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SONG 12

Great God, Jehovah

PREVIEW

When a man gets married, he becomes the head of a new family. In this article, we will discuss what headship is, why Jehovah established it, and what men can learn from the example set by Jehovah and Jesus. In the second article in this series, we will consider what a husband and a wife can learn from Jesus and other Bible examples. And the final article will examine the subject of headship in the congregation.

“The Head of Every Man Is the Christ”

“The head of every man is the Christ.”—1 COR. 11:3.

WHAT does the word “headship” mean to you? Some men allow tradition, culture, or their own family background to determine the way they treat their wife and children. Note what Yanita, a sister who lives in Europe, says, “Where I live, there is a deeply ingrained view that women are inferior to men and should be viewed as servants.” And a brother named Luke, who lives in the United States, says, “Some fathers teach their sons that women should be seen and not heard, that their opinion is not important.” However, those attitudes do not reflect the way Jehovah wants men to exercise their headship. (Compare Mark 7:13.) How, then, can a man learn to be a good family head?

² To be a good family head, a man must first understand what Jehovah requires of him. He also needs to know why Jehovah established headship and, specifically, how he can imitate the example set by Jehovah and Jesus. Why is it important for a man to gain such knowledge? Because Jehovah has given family heads a measure of authority, and he expects them to use it well.—Luke 12:48b.

WHAT IS HEADSHIP?

³ **Read 1 Corinthians 11:3.** This verse describes the way in which Jehovah has organized his universal family. Headship involves two key elements—authority and accountability. Jehovah is “the head,” or the ultimate authority, and all his children, both angelic and human, are

1. What factors are likely to influence a man’s view of headship?
2. What must a family head know, and why?
3. What do we learn about headship from the statement recorded at 1 Corinthians 11:3?

accountable to him. (Rom. 14:10; Eph. 3:14, 15) Jehovah has given Jesus authority over the congregation, but Jesus is accountable to Jehovah for the way he treats us. (1 Cor. 15:27) Jehovah has also given a husband authority over his wife and children, but a husband is accountable to both Jehovah and Jesus for the way he treats his family.—1 Pet. 3:7.

⁴ As Head of his universal family, Jehovah has the authority to make rules about how his children should behave, and he is able to enforce those rules. (Isa. 33:22) Jesus, as head of the Christian congregation, also has the right to make and enforce rules.—Gal. 6:2; Col. 1:18-20.

⁵ Following the pattern set by Jehovah and Jesus, the head of a Christian family has the authority to make decisions for his family. (Rom. 7:2; Eph. 6:4) However, his authority has limits. For example, his rules should be based on principles found in God's Word. (Prov. 3:5, 6) And a family head does not have the authority to make rules for those who are not part of his family. (Rom. 14:4) Also, when his sons and daughters grow up and leave home, they continue to respect him, but they are no longer under his headship.—Matt. 19:5.

WHY DID JEHOVAH ESTABLISH HEADSHIP?

⁶ Jehovah established headship out of love for his family. It is a gift from him. Headship makes it possible for Jehovah's

family to function in a peaceful, orderly way. (1 Cor. 14:33, 40) Without the clear-cut role of headship, Jehovah's family would become disorganized and unhappy. For example, no one would know who should make final decisions and who should take the lead in carrying out those decisions.

⁷ If God's arrangement for headship is such a good thing, why do so many women today feel oppressed and dominated by their husband? This is because many men ignore Jehovah's standards for the family and choose instead to follow local customs or traditions. They may also abuse their wives to satisfy some selfish desire. For example, a husband might dominate his wife in an attempt to boost his self-respect or to prove to others that he is a "real man." He may reason that he cannot force his wife to love him, but he can make her fear him. And he may use that fear as a way to control her.* That type of thinking and conduct clearly deprives women of the honor and respect to which they are entitled, and it is directly opposite to what Jehovah wants.—**Read Ephesians 5:25, 28.**

HOW CAN A MAN LEARN TO BE A GOOD FAMILY HEAD?

⁸ A man can learn to be a good family head by imitating the way that Jehovah and Jesus exercise their headship.

* The perception that it is acceptable for a man to mistreat his wife, even physically abusing her, has sometimes been conveyed in films, in plays, and even in comic books. Thus, the popular culture may have contributed to the idea that a man may dominate his wife.

4. What authority do Jehovah and Jesus have?

5. What authority does the head of a Christian family have, and what are his limits?

6. Why did Jehovah establish headship?

7. According to Ephesians 5:25, 28, did Jehovah intend that men should dominate women?

8. How can a man learn to be a good family head?

How Can a Newly Married Man Earn the Respect of His Wife?

- Recognize that you and your wife are now “one flesh,” and no other human—not parents, not children, not even elders—can be part of that partnership.—Matt. 19:5.
- Realize that it will take time for both you and your wife to adapt to your new roles.—1 Pet. 3:7.
- Do not compare your wife with your mother.—Gal. 6:4.
- Do not expect your wife to follow cultural traditions or attitudes that are not in harmony with Bible principles.—Prov. 3:5, 6; Mark 7:13.
- Do not demand submission; set an example by submitting to Jehovah’s direction as found in his Word.—1 Cor. 11:3.
- Do not demand respect; earn it.—Eph. 5:25; 1 Pet. 5:3.

Consider just two of the qualities manifested by Jehovah and Jesus, and note how a family head can show those qualities when dealing with his wife and children.

⁹ Humility. Jehovah is the wisest Person in existence; yet, he listens to the opinions of his servants. (Gen. 18:23, 24, 32) He has allowed those under his authority

to offer suggestions. (1 Ki. 22:19-22) Jehovah is perfect, but he does not, at present, expect perfection from us. Instead, he helps imperfect humans who serve him to succeed. (Ps. 113:6, 7) In fact, the Bible even describes Jehovah as a “helper.” (Ps. 27:9; Heb. 13:6) King David acknowledged that he could accomplish the great work he was given to do only because of Jehovah’s humility.—2 Sam. 22:36.

¹⁰ Consider Jesus’ example. Although Lord and Master of his disciples, he washed their feet. What is one reason why Jehovah had this account preserved in the Bible? No doubt to provide family heads, among others, with a clear model to follow. Jesus himself said: “I set the pattern for you, that just as I did to you, you should also do.” (John 13:12-17) Although he had great authority, Jesus did not expect to be served. Instead, he served others.—Matt. 20:28.

¹¹ Lessons for us. A family head can show humility in many ways. For example, he does not expect perfection from his wife and children. He listens to the opinions of family members, even when they do not agree with his. Marley, who lives in the United States, says: “My husband and I sometimes have different opinions. But I feel that he appreciates and respects me because he asks for my opinion and carefully considers it before he makes a decision.” In addition, a humble husband is willing to do household tasks, even if in his community these tasks are viewed as women’s work. That can be a challenge. Why? “Where I come

10. How did Jesus show humility?

11. What can a family head learn about humility from the example set by Jehovah and Jesus?

9. How does Jehovah show humility?



A family head can show humility and love by doing household tasks and by providing for his family's spiritual needs
(See paragraphs 11, 13)

from,” says a sister named Rachel, “if a husband helps his wife wash dishes or clean the home, his neighbors and relatives will question if he is a ‘real man.’ They will think that he cannot control his wife.” If that attitude is common where you live, remember that Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, even though it was viewed as a slave’s job. A good family head is concerned, not about making himself look good, but about making his wife and children feel good. In addition to humility, what other quality is essential for a good family head?

¹² **Love.** Everything Jehovah does is motivated by love. (1 John 4:7, 8) He lovingly cares for our spiritual needs by means of his written Word—the Bible—and his organization. He provides for our emotional needs by assuring us that we are loved. And what about

our material needs? Jehovah “richly provides us with all the things we enjoy.” (1 Tim. 6:17) When we make mistakes, he corrects us, but he does not stop loving us. Out of love, Jehovah provided the ransom arrangement for us. As for Jesus, he loves us so much that he gave his life for us. (John 3:16; 15:13) Nothing can break the bond of love that Jehovah and Jesus feel for those who are loyal to them.—John 13:1; Rom. 8:35, 38, 39.

¹³ **Lessons for us.** Everything a family head does should be motivated by love. Why is that so important? The apostle John answers: “The one who does not love his brother [or family], whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” (1 John 4:11, 20) Specifically, a man who loves his family and who wants to imitate Jehovah and Jesus will

12. What does love motivate Jehovah and Jesus to do?

13. Why is it important for a family head to show love for his family? (See also the box “How Can a Newly Married Man Earn the Respect of His Wife?”)



To please Jehovah, a family head must provide for his family's material needs (See paragraph 16)

provide for his family's spiritual, emotional, and material needs. (1 Tim. 5:8) He will train and discipline his children. He will also continue to learn to make decisions that honor Jehovah and benefit his family. Let us consider each of those requirements and see how a family head can imitate Jehovah and Jesus.

WHAT A FAMILY HEAD SHOULD DO

¹⁴ Provide for his family's spiritual needs. In imitation of his Father, Jesus was concerned about keeping those under his care spiritually well-fed. (Matt. 5:3, 6; Mark 6:34) Likewise, a family head's first priority is to provide for his family's spiritual needs. (Deut. 6:6-9) He does this by making sure that he and his family read and study God's Word, attend meetings, preach the good news, and build and maintain a friendship with Jehovah.

14. How does a family head provide for his family's spiritual needs?

¹⁵ Provide for his family's emotional needs. Jehovah openly expressed his affection for Jesus. (Matt. 3:17) Jesus freely expressed affection for his followers, both by what he did and by what he said. In turn, they expressed affection for him. (John 15:9, 12, 13; 21:16) A family head can show his wife and children that he loves them by what he does, such as by studying the Bible with them. He should also tell them that he loves and appreciates them and, when appropriate, commend them in front of others. —Prov. 31:28, 29.

¹⁶ Provide for his family's material needs. Jehovah cared for the basic needs of the Israelites even while they were being punished for disobedience. (Deut. 2:7; 29:5) He also provides for our basic needs today. (Matt. 6:31-33; 7:11) Likewise, Jesus fed those who followed him. (Matt. 14:17-20) He also cared for their physical health. (Matt. 4:24) To please Jehovah, a family head must provide materially for his family. However, he needs to maintain the right balance. He should not become so involved in secular work to support his family that he fails to care properly for his family's spiritual and emotional needs.

¹⁷ Provide training. Jehovah trains and disciplines us with our best interests in mind. (Heb. 12:7-9) Like his Father, Jesus trains those under his authority in a loving manner. (John 15:14, 15) He is firm but kind. (Matt. 20:24-28) He

15. What is one way that a family head can care for his family's emotional needs?

16. What else must a family head do, and how can he maintain the right balance?

17. What example do Jehovah and Jesus set in the way that they train and discipline us?

understands that we are imperfect and prone to make mistakes.—Matt. 26:41.

¹⁸ A family head who imitates Jehovah and Jesus makes allowances for the imperfections of family members. He does not become “bitterly angry” with his wife or children. (Col. 3:19) Instead, he applies the principle recorded at Galatians 6:1 and tries to readjust them “in a spirit of mildness,” remembering that he too is imperfect. Like Jesus, he realizes that the best way to teach is by example.—1 Pet. 2:21.

¹⁹ **Make unselfish decisions.** Jehovah makes decisions that are in the best interests of others. For example, he decided to create life, not to benefit himself, but to share with us the joy of living. No one could have forced him to give his Son to cover our sins. He willingly decided to make that sacrifice for our benefit. Jesus too made decisions that primarily benefited others. (Rom. 15:3) For example, he decided to forgo his own need for rest in

18. For what does a good family head make allowances?

19-20. When it comes to making decisions, how can a family head imitate Jehovah and Jesus?

order to teach a crowd of people.—Mark 6:31-34.

²⁰ A good family head knows that one of the most difficult things he must do is make wise decisions for his family, and he takes that responsibility seriously. He tries to avoid making decisions that are arbitrary or that are based purely on emotion. Instead, he allows Jehovah to train him.* (Prov. 2:6, 7) That way, he will think of benefiting others, not himself.—Phil. 2:4.

²¹ Jehovah has given family heads a challenging assignment, and he holds them accountable for the way they accomplish it. But if a husband strives to follow the example set by Jehovah and Jesus, he will be a good family head. And if his wife fulfills her role, the marriage will be a happy one. How should a wife view headship, and what challenges does she face? The next article will answer those questions.

* For more information about how to make good decisions, see the article “Make Decisions That Honor God,” published in the April 15, 2011, issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 13-17.

21. What will be discussed in the next article?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What is headship?

■ How can a family head show that he is humble?

■ In what ways should a family head provide for his family?

SONG 13

Christ, Our Model

PREVIEW

Jehovah has arranged for a married woman to be subject to her husband. Just what does that involve? Christian husbands and wives can learn a great deal about submission from the example set by Jesus and by women whose experiences are recorded in the Bible.

“The Head of a Woman Is the Man”

“The head of a woman is the man.”—1 COR. 11:3.

ALL Christians come under the perfect headship of Jesus Christ. However, when a Christian woman gets married, she comes under the headship of an imperfect man. That can present a challenge. So when considering a potential marriage mate, she would do well to ask herself: ‘What indication do I have that this brother will be a good family head? Do spiritual activities play an important role in his life? If not, what makes me think that he will be a good spiritual head after we get married?’ Of course, a sister also does well to ask herself: ‘What qualities will I bring to the marriage? Am I patient and generous? Do I have a strong relationship with Jehovah?’ (Eccl. 4:9, 12) The level of happiness a wife will experience in her marriage will depend to some extent on the decisions she makes before getting married.

² Millions of our Christian sisters set an excellent example in being submissive to their husband. They are to be commended! We are delighted to serve Jehovah alongside these loyal women! In this article, we will consider the answers to three questions: (1) What are some of the challenges that wives have to deal with? (2) Why does a wife choose to be subject to her husband? (3) What can Christian husbands and wives learn about subjection from the examples of Jesus, Abigail, and Mary, the wife of Joseph and the mother of Jesus?

1. When considering a marriage mate, what are some questions a single sister should ask?
2. What will we consider in this article?

WHAT CHALLENGES DO CHRISTIAN WIVES FACE?

³ Marriage is a perfect gift from God, but people are imperfect. (1 John 1:8) That is why God's Word warns married couples that they will face challenges that are described as "tribulation in their flesh." (1 Cor. 7:28) Note just some of the challenges that a wife might face.

⁴ Perhaps because of her background, a wife might feel that being in subjection to her husband is demeaning. "Where I grew up," says Marisol, who lives in the United States, "women were constantly told that they must be equal to men in everything. I know that Jehovah has made the headship arrangement and that he has given women a humble yet respectable role to play. But it is a challenge to keep a balanced view of headship."

⁵ On the other hand, a woman might be married to a man who thinks that women are second-class citizens. "In our area," says a sister named Ivon, who lives in South America, "men eat first and women second. Little girls are expected to cook and clean, but little boys are served by their mother and sisters, and they are told that they are 'king of the house.'" A sister named Yingling, who lives in Asia, says: "In my language there is a saying that implies that women do not need to be intelligent or to have

abilities. Their role is to do all the housework, but they are not allowed to express any opinions to their husband." A husband who is influenced by such unloving and unscriptural attitudes makes life difficult for his wife, fails to imitate Jesus, and displeases Jehovah.—Eph. 5:28, 29; 1 Pet. 3:7.

⁶ As mentioned in the preceding article, Jehovah expects Christian husbands to care for the spiritual, emotional, and material needs of their family. (1 Tim. 5:8) However, married sisters have to take time from their busy schedule each day to read God's Word and meditate on it and to turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. This can be a challenge. Wives are busy, so they may feel that they do not have the time or the energy to do those things, but it is vital that they take the time. Why? Because Jehovah wants each one of us to develop and maintain a personal relationship with him.—Acts 17:27.

⁷ Understandably, a wife may have to work hard to be submissive to her imperfect husband. However, she will find it easier to fulfill the assignment Jehovah has given her if she understands and accepts the Scriptural reasons why she should be submissive.

WHY CHOOSE TO BE IN SUBJECTION?

⁸ A Christian wife chooses to be in subjection to her husband because that is what Jehovah asks of her. **(Read**

3. Why is there no such thing as a perfect marriage?

4. Why might a wife feel that it is demeaning to be in subjection to her husband?

5. What unscriptural attitudes do some have about the role of women?

6. What do wives need to do in order to strengthen their personal relationship with Jehovah?

7. What will make it easier for a wife to fulfill her assignment?

8. As indicated at Ephesians 5:22-24, why does a Christian wife choose to be in subjection to her husband?

What can capable wives learn from Jesus' subjection to Jehovah?
(See paragraph 15)



Ephesians 5:22-24.) She trusts her heavenly Father, knowing that he is always motivated by love and only asks her to do something if it is in her best interests.—Deut. 6:24; 1 John 5:3.

⁹ The world encourages women to ignore Jehovah's standards and to view subjection as demeaning. Of course, those who promote such ideas do not know our loving God. Jehovah would never give his precious daughters a command that would demean them. A sister who works hard at fulfilling the role Jehovah has assigned her promotes peace in her household. (Ps. 119:165) Her husband benefits, she benefits, and the children benefit.

¹⁰ A wife who is submissive to her imperfect husband proves that she loves and respects Jehovah, the one who established headship. "I know that my husband will make mistakes," says Carol,

who lives in South America. "I also know that the way that I respond to those mistakes reveals how much I value my friendship with Jehovah. So I try to remain submissive because I want to please my heavenly Father."

¹¹ It can be a challenge for a wife to be respectful and submissive if she feels that her husband does not take her feelings and concerns into account. But note how a married sister named Aneese responds when that happens. She says: "I try not to become resentful. I remember that all of us make mistakes. My goal is to forgive freely, as Jehovah does. When I do forgive, I regain my peace of mind." (Ps. 86:5) A wife who is forgiving is likely to find it easier to be submissive.

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM EXAMPLES RECORDED IN THE BIBLE?

¹² Some may feel that a submissive person is weak. But that view is far from the

9. What happens when a Christian sister respects her husband's authority?

10. What lessons can we learn from the comments made by Carol?

11. What helps a sister named Aneese to be forgiving, and what can we learn from her comments?

12. What examples does the Bible contain?

truth. The Bible contains many examples of submissive individuals who had great strength of character. Consider what we can learn from Jesus, Abigail, and Mary.

¹³ **Jesus** is subject to Jehovah, but certainly not because he lacks intelligence or skill. Only a highly intelligent person could teach as simply and clearly as Jesus did. (John 7:45, 46) Jehovah respected Jesus' ability so much that He allowed Jesus to work beside Him when Jehovah created the universe. (Prov. 8:30; Heb. 1:2-4) And since Jesus' resurrection, Jehovah has entrusted him with 'all authority in heaven and on earth.' (Matt. 28:18) Even though Jesus is talented, he still looks to Jehovah for guidance. Why? Because he loves his Father. —John 14:31.

¹⁴ **What husbands can learn.** Jehovah did not make a wife subject to her husband because He views women as inferior to men. Jehovah himself has made that evident by choosing women as well as men to be corulers with Jesus. (Gal. 3:26-29) Jehovah has shown confidence in his Son by entrusting him with authority. Similarly, a wise husband will entrust his wife with a measure of authority. Describing the role of a capable wife, God's Word says that she can oversee a household, buy and manage property, and negotiate financial transactions. **(Read Proverbs 31:15, 16, 18.)** She is not a slave who has no right to voice her opinion. Rather, her husband

trusts her and listens to her ideas. **(Read Proverbs 31:11, 26, 27.)** When a man treats his wife with that kind of respect, she will find pleasure in being subject to him.

¹⁵ **What wives can learn.** Despite his accomplishments, Jesus does not feel that it is demeaning to subject himself to Jehovah's headship. (1 Cor. 15:28; Phil. 2:5, 6) Likewise, a capable woman who follows Jesus' example will not feel diminished by submitting to her husband. She will support her husband not only because she loves him but primarily because she loves and respects Jehovah.

¹⁶ **Abigail** had a husband named Nabal. He was a selfish, proud, and ungrateful man. Even so, Abigail did not take the easy way out of her marriage. She could have kept quiet and allowed David and his men to kill her husband. Instead, she took practical steps to protect Nabal along with their large household. Imagine the courage it took for Abigail to approach 400 armed men and respectfully reason with David. She was even willing to take the blame for her husband's actions. **(Read 1 Samuel 25:3, 23-28.)** David readily acknowledged that Jehovah had used this strong woman to give him needed advice that prevented him from committing a serious mistake.

¹⁷ **What husbands can learn.** Abigail was a sensible woman. Wisely, David listened to her advice. As a result, he avoided a course that would have

13. Why is Jesus in subjection to Jehovah? Explain.

14. What can husbands learn from (a) the way Jehovah views women? (b) the thoughts recorded in Proverbs 31?

15. What can wives learn from Jesus' example?

16. According to 1 Samuel 25:3, 23-28, what challenges did Abigail face? (See cover picture.)

17. What can husbands learn from the account of David and Abigail?

made him bloodguilty. Similarly, a wise husband will carefully consider his wife's views when important decisions are to be made. Perhaps her viewpoint will help him avoid making an unwise decision.

¹⁸ **What wives can learn.** A wife who loves and respects Jehovah can have a good impact on her family, even if her husband does not serve Jehovah or live by His standards. She will not look for an unscriptural way out of her marriage. Instead, by being respectful and submissive, she will try to motivate her husband to learn about Jehovah. (1 Pet. 3: 1, 2) But even if he does not respond to her good example, Jehovah appreciates the loyalty that a submissive wife shows to Him.

¹⁹ A submissive Christian wife, however, will not support her husband if he asks her to violate Bible laws or principles.

18. What can wives learn from Abigail's example?

19. In what circumstances will a wife not obey her husband?

Suppose, for example, that a sister's unbelieving mate tells her to lie, to steal, or to engage in some other unscriptural conduct. All Christians, including married sisters, owe their first allegiance to Jehovah God. If a sister is asked to violate Bible principles, she should refuse, explaining in a kind but firm way why she cannot do what he is asking.—Acts 5:29.

²⁰ **Mary** had a close, personal relationship with Jehovah. She obviously knew the Scriptures well. In a conversation with Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, Mary made more than 20 references to the Hebrew Scriptures. (Luke 1:46-55) And consider this fact: Even though Mary was engaged to Joseph, Jehovah's angel did not initially appear to him. The angel first spoke directly to Mary and announced that she would give birth to the Son of God. (Luke 1:26-33) Jehovah knew Mary well and was confi-

20. How do we know that Mary had a close, personal relationship with Jehovah?

What lessons about study and meditation can wives learn from Mary, the mother of Jesus?
(See paragraphs 20, 22)



dent that she would love and care for his Son. And Mary undoubtedly continued to have a good relationship with Jehovah even after Jesus died and was raised to heaven.—Acts 1:14.

²¹ **What husbands can learn.** A wise husband is happy when his wife knows the Scriptures well. He does not feel intimidated or threatened by his wife. He realizes that a sister with a sound knowledge of the Bible and Bible principles can be a real asset to her family. Of course, even if the wife is better educated than her husband, it is his responsibility to take the lead in family worship and in other theocratic activities.—Eph. 6:4.

²² **What wives can learn.** A woman must be submissive to her husband, but she is still responsible for her own spiritual health. (Gal. 6:5) To that end, she must allocate some time for her own personal study and meditation. That will help her to maintain her love and respect for Je-

21. What can husbands learn from what the Bible records about Mary?

22. What can wives learn from Mary?

hovah and to find joy in being submissive to her husband.

²³ Wives who remain subject to their husband out of love for Jehovah will find more joy and contentment than those who reject Jehovah's headship arrangement. They set a good example for both young men and young women. And they help to create a warm atmosphere not only in the family but also in the congregation. (Titus 2:3-5) Today, women make up a large part of those who are loyally serving Jehovah. (Ps. 68:11) All of us, whether male or female, have an important role to play in the congregation. The next article will discuss how each of us can fulfill that role.

23. How do submissive wives benefit themselves, their family, and the congregation?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 12: While conversing with Elizabeth, the mother of John the Baptist, Mary was able to cite passages from the Hebrew Scriptures by heart. A Christian wife sets aside time to study the Bible to maintain her spiritual health.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT SUBJECTION FROM THE EXAMPLE SET BY . . .

■ Jesus?

■ Abigail?

■ Mary?

SONG 137

Faithful Women,
Christian Sisters

PREVIEW

What is the role of sisters in the congregation? Is every brother the head of every sister? Do elders and family heads have the same type of authority? In this article, we will consider these questions in the light of examples found in God's Word.

Understanding Headship in the Congregation

“The Christ is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body.”—EPH. 5:23.

WE LOVE being part of Jehovah's family. Why is our family so peaceful and united? One reason is that all of us do our best to respect the headship arrangement that Jehovah has put in place. In fact, the better we understand the headship arrangement, the more united we become.

² In this article, we will consider the subject of headship as it applies to the congregation. Among other things, we will answer the following questions: What is the role of sisters? Is it true that every brother is the head of every sister? Do elders have the same type of authority over brothers and sisters as a family head has over his wife and children? First, let us consider how we should view sisters.

HOW SHOULD WE VIEW SISTERS?

³ We appreciate our sisters who work hard to care for their family, to preach the good news, and to support the congregation. We can deepen our appreciation for them by considering the way that Jehovah and Jesus view them. We will also benefit from considering how the apostle Paul treated women.

1. What is one reason why Jehovah's family is united?
2. What questions will we answer in this article?
3. How can we deepen our appreciation for the work that our sisters accomplish?

⁴ **The Bible indicates that Jehovah values women as well as men.** For instance, it reveals that in the first century, Jehovah gave holy spirit to women as well as to men and empowered them to perform miraculous works, such as speaking in different languages. (Acts 2:1-4, 15-18) They both have been anointed by holy spirit with the prospect of ruling with Christ. (Gal. 3:26-29) Women as well as men will receive the reward of everlasting life on earth. (Rev. 7:9, 10, 13-15) And both men and women are assigned to preach and teach the good news. (Matt. 28:19, 20) In fact, the book of Acts recognizes the work of a sister named Priscilla who, along with her husband, Aquila, helped to explain the truth more correctly to the well-educated man Apollos.—Acts 18:24-26.

⁵ **Jesus gave women honor and respect.** He did not follow the custom of the Pharisees, who looked down on women and who would not even speak to them in public, let alone discuss the Scriptures with them. Instead, he included women in the deep spiritual discussions that he had with his other disciples.* **(Read Luke 10:38, 39, 42.)** He also allowed women to accompany him on his preaching tours. (Luke 8:1-3) And Jesus gave them the privilege of announcing to the apostles that he had been raised from the dead.—John 20:16-18.

* See paragraph 6 of the article “Give Christian Women Your Support,” published in the September 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

4. How does the Bible indicate that Jehovah values women as well as men?

5. What does Luke 10:38, 39, 42 reveal about Jesus’ attitude toward women?

⁶ **The apostle Paul specifically reminded Timothy to honor women.** Paul told him to treat “older women as mothers” and to view “younger women as sisters.” (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Paul did much to help Timothy become a mature Christian, but he acknowledged that it was Timothy’s mother and grandmother who had first taught Timothy “the holy writings.” (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) Paul specifically greeted sisters by name in his letter to the Romans. He not only noticed the work sisters did but also expressed appreciation for them as Christian ministers.—Rom. 16:1-4, 6, 12; Phil. 4:3.

⁷ As the preceding paragraphs show, there is no Scriptural basis for thinking that sisters are inferior to brothers. Our loving and generous sisters are a real asset, and the elders rely on their help to promote peace and unity in the congregation. But some questions need answering. For instance: Why does Jehovah require a sister to wear a head covering on certain occasions? Since only brothers are appointed as elders and ministerial servants, does this imply that every brother is the head of every sister in the congregation?

IS EVERY BROTHER THE HEAD OF EVERY SISTER?

⁸ The short answer is no! A brother is not the head of all sisters in the congregation; Christ is. **(Read Ephesians 5:23.)** In the family, the husband has authority over his wife. A baptized son is

6. How did the apostle Paul show that he respected women?

7. What questions will we now consider?

8. According to Ephesians 5:23, is every brother the head of every sister? Explain.



When Should a Sister Wear a Head Covering?

To know if she should wear a head covering, a sister would need to answer these three questions:

- 1 Does the activity require that a sister pray publicly or teach from the Bible while a baptized brother is present?—1 Cor. 11: 4, 5.
- 2 Even if a baptized male is not present, would this assignment normally be done by a baptized brother?—1 Tim. 2:11, 12; Heb. 13:17.
- 3 If the sister is married, is her husband present while she publicly prays for others or teaches them from the Bible?—1 Cor. 11:3.

If the answer to any of those questions is yes, then a sister should wear a head covering. If the answer to all those questions is no, then she does not need to wear a head covering.*

* For a detailed discussion of this topic, see the book *“Keep Yourselves in God’s Love,”* pp. 209-212.

not the head of his mother. (Eph. 6:1, 2) And in the congregation, the elders have only limited authority over sisters and brothers. (1 Thess. 5:12; Heb. 13:17) Single women who no longer live with their father and mother continue to respect their parents and the elders. However, like the men in the congregation, they have only one head, Jesus.

⁹ It is true, however, that Jehovah has appointed men to take the lead in teaching and worship in the congregation, and he has not given women that same authority. (1 Tim. 2:12) Why? For the same reason that he has appointed Jesus as head of the man—to keep good order in his family. If because of circumstances a sister must fill a role that is normally cared for by a brother, then Jehovah requires that she wear a head covering.* (1 Cor. 11:4-7) Jehovah asks this of sisters, not to demean them, but to give them a way to show respect for the headship principle that he has put in place. With those facts in mind, let us now answer the question: How much authority do family heads and elders have?

THE ROLES OF FAMILY HEADS AND ELDERS

¹⁰ Elders love Christ, and they love the “sheep” whom Jehovah and Jesus have placed under their care. (John 21:15-17) With good intentions, an elder might think of himself as a fatherlike head in

* See the box “When Should a Sister Wear a Head Covering?”

9. Why do sisters at times need to wear a head covering?

10. Why might an elder be inclined to make rules for the congregation?



**Jesus, under Jehovah's headship,
gives direction to the Christian congregation**
(See paragraph 14)



**Elders care for the spiritual
and emotional needs of the
congregation. Jehovah has given
them the responsibility to keep
the congregation morally clean**
(See paragraphs 11-12)



**Family heads have been given
authority by Jehovah to take the
lead in their family. Before
making decisions, a loving family
head will consult with his wife**
(See paragraph 13)



**Single ones who no longer
live with their parents are
under Jesus' headship**
(See paragraph 8)

the congregation. He may reason that if a family head has the right to make rules to protect his family, an elder can make rules that he hopes will protect God's sheep. And some brothers and sisters may encourage elders to act as their spiritual head by asking them to make decisions for them. But do elders in the congregation and family heads have the same authority?

¹¹ The apostle Paul implied that there are some *similarities* between the role of a family head and that of an el-

11. How are the roles of family heads and elders similar?

der. (1 Tim. 3:4, 5) For example, Jehovah wants family members to obey the head of the family. (Col. 3:20) And he wants those in the congregation to obey the elders. Jehovah expects both family heads and elders to make sure that those under their care are spiritually healthy. Both also care for the emotional needs of those under their authority. And like good family heads, elders make sure that those under their care receive help in times of crisis. (Jas. 2:15-17) In addition, Jehovah expects elders and family heads to promote his standards and not to "go beyond the

things that are written” in the Bible.—1 Cor. 4:6.

¹² However, there are also significant *differences* between the role of an elder and the role of a family head. For instance, Jehovah has assigned the elders to act as judges, and he has given them the responsibility of removing unrepentant sinners from the congregation.—1 Cor. 5:11-13.

¹³ On the other hand, Jehovah has given family heads some authority that he has not given to elders. For instance, he has authorized a family head both to make and to enforce rules for his family. **(Read Romans 7:2.)** For example, a family head has the right to decide at what time his children should arrive home at night. He also has the authority to discipline his children if they fail to obey that rule. (Eph. 6:1) Of course, a loving family head consults with his wife before making rules in the household; after all, the two of them are “one flesh.”*—Matt. 19:6.

RESPECT CHRIST AS HEAD OF THE CONGREGATION

¹⁴ By means of the ransom, Jehovah purchased the lives of each individual in the congregation and, potential-

* For a discussion of who should decide in which congregation a family will serve, see paragraphs 17-19 of the article “Respect the Place of Others in Jehovah’s Congregation,” published in the August 2020 issue of *The Watchtower*.

12-13. As indicated at Romans 7:2, how are the roles of family heads and elders different?

14. (a) In light of what is said at Mark 10:45, why is it fitting that Jehovah has appointed Jesus as head of the congregation? (b) What is the role of the Governing Body? (See the box “The Role of the Governing Body.”)



The Role of the Governing Body

The members of the Governing Body are not masters over the faith of their brothers and sisters. (2 Cor. 1:24) They recognize Jesus Christ as the head of the Christian congregation, and they agree wholeheartedly with the Lord’s admonition to his disciples: “All of you are brothers.” (Matt. 23:8) At the same time, they love their brothers and sisters very much and do their best to care for their needs. Under the headship of Christ Jesus, the members of the Governing Body provide helpful direction to organize Jehovah’s people worldwide. They appoint Branch Committee members and circuit overseers. (Eph. 4:7-13) In turn, circuit overseers appoint congregation elders. (Acts 14:23; Titus 1:5) The Governing Body also takes very seriously its responsibility to provide spiritual food and instruction from God’s Word. The Governing Body does so through letters, printed guidelines and publications, JW Broadcasting® programs as well as through schools, meetings, conventions, and assemblies. (Acts 15:22-35) And when a natural disaster or some other calamity strikes, the members of the Governing Body, moved by heartfelt love for their brothers and sisters, immediately take action to ensure that practical help will be provided.*

* For a full discussion of the role of the Governing Body, see the July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*, pp. 20-25.

ly, of all humankind. **(Read Mark 10: 45; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 15:21, 22)** So it is fitting that he appointed Jesus, who gave his life as a ransom, as head of the congregation. As our head, Jesus has the authority to make and to enforce rules that govern the conduct of individuals, of families, and of the entire congregation. (Gal. 6:2) But Jesus does more than just make rules. He feeds and cherishes each one of us.—Eph. 5:29.

¹⁵ Sisters show that they respect Christ by following the direction given by the men he has appointed to take care of them. A sister named Marley, who lives in the United States, sums up the view of many sisters. She says: “I really value my place as a wife and as a sister in the congregation. I constantly have to cultivate the right attitude toward Je-

15-16. What do you learn from the comments made by a sister named Marley and a brother named Benjamin?

hovah’s headship arrangement. But my husband and the brothers in the congregation have made that easier for me because they respect me and express their appreciation for the work I do.”

¹⁶ Brothers show that they understand the headship arrangement by respecting and honoring sisters. Benjamin, a brother who lives in England, says: “I have learned so much from sisters’ comments at the meetings and from their tips on how to study and how to be effective in the ministry. I think the work that they do is very valuable.”

¹⁷ When all in the congregation—men, women, family heads, and elders—understand and respect the principle of headship, the congregation enjoys peace. And more important, we bring praise to our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 150:6.

17. Why should we respect the headship principle?

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| ■ How should we view sisters in the congregation? | ■ Is every brother the head of every sister? Explain. | ■ How are the roles of family heads and elders different? |
|---|---|---|

Jehovah Has ‘Made My Paths Straight’

AS TOLD BY STEPHEN HARDY



A YOUNG brother once asked me, “What is your favorite scripture?” Without hesitation, I replied, “Proverbs 3, verses 5 and 6, which states: ‘Trust in Jehovah with all your heart, and do not rely on your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he will make your paths straight.’” Yes, Jehovah has indeed made my paths straight. How?

MY PARENTS’ GUIDANCE PUT ME ON THE RIGHT PATH

In the 1920’s before they got married, my parents learned the truth. I was born in the beginning of 1939. As a youngster in England, I accompanied my parents to Christian meetings and enjoyed the Theocratic Ministry School. To this day, I recall how I felt climbing on top of a box to be tall enough to see over the speaker’s stand to present my first talk. I was six years old and very nervous, looking out at all the grown-ups in the audience.

For field service, my father typed a simple presentation on a card for me to use in the ministry. I was eight years old when for the first time I went to a door alone. How thrilled I was when the householder read my card and right away accepted the book “*Let God Be True*”! I ran down the street to tell my father. The ministry and the meetings brought me joy and helped develop my desire to serve Jehovah full-time.

Bible truth began to touch me deeper after my father obtained a subscription to *The Watchtower* for me. I took a real interest in each copy as it arrived in the mail. My trust in Jehovah grew and led me to make a dedication to him.

As a family we were delegates to the 1950 Theocracy’s Increase Assembly in New York. On Thursday, August 3, the theme of the day was “Missionary Day.” That day, Brother Carey Barber, who later served on the Governing Body, gave the baptism talk. After he asked the baptism candidates the two questions at the end of his talk, I stood up and said, “Yes!” I was 11 years of age but

realized that I had taken an important step. However, I feared going into the water because I had not yet learned to swim. My uncle accompanied me to the pool and assured me that everything would be fine. Indeed, it was over so quickly that my feet never touched the bottom of the pool. I was handed from one brother to another; one baptized me, and another lifted me from the pool. Ever since that important day, Jehovah has continued to make my paths straight.

CHOOSING TO TRUST JEHOVAH

When I left school, I wanted to pioneer, but my teachers urged me to pursue higher education. I succumbed to their pressure and went to university; however, I soon realized that I could not remain firm in the truth and at the same time concentrate on my studies, so I decided to leave. I took the matter to Jehovah in prayer and wrote a respectful resignation letter, leaving at the end of that first year. With full trust in Jehovah, I immediately took up pioneer service.

In July 1957 my full-time service began in the town of Wellingborough. I asked brothers at the London Bethel to recommend an experienced pioneer brother whom I could join. Brother Bert Vaisey became my mentor, and his diligence helped me to establish a good field service routine. The congregation consisted of six elderly sisters and Brother Vaisey and me. Preparing for and

participating in all the meetings gave me many opportunities to build trust in Jehovah and to express my faith.

After a short time in prison for refusal to engage in military service, I met Barbara, a special pioneer sister. We got married in 1959, willing to go wherever assigned. At first, it was Lancashire in northwest England. Then in January 1961, I was invited to attend a one-month course of the Kingdom Ministry School at London Bethel. To my surprise, at the end of the course, I was assigned to the traveling work. For two weeks, I received training from an experienced circuit overseer in the city of Birmingham, and Barbara was allowed to join me. Then we were off to our own assignment back in the counties of Lancashire and Cheshire.

TRUST IN JEHOVAH NEVER MISPLACED

While on vacation in August 1962, we received a letter from the branch office. Enclosed were application forms for Gilead School! After making the matter a subject of prayer, Barbara and I completed the forms and quickly returned them to the branch office as requested. Five months later, we were on our way to Brooklyn, New York, to attend the 38th class of Gilead, a ten-month course of theocratic education.

Instruction at Gilead taught us not only about God's Word and his organization but also about our brotherhood. Still in our mid-20's, we learned much from the other



Street witnessing
with my parents

students in our class. It was my privilege to have a work assignment each day alongside Brother Fred Rusk, one of our instructors. One outstanding lesson he emphasized was the need always to counsel righteously, that is, to make sure that advice given was solidly based on the Scriptures. Among those who gave lectures during our course were such experienced brothers as Nathan Knorr, Frederick Franz, and Karl Klein. And how we students learned from the humble example of Brother A. H. Macmillan, whose lecture gave us insight into Jehovah's guidance during the time of testing from 1914 to early 1919!

A CHANGE OF ASSIGNMENT

Toward the end of the course, Brother Knorr told Barbara and me that we were to be assigned to Burundi in Africa. We rushed to the Bethel library to look up in the *Yearbook* how many publishers were serving in Burundi at that time. To our surprise, nowhere did we find figures for that country! Yes, we were going to virgin territory, located on a continent about which we

knew very little. Oh, how our nerves kicked in! Earnest prayer helped calm them.

In our new assignment, everything was so different from anything we had ever experienced—the climate, the culture, and the language. Now we had to master French. We also faced the challenge of where to live. Two days after we arrived, one of our Gilead classmates, Harry Arnott, visited us on his way back to his assignment in Zambia. He helped us locate an apartment, which became our first missionary home. Soon, though, we began to get opposition from local authorities, who knew nothing about Jehovah's Witnesses. Just as we were beginning to enjoy our assignment, the authorities informed us that we would not be able to stay without a valid work permit. Sadly, we had to leave and adjust to a new country, this time Uganda.

Trust in Jehovah alleviated our fears about arriving in Uganda without a visa. A Canadian brother serving where the need was greater in Uganda managed to explain our situation to an immigration officer, and



On our “scouting safari,” Uganda



we were given some months during which we could apply to legalize our residence. That favorable development indicated to us that Jehovah was helping us.

Conditions in this new assignment were very different from those in Burundi. The Kingdom work was already established, although there were only 28 Witnesses in the entire country. In the territory, we found many who spoke English. We soon realized, however, that in order to help interested ones progress, we needed to learn at least one of the many indigenous languages. We started preaching in the Kampala area, where Luganda was widely spoken, so we decided to concentrate on that language. It took us several years to become fluent, but what a difference it made to the effectiveness of our work! We began to understand better the spiritual needs of our Bible students. They, in turn, opened their hearts and expressed how they felt about what they were learning.

MULTIPLE SAFARIS

Our joy of finding humble people who were receptive to the truth was compounded by another unexpected privilege—that of serving in the traveling work throughout the country. Under the direction of the Kenya branch, we embarked on a “scouting safari” to find suitable locations for special pioneers who could open up the field. Several times we experienced outstanding hospitality from people who had never met Witnesses before. They made us feel welcome and even prepared meals for us.

A different kind of safari came next. From Kampala, I traveled two days by train to the Kenyan port of Mombasa and then onward by ship to the Seychelles, an island group out in the Indian Ocean. Later, from 1965 to 1972, Barbara joined me on regular visits to the Seychelles. During that time, the two isolated publishers became a group and



**Mimeographing Our Kingdom Ministry,
Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire branch**

then a thriving congregation. Other “safaris” took me to visit the brothers in Eritrea, Ethiopia, and Sudan.

Back in Uganda the political climate changed rapidly following a military coup. The years of terror that followed brought home to me the wisdom of obeying the instruction to “pay back Caesar’s things to Caesar.” (Mark 12:17) At one point, all resident foreign nationals were required to register at the police post nearest their home. Promptly we obeyed. A few days later, while driving through Kampala, secret police officers approached another missionary and me. Our hearts were pounding! They accused us of being spies and escorted us to the main police station where we explained that we were peaceful missionaries. Our protests that we had already registered with the police fell on deaf ears. Under armed guard we were driven to the police post nearest the missionary home. How relieved we were when the desk officer, who knew we had registered earlier, recognized us and directed our guard to release us!

In those days, we often experienced tense moments at military roadblocks, especially when stopped by soldiers who had been drinking heavily. Every time, though, we

prayed and felt an inner calm as we were allowed to pass through safely. Sadly, in 1973 all foreign missionaries were ordered to leave Uganda.

Again we received an assignment change, this time to Côte d'Ivoire, West Africa. What an adjustment this meant for us: learning a completely new culture and once again speaking French all the time and adapting to life with missionaries from different backgrounds! Yet, once more we saw Jehovah's direction as humble, honest-hearted ones from the field quickly responded to the good news. Together we saw how our trust in Jehovah made our paths straight.

Then suddenly Barbara was diagnosed with cancer. Despite our international travels for specialized treatment, by 1983 it became obvious that we could no longer serve in our assignment in Africa. What a disappointment this was for both of us!

CHANGES IN CIRCUMSTANCES

Barbara's cancer progressed while we were serving at London Bethel, and she eventually died. The Bethel family proved to be a wonderful support. One couple in particular helped me to adjust and continue to trust in Jehovah. Later I met a commuter Bethel sister who had experience as a special pioneer and whose love for Jehovah showed that she was a spiritual person. Ann and I got married in 1989, and we have served at London Bethel ever since.

From 1995 to 2018, I enjoyed the privilege of serving as a world headquarters representative (formerly called zone overseer), visiting nearly 60 different countries. In each, I saw living proof of how Jehovah blesses his servants under various circumstances.

In 2017 our visits took me back to Africa. What a joy it was to introduce Ann to Burundi and for both of us to marvel at the



With Ann in front of the new Britain Bethel site

growth in that field! On the very street where I preached from house to house back in 1964, there is now a beautiful Bethel home serving more than 15,500 publishers.

I was overjoyed when I received the itinerary for my visits in 2018. There on the list of countries was Côte d'Ivoire. Our arrival in Abidjan, the capital, was like coming home for me. As I glanced at the telephone listing, who should be living next door to our Bethel guest room but a brother whose name I recognized, Sossou. I remembered that he had served as city overseer when I was in Abidjan. But I was mistaken. It was another Sossou—his son.

Jehovah has been true to his word. Through numerous adversities, I have come to appreciate that when we trust in Jehovah, he really does make our paths straight. Now we eagerly anticipate following the unending path that will become even brighter with life in the new world.—Prov. 4:18.

All Because of a Smile!

TWO young women were walking together in a business district in Baguio City, Philippines. They noticed a public witnessing cart, but they did not approach it. Helen, the sister standing next to the cart, smiled broadly at them. The women continued on their way, but they were impressed by Helen's warm smile.

Later, as the women were riding home on a bus, they spotted a large jw.org sign displayed at a Kingdom Hall. They remembered that it was the same lettering they had seen on the witnessing cart earlier. They both got off the bus and checked the schedule of meetings for the different congregations listed at the gate of the Kingdom Hall.

The two women attended one of the next meetings. And whom did they see as they walked into the Kingdom Hall? Helen! They recognized her immediately as the person with the big smile. "When they walked up to me," says Helen, "I got a bit nervous. I thought that perhaps I had done something wrong." But the women explained to Helen what had happened.

The young women enjoyed the meeting and association; they felt right at home. When they saw others cleaning the hall after the meeting, they asked if they could help. One of the women has since left the country, but the other woman began attending meetings and started studying the Bible—all because of a smile!



SONG 111

Our Reasons for Joy

PREVIEW

The book of James is full of practical counsel on dealing with trials. This article reviews some of the advice James offers. This advice can help us to endure hardship without losing our joy in serving Jehovah.

How to Maintain Joy When Enduring Trials

“Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials.”—JAS. 1:2.

JESUS promised his followers that they would be genuinely happy. He also warned those who love him that they would face trials. (Matt. 10:22, 23; Luke 6:20-23) We find joy in being disciples of Christ. But how do we feel about the possibility of being opposed by our family, persecuted by the government, or pressured to do what is wrong by our workmates or schoolmates? Understandably, such possibilities can make us feel anxious.

² People do not normally view persecution as a reason to feel joyful. Yet, that is exactly what God’s Word tells us to do. For example, the disciple James wrote that instead of feeling overwhelmed, we should consider it a joy when we go through trials. (Jas. 1:2, 12) And Jesus said that we should be happy even when we are persecuted. **(Read Matthew 5:11.)** How can we keep our joy despite trials? We can learn much by considering a few thoughts from the letter that James wrote to the early Christians. First, let us consider the challenges that those Christians faced.

WHAT TRIALS DID THE FIRST-CENTURY CHRISTIANS FACE?

³ Shortly after Jesus’ half brother James became a disciple, opposition broke out against Christians in Jerusalem. (Acts 1:14; 5:17, 18) And when the disciple Stephen was murdered, many Christians fled the city and “were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria,” eventually as far away as Cyprus and Antioch.

1-2. According to Matthew 5:11, how should we view trials?

3. What happened shortly after James became a disciple of Jesus?

(Acts 7:58–8:1; 11:19) We can only imagine the hardship the disciples had to endure. Still, they eagerly preached the good news wherever they went, and congregations were established throughout the Roman Empire. (1 Pet. 1:1) But far more turbulent times lay ahead for the early Christians.

⁴ The early Christians had to endure a variety of trials. For instance, about the year 50 C.E., Roman Emperor Claudius ordered all Jews to leave Rome. So Jews who had become Christians were forced to abandon their homes and relocate elsewhere. (Acts 18:1-3) About 61 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote that his fellow Christians had been publicly reproached,

4. What other trials did the early Christians have to endure?

put in prison, and plundered. (Heb. 10:32-34) And just like other people, Christians had to endure poverty and sickness.—Rom. 15:26; Phil. 2:25-27.

⁵ When James wrote his letter before the year 62 C.E., he was fully aware of the trials being experienced by his brothers and sisters. Jehovah inspired James to write to those Christians to give them practical advice that would help them remain joyful even when facing trials. Let us examine the letter of James and answer these questions: What is the joy that James wrote about? What could rob a Christian of that joy? And how can wisdom, faith, and courage help us to maintain our joy no matter what trials we face?

5. What questions will we answer?



Like a steadily burning flame inside the protection of a lantern, the deep joy that Jehovah gives steadily burns within a Christian heart
(See paragraph 6)

WHAT MAKES A CHRISTIAN FEEL JOY?

⁶ People may think that they can be happy only if they have good health, a lot of money, and peaceful family relationships. But the type of joy that James wrote about is a part of the fruitage of God's spirit and is not dependent on a person's circumstances. (Gal. 5:22) A Christian gains joy, or a deep sense of happiness, from knowing that he is pleasing Jehovah and following Jesus' example. **(Read Luke 6:22, 23; Col. 1:10, 11)** Like a flame burning inside the protection of a lantern, this type of joy burns within a Christian's heart. It does not flicker when health fails or money is scarce. And it is not snuffed out by ridicule or opposition from family members or others. Rather than being put out, the flame burns brighter each time opposers try to extinguish it. The trials we face because of our faith confirm that we are true disciples of Christ. (Matt. 10:22; 24:9; John 15:20) For good reason, James could write: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials."—Jas. 1:2.

⁷ James identifies an additional reason why Christians are willing to face even severe trials. He says: "This tested quality of your faith produces endurance." (Jas. 1:3) Trials can be likened to the fire that is used to forge a blade of steel. When the blade is heated and cooled, the steel becomes stronger. Similarly, when we endure trials, our faith is strengthened. That is why James wrote:

6. According to Luke 6:22, 23, why can a Christian feel joy when suffering trials?

7-8. How does our faith benefit from being tested?



"Let endurance complete its work, so that you may be complete and sound in all respects." (Jas. 1:4) When we see that our trials make our faith stronger, we can endure them with joy.

⁸ In his letter, James also identifies some of the things that could cause us to lose our joy. What are those challenges, and how can we overcome them?

OVERCOMING CHALLENGES THAT COULD ROB US OF JOY

⁹ ***The challenge: Not knowing what to do.*** When undergoing a trial, we want to look to Jehovah for help to make choices that please him, benefit our brothers and sisters, and help us to keep our own integrity. (Jer. 10:23) We need wisdom to know what course to take and what we should say to those who oppose

9. Why do we need wisdom?



Why can trials be likened to the fire that is used to forge a blade of steel?
(See paragraph 7)

us. If we do not know what to do, we may feel that we are helpless victims of our circumstances, and we could quickly lose our joy.

¹⁰ **The solution: Ask Jehovah for wisdom.** If we are to endure our trials with joy, we must first ask Jehovah in prayer to give us the wisdom we need to make good decisions. **(Read James 1:5.)** How should we react if we feel that Jehovah does not answer our prayer immediately? James says that we should “keep asking” God. Jehovah is not annoyed when we keep asking him for wisdom. He will not reproach us. Our heavenly Father “gives generously” when we pray for the wisdom to endure our trials. (Ps. 25:12, 13) He sees our trials, he has empathy, and he is eager to help us. Certainly, that

10. To gain wisdom, what does James 1:5 tell us we need to do?

is a cause for joy! How, though, does Jehovah give us wisdom?

¹¹ Jehovah gives us wisdom by means of his Word. (Prov. 2:6) To gain that wisdom, we must study God’s Word and Bible-based publications. But we need to do more than just accumulate knowledge. We must put God’s wisdom to work in our life by acting on his advice. James wrote: “Become doers of the word and not hearers only.” (Jas. 1:22) When we apply God’s counsel, we become more peaceable, reasonable, and merciful. (Jas. 3:17) Those qualities help us to deal with any trial without losing our joy.

¹² God’s Word acts like a mirror, helping us to identify and address what we need to work on. (Jas. 1:23-25) For

11. What else must we do to gain wisdom?

12. Why is it important that we know the Bible well?

example, after studying God's Word, we might realize that we need to control our temper. With Jehovah's help, we learn how to be mild when dealing with people or problems that could provoke us. Because we are mild, we cope better with the pressures we face. We are able to think more clearly and make better decisions. (Jas. 3:13) How important it is that we know the Bible well!

¹³ Sometimes we learn what to avoid only after we make a mistake. But that is a hard way to learn. A better way to gain wisdom is to learn from both the successes and the mistakes of others. That is why James encourages us to look at examples set by such Bible characters as Abraham, Rahab, Job, and Elijah. (Jas. 2:21-26; 5: 10, 11, 17, 18) Those loyal servants of Jehovah were able to endure trials that could have robbed them of joy. Their examples of endurance show that with Jehovah's help we can do the same.

¹⁴ **The challenge: Unresolved doubts.** From time to time, we might have difficulty understanding something in God's Word. Or Jehovah may not answer our prayers the way that we had hoped for. This may give rise to doubts. If we ignore our doubts, they will weaken our faith and damage our relationship with Jehovah. (Jas. 1:7, 8) And they could even make us lose our hope for the future.

¹⁵ The apostle Paul likened our hope for the future to an anchor. (Heb. 6: 19) An anchor stabilizes a ship during a storm and stops it from drifting onto

rocks. But an anchor is useful only if the chain that attaches it to the ship does not break. Just as rust weakens an anchor chain, so unresolved doubts weaken our faith. When tested by opposition, a person who has doubts could lose faith that Jehovah will fulfill his promises. If we lose our faith, we lose our hope. As James says, the doubter "is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about." (Jas. 1:6) A person in that position is unlikely to feel any joy at all!

¹⁶ **The solution: Face your doubts; strengthen your faith.** Do not be indecisive. In the days of the prophet Elijah, Jehovah's people had become indecisive. Elijah told them: "How long will you be limping between two different opinions? If Jehovah is the true God, follow him; but if Baal is, follow him!" (1 Ki. 18: 21) The same is true today. We need to do some research to prove to ourselves that Jehovah is God, that the Bible is his Word, and that Jehovah's Witnesses are his people. (1 Thess. 5:21) Doing all of that will dispel our doubts and strengthen our faith. If we need help to resolve our doubts, we can ask the elders. We must take decisive action if we are to maintain our joy in serving Jehovah!

¹⁷ **The challenge: Discouragement.** God's Word says: "If you become discouraged in the day of distress, your strength will be meager." (Prov. 24:10) The Hebrew word translated "become discouraged" can mean "to lose courage." If you lose your courage, you will quickly lose your joy.

13. Why should we study the examples set by Bible characters?

14-15. Why must we resolve our doubts?

16. What should we do if we have doubts?

17. What will happen if we lose our courage?

¹⁸ ***The solution: Rely on Jehovah to give you the courage to endure.*** We need to have courage if we are to endure trials. (Jas. 5:11) The word James used that is rendered “endurance” conveys the idea of someone who remains steadfast in his position. We might think of a soldier courageously standing his ground against the enemy, refusing to give an inch no matter how fiercely he is attacked.

¹⁹ The apostle Paul set an outstanding example of courage and endurance. At times, he felt weak. But he was able to endure because he relied on Jehovah to give him the strength he needed. (2 Cor. 12:8-10; Phil. 4:13) We can have that kind of strength and courage if we humbly recognize that we need Jehovah’s help.—Jas. 4:10.

DRAW CLOSE TO GOD AND KEEP YOUR JOY

²⁰ We can be certain that the trials we face are not punishment from Jehovah.

18. What does it mean to endure?

19. What can we learn from the example set by the apostle Paul?

20-21. Of what can we be certain?

James assures us: “When under trial, let no one say: ‘I am being tried by God.’ For with evil things God cannot be tried, nor does he himself try anyone.” (Jas. 1:13) When we are convinced of that fact, we are drawn closer to our loving heavenly Father.—Jas. 4:8.

²¹ Jehovah “does not vary or change.” (Jas. 1:17) He supported the first-century Christians through their trials, and he will help each of us today too. Earnestly ask Jehovah to help you gain wisdom, faith, and courage. He will answer your prayers. Then you can be certain that he will help you to maintain your joy while enduring trials!

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 29: A brother is arrested in his home. His wife and daughter look on as police officers take him away. While the husband is in prison, fellow worshippers join the sister and her daughter for family worship. The mother and daughter frequently ask Jehovah for strength to endure their trial. Jehovah gives them inner peace and courage. As a result, their faith grows stronger, enabling them to endure with joy.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What makes a Christian joyful?

■ What challenges could rob us of joy?

■ How can we remain joyful despite trials?

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COVER PICTURE:

After sending food to David and his men, Abigail approaches David. Then she bows down to the ground and urges him not to bring bloodguilt on himself by taking revenge (See study article 6, paragraph 16)

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