

From another angle, we could get so upset with the imperfections of fellow believers that we stop speaking to certain ones or even start missing Christian meetings. Relieving our hurt feelings might seem to be the most important issue. But how sad to take such a shortsighted viewpoint and allow our most precious possession—our relationship with Jehovah—to be weakened by what others do or say. If we allowed that to happen, we would be falling prey to one of Satan's age-old ploys.

Rightly, we look for high standards in the Christian congregation. But if we expect too much from our fellow worshipers, who are still imperfect, we are bound to be disappointed. In contrast, Jehovah is realistic in what he requires of his servants. If we imitate his example, we will be prepared to put up with their imperfections. (Ephesians 4:2, 32) The apostle Paul gave this advice: "If you are angry, do not let anger lead you into sin; do not let sunset find you still nursing it; leave no loop-hole for the devil."—Ephesians 4:26, 27, *The New English Bible*.

As the Bible clearly shows, Satan uses a wide variety of cunning devices in order to discover—if he can—the way to break a Christian's integrity. Some of his ploys are attractive to the fallen flesh, others are a source of pain. From the foregoing discussion, you can see why you should never be caught unawares. With your love for God firmly in your heart, resolve to prove the Devil a liar and make Jehovah's heart glad. (Proverbs 27:11; John 8:44) Remember, true Christian integrity must never be compromised, whatever trials come our way.

# Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- **What is empathy, and why should Christians cultivate it?**

It is the ability to put oneself in another's place, such as feeling another person's pain in our heart. Christians are counseled to show 'fellow feeling, brotherly affection, and compassion.' (1 Peter 3:8) Jehovah set an example for us to follow in showing empathy. (Psalm 103:14; Zechariah 2:8) We can sharpen our sensitivity in this regard by listening, observing, and imagining.—4/15, pages 24-6.

- **To obtain true happiness, why must spiritual healing come before the final solution to physical disabilities?**

Many physically healthy people are unhappy, overwhelmed with problems. In contrast, many Christians who today have physical disabilities are very happy serving Jehovah. Those benefiting from spiritual healing will be in line to experience the elimination of physical disabilities in the new world.—5/1, pages 6-7.

- **Why does Hebrews 12:16 put Esau in the same category as a fornicator?**

The Bible account shows that Esau displayed a mentality focused on immediate rewards and a disregard for sacred things. If someone today allows that type of mentality to develop, it could lead to serious sin, such as fornication.—5/1, pages 10-11.

- **Who was Tertullian, and for what is he noted?**

He was a writer and theologian who lived in the second and third centuries C.E. He is noted for producing a number of literary works in defense of nominal Christianity. While offering his defense, he introduced ideas and philosophic approaches that laid the basis for doctrinal corruptions, such as the Trinity.—5/15, pages 29-31.

- **Why are genetics not fully responsible for human diseases, behavior, and death?**

Scientists have concluded that there evidently is a genetic component to various human diseases, and some believe that behavior is determined by our genes. Yet, the Bible provides insight into mankind's origin, including how sin and imperfection came to afflict mankind. While genes may play a role in shaping personalities, our imperfection and our environment also are major influences.—6/1, pages 9-11.

- **How does a papyrus fragment found in Oxyrhynchus, Egypt, shed light on the use of God's name?**

This fragment of Job 42:11, 12 from the Greek *Septuagint* contains the Tetragrammaton (the four Hebrew letters of God's name). This is additional evidence that God's name in Hebrew appeared in the *Septuagint*, often quoted by writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures.—6/1, page 30.

- **The violent and deadly gladiatorial events of the Roman Empire have been compared to what modern spectator sports?**

A recent exhibit in the Colosseum in Rome, Italy, suggested modern parallels by including video clips of bullfighting, professional boxing, auto and motorcycle races, and spectator fights at other modern sports events. Early Christians took to heart that Jehovah does not love violence or violent ones, and neither should Christians today. (Psalm 11:5)—6/15, page 29.

- **As we strive to become effective teachers, what can we learn from Ezra's example?**

Ezra 7:10 highlights four things that Ezra did, things that we can strive to imitate. It says: "Ezra himself had [1] prepared his heart [2] to consult the law of Jehovah and [3] to do it and [4] to teach in Israel regulation and justice."—7/1, page 20.

- **In what two spheres of activity is it appropriate for a Christian woman to wear a head covering?**

One is in situations arising in the family setting. Her wearing a head covering reflects recognition that her husband is responsible to take the lead in prayer and Bible instruction. The other is in congregation activities, where she shows recognition that baptized males are Scripturally authorized to teach and direct. (1 Corinthians 11:3-10)—7/15, pages 26-7.

- **Why do Christians recognize that yoga goes beyond mere exercise and is dangerous?**

The objective of yoga as a discipline is to lead a person to being merged with a superhuman spirit. Contrary to God's direction, yoga involves stopping spontaneous thinking. (Romans 12:1, 2) Yoga can expose one to the dangers of spiritism and occultism. (Deuteronomy 18:10, 11)—8/1, pages 20-2.

## Questions From Readers

**What guidance do the Scriptures provide about child training when one parent is one of Jehovah's Witnesses and the other is not?**

Two key Scriptural principles provide guidance about child training for a Witness parent who has a non-Witness mate. One is: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) The other is: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation." (Ephesians 5:23) The latter applies not only to wives with Witness husbands but also to those with non-Witness mates. (1 Peter 3:1) How can a Witness parent balance these principles when teaching his or her children?

If the husband is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he is responsible for making both spiritual and physical provisions for his family. (1 Timothy 5:8) Although the unbelieving mother may spend more time with their children, the Witness father should teach his children by giving spiritual training at home and by taking them to Christian meetings, where they will benefit from moral instruction and wholesome association.

What if his unbelieving wife insists on taking their children to her place of worship or teaching them her beliefs? The law of the land may give her the right to do so. Whether the children are enticed into acts of worship at such

places may depend much on the quality of the father's spiritual teaching. As the children grow older, the Scriptural education by their father should help them to follow the truth of God's Word. How happy the believing husband would be if his children were to take their stand for the truth!

If the mother is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, she has to respect the headship principle while being concerned about her children's eternal welfare. (1 Corinthians 11:3) In many cases, her unbelieving mate will not mind if his Witness wife gives moral and spiritual education to their children, and help toward that end is available at meetings of Jehovah's people. The mother can help her unbelieving husband to see the benefits of the upbuilding education that their children receive through Jehovah's organization. She can tactfully emphasize the merit of inculcating the Bible's moral principles in their children, faced as they are with living in a morally deteriorating world.

However, the unbelieving husband might insist that his children practice his religion, taking them to his place of worship and giving them religious education according to his faith. Or a husband may be opposed to all religion and insist that his children receive no religious education. As the head of the family, he is the one primarily responsible for making the decision.\*

While respecting her husband's headship, as a dedicated Christian, the believing wife would bear in mind the attitude of the apostles Peter and John, who said: "As for us, we cannot stop speaking about the things we have seen and heard." (Acts 4:19, 20) Out of concern for

\* The wife's legal right to free practice of religion includes her right to attend Christian meetings. In some cases, a husband has been unwilling to care for minor children at those times, so the loving mother was obliged to take them with her to the meetings.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Good Neighbors Are an Asset

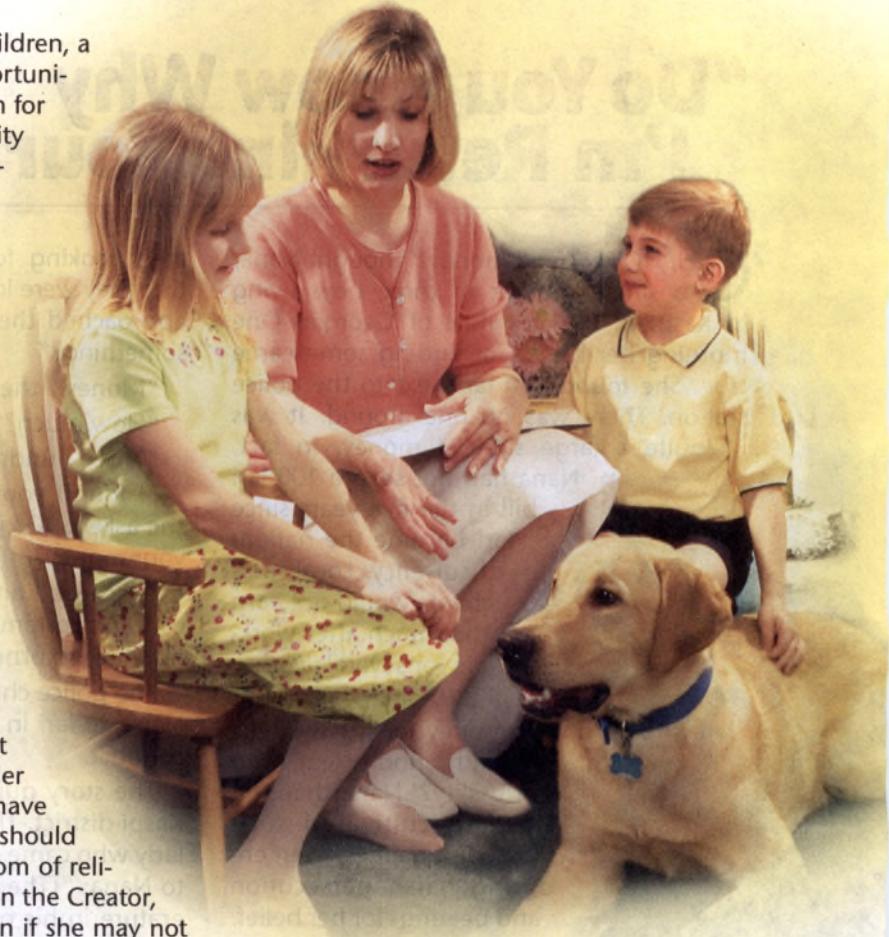
Imitate the Great Teacher

How Should We View Trials?

the spiritual welfare of the children, a Witness mother will find opportunities to provide moral direction for them. She has a responsibility before Jehovah to teach others about what she knows to be true, and her children should be no exception. (Proverbs 1:8; Matthew 28:19, 20) How can the Witness mother deal with the dilemma?

Take for example the matter of belief in God. The Witness wife may not be able to have a formal Bible study with her children because of her husband's restrictions. Should she for this reason shy away from telling her children anything about Jehovah? No. Her words and deeds would naturally reflect her belief in the Creator. Her children would no doubt have questions on the subject. She should feel free to exercise her freedom of religion by expressing her belief in the Creator, including to her children. Even if she may not be able to conduct a Bible study with the children or take them to meetings regularly, she can impart to them knowledge about Jehovah God.—Deuteronomy 6:7.

Concerning the relationship between a Witness and his or her unbelieving mate, the apostle Paul wrote: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would really be unclean, but now they are holy." (1 Corinthians 7:14) Jehovah views the marital relationship as holy because of the believing mate, and the children are considered holy in Jehovah's eyes. The Witness wife should do her best to help her children to understand the truth, leaving the final outcome in Jehovah's hands.



As the children grow older, they have to decide what stand they will take based on the information they have received from their parents. They may decide to act in accord with Jesus' words: "He that has greater affection for father or mother than for me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37) They are also commanded: "Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord." (Ephesians 6:1) Many youths have decided to 'obey God as ruler' rather than a non-Witness parent, despite suffering hardship from that parent. How rewarding it would be to the Witness parent to see the children decide to serve Jehovah in spite of opposition!

# "Do You Know Why I'm Returning Your Money?"

'OH, HOW I need money!' thought Nana, a single mother of three boys living in Kaspi in the Republic of Georgia. One morning her dream of finding some came true. She found 300 lari next to the police station. There was no one around. It was quite a large sum of money. In fact, Nana had not seen a 100 lari bill in the five years since lari became the national currency. Local merchants would not earn that much after working for several years.

'What do I need this money for if I will lose my faith, godly fear, and spirituality?' Nana thought. She had cultivated such Christian qualities, even enduring harsh persecution and beatings for her belief.

Upon going to the police station, Nana saw five officers desper-

ately looking for something. She realized that they were looking for the money, so she approached them and said: "Did you lose something?"

"Money," they answered.

"How much?"

"Three hundred lari!"

"I found your money," Nana said. Then she asked: "Do you know why I'm returning your money?" They did not.

"Because I am one of Jehovah's Witnesses," she continued. "If I were not, I would not have returned your money."

The police chief who lost the money gave Nana 20 lari in appreciation for her honest conduct.

The story quickly spread throughout the Kaspi district. The following day, a cleaning lady who came out of the police station said to Nana: "[The chief] always keeps your literature in his office. Now he will probably appreciate it even more." One police officer even said: "If all people were Jehovah's Witnesses, who would commit crimes?"

