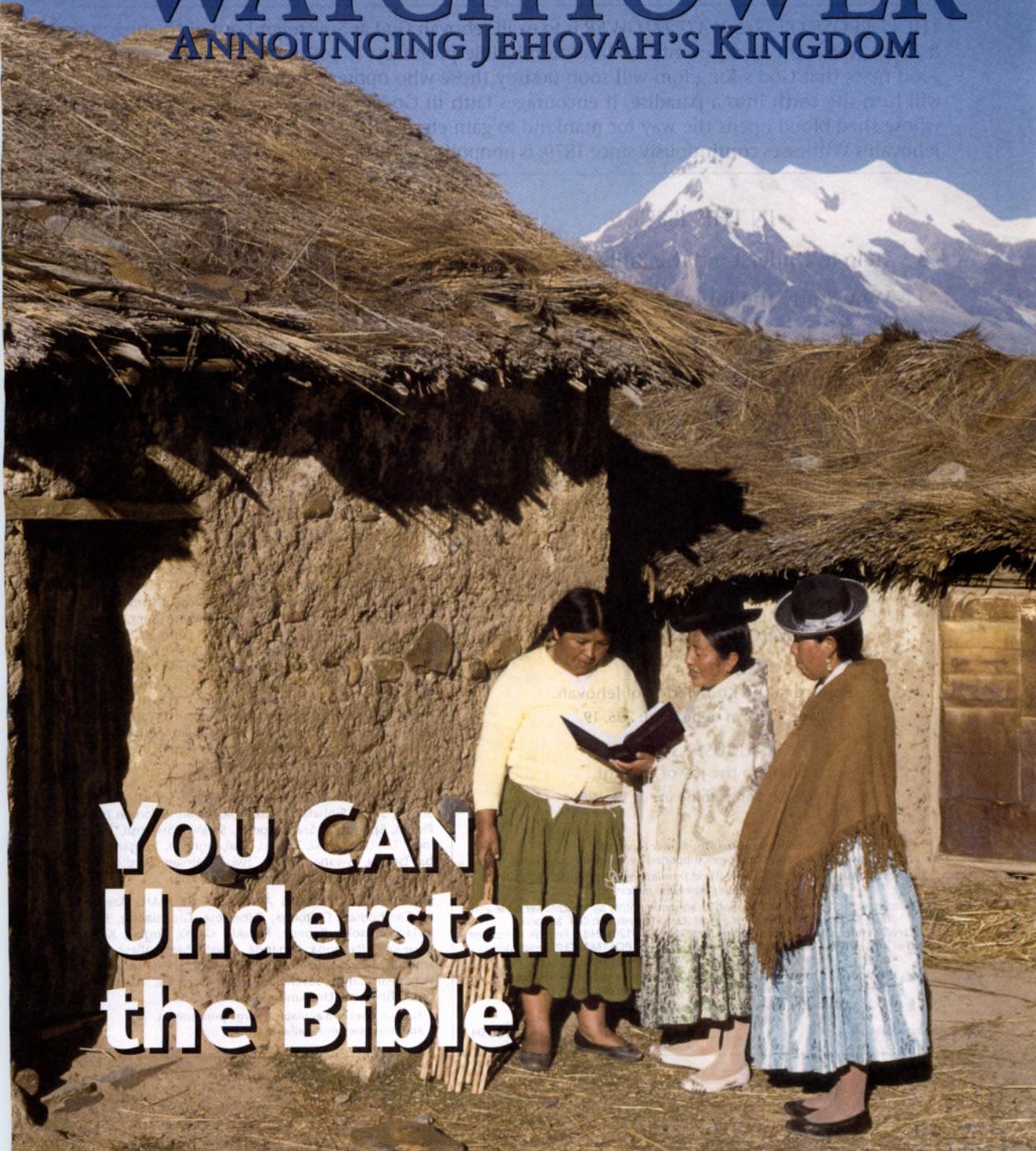


JULY 1, 2001

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## You CAN Understand the Bible



# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

July 1, 2001

Average Printing Each Issue: 23,042,000

Vol. 122, No. 13

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.

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Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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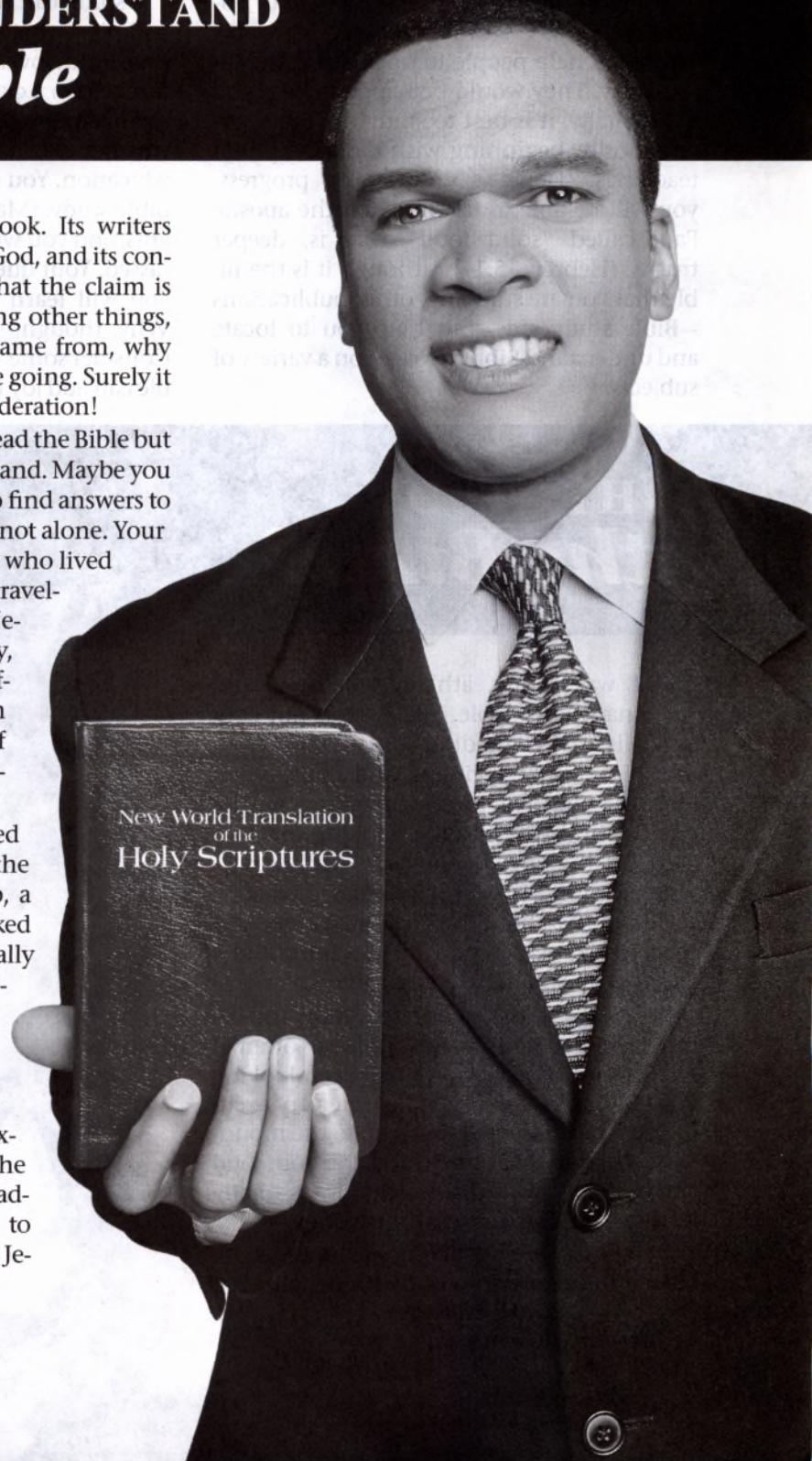
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# HELP TO UNDERSTAND *the Bible*

THE Bible is a unique book. Its writers claim to be inspired by God, and its contents provide ample proof that the claim is true. (2 Timothy 3:16) Among other things, the Bible shows where we came from, why we are here, and where we are going. Surely it is a book worthy of our consideration!

Perhaps you have tried to read the Bible but have found it hard to understand. Maybe you do not know where to look to find answers to your questions. If so, you are not alone. Your situation is like that of a man who lived in the first century. He was traveling in a chariot, going from Jerusalem to his native country, Ethiopia. This Ethiopian official was reading aloud from the prophetic Bible book of Isaiah, written more than seven hundred years earlier.

Suddenly, he was addressed by a man running alongside the chariot. The man was Philip, a disciple of Jesus, and he asked the Ethiopian: "Do you actually know what you are reading?" The Ethiopian replied: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" He then invited Philip into the chariot. Philip explained the meaning of the passage the man had been reading and went on to declare to him "the good news about Jesus."—Acts 8:30-35.



Just as Philip helped that Ethiopian to understand God's Word long ago, Jehovah's Witnesses help people to understand the Bible today. They would be happy to help you too. Usually, it is best to study the Bible systematically, beginning with basic Scriptural teachings. (Hebrews 6:1) As you progress, you will be able to take in what the apostle Paul called "solid food"—that is, deeper truths. (Hebrews 5:14) Although it is the Bible that you are studying, other publications—Bible study aids—can help you to locate and understand Bible passages on a variety of subjects.

A study can usually be arranged at a time and place that is convenient for you. Some even study over the telephone. The study is not held in a classroom setting; it is a private arrangement tailored to your personal circumstances, including your background and education. You do not have to pay for such a Bible study. (Matthew 10:8) There are no exams, and you will not be made to feel embarrassed. Your questions will be answered, and you will learn how to draw close to God. Why, though, should you study the Bible? Consider some reasons why a study of the Bible can add joy to your life.

## WHY STUDY *the Bible?*

BILL was young, athletic, educated, and financially stable. Yet, he was not content. His life had no direction, and that troubled him deeply. Trying to find a purpose in life, he examined various religions, but he did not find what he was looking for. In 1991 he met one of Jehovah's Witnesses who left him a book that discussed what the Bible says about the meaning of life. A Bible study was arranged so that Bill could address this subject as well as others.

Bill recalls: "We had our first study, and because we referred to the Bible so often, I knew that this was what I had been looking for. The answers in the Bible were very exciting. After that study, I drove up to the mountains, got out of my truck, and cried out loud for sheer joy. I was thrilled that I was finally learning the answers to my questions."

Of course, not everyone who finds Bible truth literally cries out with delight. Yet,



learning the answers to life's important questions is a joyous experience for many. They feel like the man in Jesus' parable who discovered a treasure hidden in a field. Jesus said: "For the joy he has he goes and sells what things he has and buys that field."—Matthew 13:44.

### The Key to a Meaningful Life

Bill had pondered a basic question, What is the purpose of life? Philosophers, theologians, and scientists have struggled with that question for millenniums. Countless volumes have been written by individuals attempting to answer it. Their efforts have been in vain, and many have concluded that the question cannot be answered. Still, there is an answer. Though profound, it is not complicated. It is explained in the Bible. The key to a happy, meaningful life is this: *We must have a proper relationship with Jehovah, our Creator and heavenly Father.* How do we achieve that?

There are two seemingly contradictory aspects of drawing close to God. Those who do so both fear him and love him. Let us consider two scriptures supporting that statement. Long ago, wise King Solomon made a careful study of humankind and recorded his findings in the Bible book of Ecclesiastes. Summing up his observations, he wrote: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: *Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man.*" (Ecclesiastes 12:13) Centuries later, when asked what was the greatest commandment in the Law given to Moses, Jesus responded: "You must *love* Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." (Matthew 22:37) Does it seem odd to you that we should both fear God and love him? Let us examine the importance of fear and love and how they work together to produce a satisfying relationship with God.

### What the Fear of God Means

A respectful fear is fundamental if we are to worship God acceptably. The Bible says: "The fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom." (Psalm 111:10) The apostle Paul wrote: "Let us continue to have undeserved kindness, through which we may acceptably render God sacred service with godly fear and awe." (Hebrews 12:28) Similarly, an angel in mid-heaven seen in vision by the apostle John began his proclamation of good news with the words: "Fear God and give him glory."—Revelation 14:6, 7.

## DRAWING CLOSE TO GOD MEANS THAT WE BOTH LOVE HIM AND FEAR HIM

This fear of God, so essential to a meaningful life, is not the same as morbid dread. We might feel dread if we are threatened by a cruel and dangerous criminal. But fear of God—or godly fear—is awe and profound reverence for the Creator. It also involves healthful fear of displeasing God because he is the Supreme Judge and the Almighty, who has both the power and the authority to punish those who disobey.

### Fear and Love Work Together

Nevertheless, Jehovah does not want people to serve him simply because they are in awe of him. Jehovah is outstandingly a God of love. The apostle John was moved to write: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) Jehovah God has dealt very lovingly with mankind, and he wants people to respond by loving him in return. How, though, is such love compatible with godly fear? The two are actually linked. The psalmist wrote: "The intimacy with

Jehovah belongs to those fearful of him.”  
—Psalm 25:14.

Just think of the feeling of respect and awe that a child has for a strong and wise father. At the same time, such a child will respond to the father’s love. The child will trust the father and look to him for guidance, con-

**Jesus was joyful in the fear of Jehovah**



fident that this guidance will bring benefits. Similarly, if we love and fear Jehovah, we will obey his direction, and this will benefit us. Notice what Jehovah said concerning the Israelites: “If only they would develop this heart of theirs to fear me and to keep all my commandments always, in order that it might go well with them and their sons to time indefinite!”—Deuteronomy 5:29.

Yes, godly fear leads not to bondage but to freedom, not to sadness but to joy. Isaiah prophesied about Jesus: “There will be enjoyment by him in the fear of Jehovah.” (Isaiah 11:3) And the psalmist wrote: “Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah, in whose commandments he has taken very much delight.”—Psalm 112:1.

Obviously, we can neither fear God nor love him if we do not know him. That is why a study of the Bible is so important. Such a study helps us to understand God’s personality and to come to appreciate the wisdom of following his direction. As we draw closer to God, we want to do his will and we are motivated to keep his commandments, knowing that they will benefit us.

—1 John 5:3.

It is a joy to know that one is on the right track in life. This is true of Bill, mentioned at the outset. He recently said: “In the nine years that have passed since my first Bible study, my relationship with Jehovah has grown. The initial outburst of joy that I felt has developed into a truly joyful way of life. I have a consistently positive outlook on life. My days are filled with meaningful activity, not with an aimless search for pleasure. Jehovah has become a real person to me, and I know that he has my best interests at heart.”

In the following article, we will consider further how a knowledge of Jehovah brings joy and benefits to those who apply it in their lives.

# REJOICE IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF JEHOVAH

*"Happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!"—LUKE 11:28.*

**J**EHOVAH loves humans and is deeply interested in their welfare. It is not surprising, therefore, that he communicates with them. This communication began in the garden of Eden. According to Genesis 3:8, on one occasion “about the breezy part of the day,” Adam and Eve “heard the voice of Jehovah God.” Some suggest that this implies that it was Jehovah’s custom to communicate with Adam at this time, possibly every day. Whatever the case, the Bible makes it clear that God had taken time not only to give instructions to the first man but also to teach him what he needed to know in order to carry out his responsibilities.—Genesis 1:28-30.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah gave Adam and Eve life, dominion over the animals, and authority over the entire earth. There was but one prohibition—they were not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. Influenced by Satan, Adam and Eve disobeyed God’s command. (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:1-6) They chose to act independently, deciding for themselves what was right and what was wrong. In so doing, they foolishly cut themselves off from the guidance of their loving Creator. The consequences were disastrous for them and for their unborn offspring. Adam and Eve grew old and eventually died with no hope of a resurrection. Their descendants inherit-

1. When did Jehovah begin to communicate with humans?
2. How did the first couple cut themselves off from the guidance of Jehovah, and with what result?

ed sin and its consequence, death.—Romans 5:12.

<sup>3</sup> Despite the rebellion in Eden, Jehovah continued to communicate with his human creation. Cain, the firstborn son of Adam and Eve, was in danger of being overcome by sin. Jehovah warned him that he was heading for trouble and advised him to “turn to doing good.” Cain rejected this loving counsel and murdered his brother. (Genesis 4:3-8) Thus, the first three humans on earth all spurned the clear direction provided by the one who gave them life, the God who gives instruction to his people so that they might benefit themselves. (Isaiah 48:17) How disappointing this must have been to Jehovah!

## Jehovah Reveals Himself to Men of Old

<sup>4</sup> Though he had every right to cut off communication with humans, Jehovah did not do so. He was confident that some of Adam’s descendants would wisely heed His direction. When pronouncing judgment on Adam and Eve, for example, Jehovah foretold the coming of a “seed” who would stand in opposition to the Serpent, Satan the Devil. In time, Satan would be fatally bruised in the head. (Genesis 3:15) This prophecy was a joyful message of hope to “those hearing the word of God and keeping it.”—Luke 11:28.

3. Why did Jehovah communicate with Cain, and how did Cain respond?
4. Regarding Adam’s descendants, of what was Jehovah confident, and what message of hope did he give with that in mind?

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah communicated his will to faithful patriarchs of old, such as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Job. (Genesis 6:13; Exodus 33:1; Job 38:1-3) Later, through Moses he set out an entire code of laws for the nation of Israel. The Mosaic Law benefited them in many ways. By observing it, Israel was separated from all other nations as God's special people. God assured the Israelites that if they obeyed the Law, he would bless them not only materially but also spiritually, making them into a kingdom of priests, a holy nation. The Law even provided dietary and sanitary regulations that promoted good health. However, Jehovah also warned of the tragic consequences that would result from disobedience.—Exodus 19:5, 6; Deuteronomy 28:1-68.

<sup>6</sup> In time, other inspired books were added to the Bible canon. Historical accounts told of Jehovah's dealings with nations and peoples. Poetic books beautifully described his qualities. Prophetic books foretold the future outworking of Jehovah's will. Faithful men of old carefully studied and applied these inspired writings. One wrote: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway." (Psalm 119:105) To those who were willing to listen, Jehovah provided education and enlightenment.

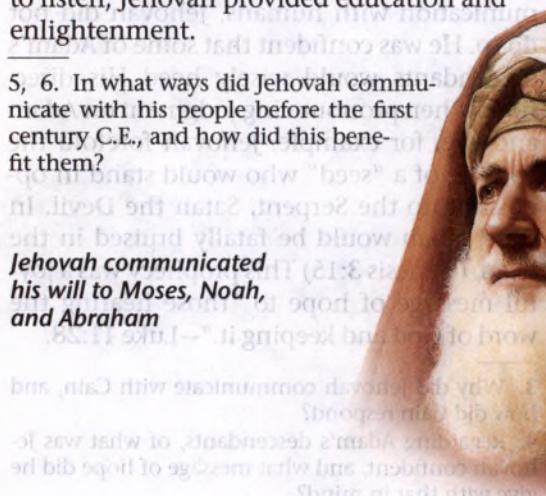
5, 6. In what ways did Jehovah communicate with his people before the first century C.E., and how did this benefit them?

**Jehovah communicated his will to Moses, Noah, and Abraham**

## The Light Becomes Brighter

<sup>7</sup> By the first century, Jewish religious groups had added human traditions to the Law. The Law was misapplied, and instead of being a source of enlightenment, it became burdensome because of those traditions. (Matthew 23:2-4) However, in 29 C.E., Jesus appeared as the Messiah. His mission was not only to give his life in behalf of humankind but also to "bear witness to the truth." Though he performed miracles, he was primarily known as "the Teacher." His teaching was like a light beaming through the spiritual darkness that shrouded the minds of people. Jesus himself rightly said: "I am the light of the world."—John 8:12; 11:28; 18:37.

7. Although Jesus performed miracles, for what was he primarily known, and why?





*In our day,  
Jehovah has shed  
light on his Word*

<sup>8</sup> Later were added the Gospels, four written accounts of Jesus' life, and the book of Acts, a history of the spread of Christianity after Jesus' death. There were also the inspired letters written by Jesus' disciples, as well as the prophetic book of Revelation. These writings, combined with the Hebrew Scriptures, completed the Bible canon. With the help of this inspired library, Christians could "grasp mentally with all the holy ones what is the breadth and length and height and depth" of the truth. (Ephesians 3:14-18) They could have "the mind of Christ." (1 Corinthians 2:16) Nevertheless, those early Christians did not fully understand every aspect of Jehovah's purposes. The apostle Paul wrote to fellow believers: "At present we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror." (1 Corinthians 13:12) Such a mirror would reflect an outline but not all the details. A fuller comprehension of God's Word was yet to come.

<sup>9</sup> Today, we live in an era called "the last days," an era marked by "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) The prophet Daniel foretold that during this time "the

8. What inspired books were written in the first century C.E., and how did they benefit early Christians?

9. What enlightenment has occurred during "the last days"?

true knowledge [would] become abundant." (Daniel 12:4) Hence, Jehovah, the Great Communicator, has helped honesthearted ones to grasp the meaning of his Word. Multitudes of people now understand that Christ Jesus was enthroned in the invisible heavens in 1914. They also know that he will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a global paradise. This important aspect of the Kingdom good news is now being preached throughout the earth.—Matthew 24:14.

<sup>10</sup> Yes, throughout history Jehovah has communicated his will and purpose to people on earth. The Bible record describes many who listened, applied godly wisdom, and were blessed for it. It tells of others who rejected God's loving counsel, following the ruinous course of Adam and Eve. Jesus illustrated this situation when he spoke of two symbolic roads. One leads to destruction. Broad and spacious, it is followed by the many who reject God's Word. The other road leads to everlasting life. Though cramped, it is the path of the few who accept the Bible for what it is, the Word of God, and live in harmony with it.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

### Appreciating What We Have

<sup>11</sup> Are you among those who have chosen the road to life? If so, you will no doubt want to stay on it. How can you do so? Reflect regularly and appreciatively on the blessings that knowing Bible truths has brought to your life. The very fact that you have responded to the good news is evidence of God's blessing. Jesus indicated this when he prayed to his Father in these words: "I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to

10. Throughout the centuries, how have people reacted to Jehovah's counsel?

11. Our knowledge of and belief in the Bible is evidence of what?



***Think of the blessing  
that we have in our  
multiracial brotherhood!***

babes." (Matthew 11:25) Fishermen and tax collectors got the sense of Jesus' teaching, while highly educated religious leaders did not. Jesus further said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) If you have come to know the Bible and you believe and follow its teachings, this is evidence that Jehovah has drawn you. It is reason for rejoicing.

<sup>12</sup> God's Word contains liberating truths and gives enlightenment. Those who live according to Bible knowledge are freed from the superstitions, false teachings, and ignorance that dominate the lives of millions. For example, knowing the truth about the soul frees us from any fear that the dead can harm us or that our dead loved ones are suffering. (Ezekiel 18:4) Knowing the truth about wicked angels helps us avoid the perils of spirit-

ism. The teaching of the resurrection is comforting to those who have lost loved ones in death. (John 11:25) Bible prophecies show us where we are in the stream of time and give us confidence in God's promises for the future. They also reinforce our hope of living forever.

<sup>13</sup> The godly principles in the Bible teach us to live in a way that brings physical benefits. For example, we learn to avoid practices that defile our bodies, such as the misuse of tobacco and other drugs. We shun alcohol abuse. (2 Corinthians 7:1) Heeding God's moral laws serves as a protection from sexually transmitted diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:18) By observing God's counsel to avoid the love of money, we do not destroy our peace of mind, as many have, in the pursuit of riches. (1 Tim-

12. In what ways does the Bible give enlightenment?

13. How does heeding God's Word benefit us physically?

othy 6:10) In what ways have you benefited physically because of applying God's Word in your life?

<sup>14</sup> If we live according to God's Word, we receive Jehovah's holy spirit. We cultivate a Christlike personality, characterized by such appealing qualities as mercy and compassion. (Ephesians 4:24, 32) God's spirit also produces in us its fruitage—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) These qualities promote happy and meaningful relationships with others, including family members. We gain inner strength that helps us to face hardship with courage. Do you discern how the holy spirit has influenced your life for the better?

<sup>15</sup> As we harmonize our lives with God's will, we strengthen our relationship with Jehovah. Our conviction grows that he understands and loves us. We learn through experience that he supports us during difficult times. (Psalm 18:18) We discern that he really listens to our prayers. (Psalm 65:2) We come to rely on his guidance, confident that it will benefit us. And we have the wonderful hope that in due time God will bring his faithful ones to perfection and bestow upon them his gift of everlasting life. (Romans 6:23) "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you," wrote the disciple James. (James 4:8) Have you felt that your relationship with Jehovah has been strengthened as you have drawn close to him?

### A Treasure Beyond Compare

<sup>16</sup> Paul reminded spirit-anointed Christians of the first century that some of them had at one time been fornicators, adulterers, homo-

14. What influence does the holy spirit have on our lives?

15. As we harmonize our lives with God's will, how do we benefit?

16. What changes did some first-century Christians make?

sexuals, thieves, greedy persons, drunkards, revilers, and extortioners. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Bible truth caused them to make major changes; they were "washed clean." Try to imagine what your life would be like without the liberating truths you have learned from the Bible. Surely the truth is a treasure far beyond compare. How happy we are that Jehovah communicates with us!

<sup>17</sup> Further, think of the blessing that we have in our multiracial brotherhood! "The faithful and discreet slave" supplies spiritual food at the proper time, including Bibles, magazines, and other publications in a multitude of languages. (Matthew 24:45-47) At congregation meetings during the year 2000, Jehovah's Witnesses in many lands reviewed highlights from eight major books of the Hebrew Scriptures. They meditated on the lives of 40 Bible characters discussed in *Insight on the Scriptures*. They considered about one fourth of the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived* and almost the entire book *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!* Thirty-six secondary articles were considered from the *Watchtower* magazine in addition to 52 study articles. Furthermore, Jehovah's people were nourished with 12 issues of *Our Kingdom*

17. How have Jehovah's Witnesses been fed spiritually at Christian meetings?

### Do You Remember?

- With whom did Jehovah communicate in pre-Christian times?
- How did spiritual light become brighter in the first century? in modern times?
- What blessings come from living according to the knowledge of Jehovah?
- Why do we rejoice in our knowledge of God?

*Ministry* and weekly public talks on a variety of Bible subjects. What a wealth of spiritual knowledge has been made available!

<sup>18</sup> Throughout the world, over 91,000 congregations provide support and encouragement through meetings and association. We

18. In what ways are we helped within the Christian congregation?

## SHARE IN THE JOY OF GIVING!

*"There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."*—ACTS 20:35.

THE joy of knowing the truth and the resulting blessings are precious gifts from God. Those who have come to know Jehovah have many reasons to rejoice. But while there is joy in receiving a gift, there is also joy in giving one. Jehovah is the Giver of "every good gift and every perfect present," and he is "the happy God." (James 1:17; 1 Timothy 1:11)

He imparts healthful teachings to all who listen, and he delights in the obedience of those whom he teaches, just as parents rejoice when their children respond to loving instruction.

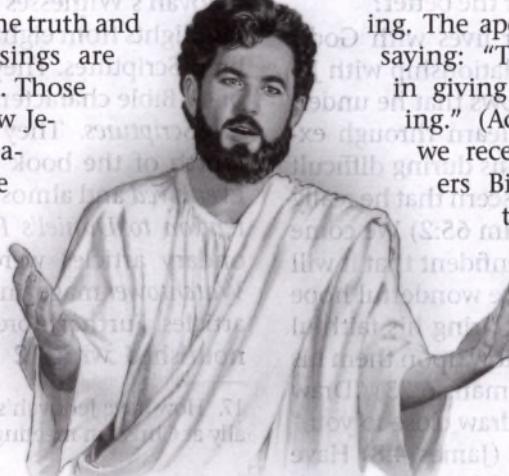
—Proverbs 27:11.

<sup>2</sup> Similarly, when on earth Jesus was happy to see people respond positively to his teach-

1. How does Jehovah demonstrate the joy of giving?

2. (a) What did Jesus say about giving? (b) What happiness do we receive when we teach others Bible truth?

also enjoy the support of mature fellow Christians who are willing to help us spiritually. (Ephesians 4:11-13) Yes, we have greatly benefited by receiving a knowledge of the truth. It is a joy to know and serve Jehovah. How true are the words of the psalmist who wrote: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Psalm 144:15.



ing. The apostle Paul quoted Jesus as saying: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) The happiness we receive when we teach others Bible truth is not simply the satisfaction of having someone agree with our religious beliefs. Far more than that, it is the joy of knowing that we are giving something of genuine and lasting value. By giving spiritually, we can help people to benefit themselves both now and throughout eternity.—1 Timothy 4:8.

### Giving Brings Joy

<sup>3</sup> Yes, just as Jehovah and Jesus rejoice in imparting spiritual gifts, Christians do also. The apostle Paul found joy in the knowledge that he had helped others learn the truth of

3. (a) How did the apostles Paul and John express their joy in helping others spiritually? (b) Why is imparting Bible truth to our children an expression of love?



*When children respond to training, parents experience great joy and satisfaction*



God's Word. To the congregation in Thessalonica, he wrote: "What is our hope or joy or crown of exultation—why, is it not in fact you?—before our Lord Jesus at his presence? You certainly are our glory and joy." (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20) In like manner the apostle John, referring to his spiritual children, wrote: "No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that I should be hearing that my children go on walking in the truth." (3 John 4) Think, too, of the joy there is in aiding our own children to become our spiritual children! Raising children in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" is an expression of love on the part of parents. (Ephesians 6:4) Parents thereby show that they are concerned about their young ones' eternal welfare. When these respond, parents experience great joy and satisfaction.

<sup>4</sup> Dell is a full-time pioneer minister and the mother of five. She says: "I can relate very

4. What experience demonstrates the joy of spiritual giving?

well to the apostle John's words because I am very thankful that four of my children are 'walking in the truth.' I know that it brings honor and glory to Jehovah when families are united in true worship, so I feel deep satisfaction in seeing his blessing on my efforts to instill the truth in my children. The beautiful prospect of endless life in Paradise with my family fills me with hope and motivates me to endure in spite of difficulties and obstacles." Unhappily, one of Dell's daughters was disfellowshipped from the congregation because of pursuing an unchristian course. Still, Dell works hard to maintain a positive attitude. "I hope that one day my daughter will humbly and sincerely return to Jehovah," she says. "But I thank God that most of my children continue to serve him faithfully. The joy that I feel has been a real source of strength to me."—Nehemiah 8:10.

## Making Everlasting Friends

<sup>5</sup> Jesus directed his followers to make Christian disciples and teach them about Jehovah and his requirements. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Both Jehovah and Jesus have unselfishly helped people to learn the way of the truth. So as we give of ourselves in the work of making disciples, we have the satisfaction of knowing that we are imitating the example of Jehovah and of Jesus, as did the early Christians. (1 Corinthians 11:1) When we thus cooperate with Almighty God and his beloved Son, our lives take on real meaning. What a blessing it is to be counted among God's "fellow workers"! (1 Corinthians 3:9) And is it not thrilling that even angels have a part in this activity of preaching the good news?—Revelation 14:6, 7.

<sup>6</sup> In fact, by sharing in this work of spiritual giving, we can become more than fellow workers with God—we can come into an everlasting friendship with him. Because of his faith, Abraham was called Jehovah's friend. (James 2:23) As we strive to do God's will, we too can become God's friends. If we do that, we also become friends of Jesus. He said to his disciples: "I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:15) Many rejoice to be counted friends of influential people or high officials, but we can be counted as friends of the two greatest personalities in all the universe!

<sup>7</sup> Further, when we help people to come to know God, they become our friends too, bringing us special happiness. Joan, who lives in the United States, began to study the Bible with a woman named Thel-

5. As we give of ourselves in the work of making disciples, what knowledge gives us satisfaction?
6. As we share in spiritual giving, who become our friends?
7. (a) How did one woman make a real friend?  
(b) Have you had a similar experience?

ma. Though Thelma encountered family opposition to her study, she persevered and was baptized a year later. Joan wrote: "Our association did not end there; rather, it developed into a friendship that has lasted for about 35 years now. We have often gone in the ministry and to conventions together. Eventually, I moved to a new home 500 miles away. But Thelma continues to send me the most loving and heartwarming letters, telling me that she thinks of me fondly and thanking me for being her friend and example and for teaching her the truth from the Bible. Having such a near and dear friend is a wonderful reward for the effort I made to help her to learn about Jehovah."

<sup>8</sup> The prospect of finding someone who wants to learn the truth can help us endure even if many of the people we meet show little or no interest in Jehovah's Word. Such apathy can present a challenge to our faith and endurance. Yet, a positive attitude will help us. Fausto, who comes from Guatemala, said: "When I witness to others, I think about how great it would be if the person to whom I am speaking were to become a spiritual brother or sister. I reason that at least one person I will meet may eventually embrace the truth of God's Word. That thought keeps me going and brings me real joy."

## Storing Up Treasures in Heaven

<sup>9</sup> Making disciples, whether of our children or of other individuals, is not always easy. It may take time, patience, and perseverance. Remember, though, that many are willing to work hard to store up an abundance of material things, things that usually do not bring them joy and that do not last forever. Jesus told his listeners that it was better to

8. What positive attitude will help us in the ministry?
9. What did Jesus say about treasures in heaven, and what can we learn from this?

work for spiritual things. He said: "Stop storing up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves do not break in and steal." (Matthew 6:19, 20) By pursuing spiritual goals—which include sharing in the important work of disciple making—we can have the satisfaction of knowing that we are doing God's will and that he will reward us. The apostle Paul wrote: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name."—Hebrews 6:10.

<sup>10</sup> If we work diligently to make disciples, we store up for ourselves "treasures in heaven," in harmony with what Jesus said. This brings us the joy of receiving. If we unselfishly give, we end up being enriched ourselves. Jesus himself had faithfully served Jehovah for billions of years. Think of the treasures he had accumulated in heaven! Nevertheless, Jesus did not seek his own interests. The apostle Paul wrote: "[Jesus] gave himself for our sins that he might deliver us from the present

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10. (a) Why did Jesus have spiritual treasures? (b) How did Jesus give of himself, and with what great benefit to others?

*In making disciples,  
we can make real friends*



wicked system of things according to the will of our God and Father." (Galatians 1:4) Not only did Jesus unselfishly give of himself in his ministry but he gave his very life as a ransom so that others might have the opportunity to store up treasures in heaven.

<sup>11</sup> By teaching people about God, we help them see how they too might store up imperishable spiritual treasures. What greater gift could you impart? If you give a friend an expensive watch, a car, or even a home, that friend will likely be grateful and happy, and you will have the joy of giving. But what will be the condition of that gift in 20 years? In 200 years? In 2,000 years? On the other hand, if you give of yourself to help a person serve Jehovah, he or she can benefit from that gift forever.

**Seeking Out Those  
Who Want the Truth**

<sup>12</sup> To share in the joy of spiritual giving, Jehovah's people have reached out to the ends of the earth. Thousands have left home and family to take up missionary service in lands where they have had to adapt to new languages and cultures. Others have moved to areas in their own countries where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers. Still others have learned a foreign language, opening up new opportunities of preaching in their own localities to immigrant populations. For example, after raising two children who are now serving at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, one couple in New Jersey, U.S.A., began pioneering and learned Chinese. Over a three-year period, they conducted Bible studies with 74 Chinese-speaking people who attended a nearby college. Are you able to expand

11. Why are spiritual gifts better than material ones?
12. How have many given of themselves to help others spiritually?



**Jehovah bears us up in old age**  
your ministry in some way in order to find more joy in the disciple-making work?

<sup>13</sup> Perhaps you yearn to conduct a Bible study but have not been able to do so. In some lands it is difficult to find interested ones. Maybe the people you meet show no interest in the Bible. If that is so, perhaps you can mention your desire more often in prayer, knowing that both Jehovah and Jesus Christ are keenly interested in the work and may guide you to a sheeplike person. Seek suggestions from those in your congregation who are more experienced or whose ministry is more fruitful. Take advantage of the training and suggestions given at Christian meetings. Benefit from the counsel of traveling overseers and their wives. Above all, never give up. The wise man wrote: "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success." (Ecclesiastes 11:6) In the meantime, remember such faithful men as Noah and Jeremiah. Although very few responded positively to their preaching, their ministry was a success. Above all, it pleased Jehovah.

13. What might you do if you would like to have a more fruitful ministry?

## Doing the Best You Can

<sup>14</sup> It may be that your circumstances do not permit you to do as much as you would like to in the ministry. For example, old age may limit what you can do in Jehovah's service. Still, remember what the wise man wrote: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31) To Jehovah, a life spent in his service is beautiful. Further, the Scriptures say: "Even to one's old age I [Jehovah] am the same One; and to one's gray-headedness I myself shall keep bearing up. I myself shall certainly act, that I myself may carry and that I myself may bear up and furnish escape." (Isaiah 46:4) Our loving heavenly Father promises to sustain and support his loyal ones.

<sup>15</sup> Perhaps you are coping with sickness, opposition from an unbelieving mate, heavy family responsibilities, or some other difficult problem. Jehovah recognizes our limitations and circumstances, and he loves us for our earnest efforts to serve him. That is true even though what we do may be less than what others do. (Galatians 6:4) Jehovah knows that we are imperfect, and he is realistic in what he expects of us. (Psalm 147:11) If we do our best, we may rest assured that we are precious in

14. How does Jehovah view those who have grown old in his service?

15. Do you believe that Jehovah understands your circumstances? Why?

## Can You Explain?

- How have Jehovah and Jesus set the example in giving spiritually?
- How might we make everlasting friends?
- What steps might we take to make our ministry more successful?
- How can all in the congregation share in the joy of giving?

God's sight and that he will not forget our acts of faith.—Luke 21:1-4.

<sup>16</sup> Remember, too, that the disciple-making work is a group effort. No one individual makes a disciple, any more than one drop of rain nourishes a plant. True, one Witness may locate an interested person and conduct a Bible study. But once that new one comes to the Kingdom Hall, the whole congregation helps him or her to recognize the truth. The warmth of the brotherhood shows the influence of God's spirit. (1 Corinthians 14:24, 25) Children and teenagers give stimulating comments, showing the new person that our young ones are different from the youth of the world. The sick, the infirm, and the elderly in the congregation teach new ones what endurance involves. Regardless of our age or limitations, all of us play an important part in helping new ones as their love of Bible truth deepens and they progress toward baptism. Every hour we spend in the ministry, each return visit, each conversation with an interested person at the Kingdom Hall, may seem insignificant on its own, but it is part of a mighty work that Jehovah is accomplishing.

<sup>17</sup> Of course, besides sharing in the important disciple-making work, we as Christians also share in the joy of giving in other ways. We can set aside funds to contribute to the support of pure worship and to help those in need. (Luke 16:9; 1 Corinthians 16:1, 2) We

16. In what way does an entire congregation share in making a disciple?

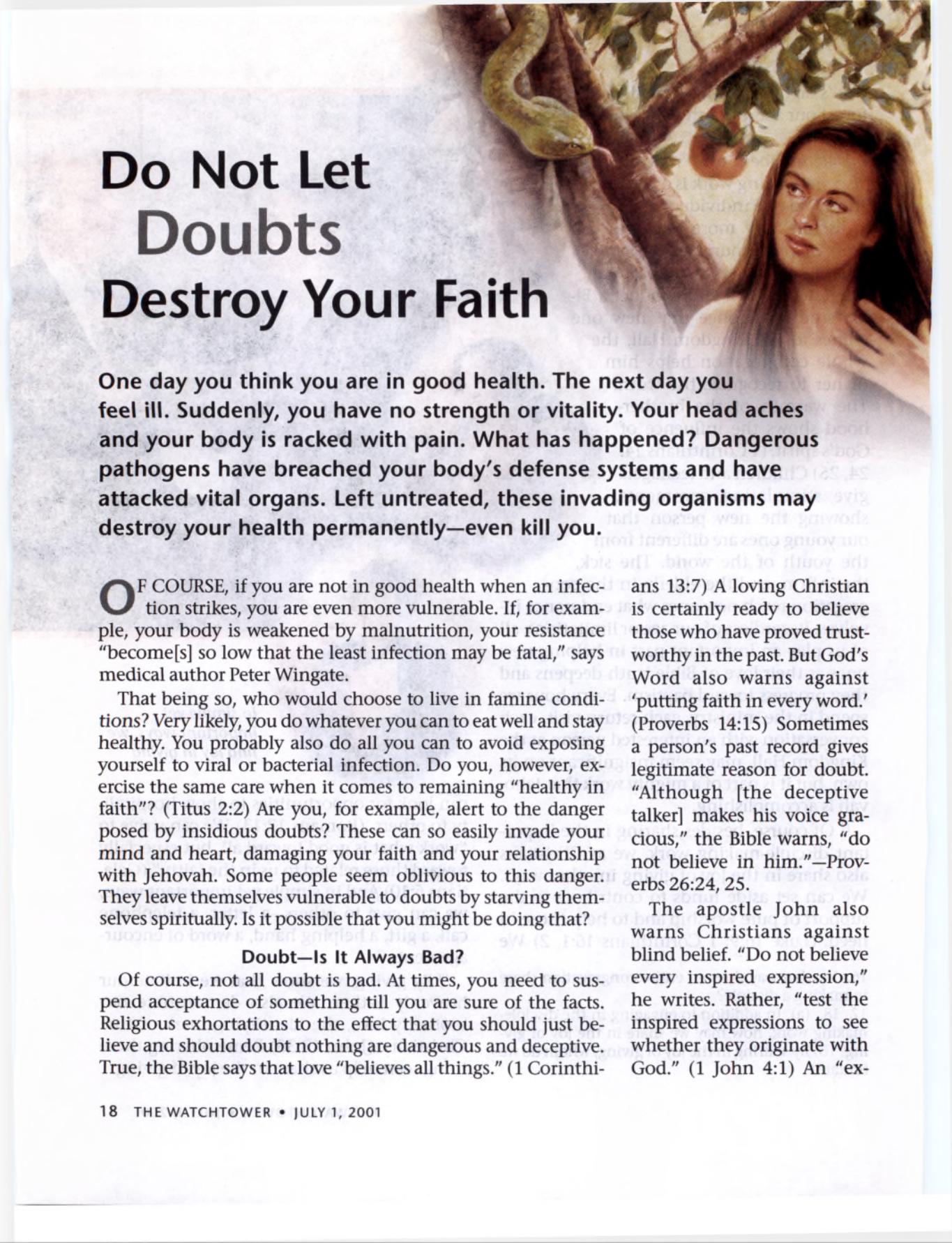
17, 18. (a) In addition to engaging in the disciple-making work, how may we share in the joy of giving? (b) By sharing in the joy of giving, whom do we imitate?



*In simple yet important ways, we find joy in giving*

can look for opportunities to show hospitality to others. (Romans 12:13) We can strive to "work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) And in simple yet important ways, we can give to others—a letter, a telephone call, a gift, a helping hand, a word of encouragement.

<sup>18</sup> By giving, we show that we imitate our heavenly Father. We also demonstrate our brotherly love, the identifying mark of true Christians. (John 13:35) Remembering these things can help us share in the joy of giving.



# Do Not Let Doubts Destroy Your Faith

One day you think you are in good health. The next day you feel ill. Suddenly, you have no strength or vitality. Your head aches and your body is racked with pain. What has happened? Dangerous pathogens have breached your body's defense systems and have attacked vital organs. Left untreated, these invading organisms may destroy your health permanently—even kill you.

OF COURSE, if you are not in good health when an infection strikes, you are even more vulnerable. If, for example, your body is weakened by malnutrition, your resistance "become[s] so low that the least infection may be fatal," says medical author Peter Wingate.

That being so, who would choose to live in famine conditions? Very likely, you do whatever you can to eat well and stay healthy. You probably also do all you can to avoid exposing yourself to viral or bacterial infection. Do you, however, exercise the same care when it comes to remaining "healthy in faith"? (Titus 2:2) Are you, for example, alert to the danger posed by insidious doubts? These can so easily invade your mind and heart, damaging your faith and your relationship with Jehovah. Some people seem oblivious to this danger. They leave themselves vulnerable to doubts by starving themselves spiritually. Is it possible that you might be doing that?

## Doubt—Is It Always Bad?

Of course, not all doubt is bad. At times, you need to suspend acceptance of something till you are sure of the facts. Religious exhortations to the effect that you should just believe and should doubt nothing are dangerous and deceptive. True, the Bible says that love "believes all things." (1 Corinthi-

ans 13:7) A loving Christian is certainly ready to believe those who have proved trustworthy in the past. But God's Word also warns against 'putting faith in every word.' (Proverbs 14:15) Sometimes a person's past record gives legitimate reason for doubt. "Although [the deceptive talker] makes his voice gracious," the Bible warns, "do not believe in him."—Proverbs 26:24, 25.

The apostle John also warns Christians against blind belief. "Do not believe every inspired expression," he writes. Rather, "test the inspired expressions to see whether they originate with God." (1 John 4:1) An "ex-

pression," a teaching or opinion, might appear to emanate from God. But did it really come from him? Exercising some doubt, or suspending belief, can be a real protection because, as the apostle John says, "many deceivers have gone forth into the world."—2 John 7.

### Unfounded Doubts

Yes, an honest, humble examination of the facts to establish the truth is often called for. This, however, is not the same as allowing unfounded, damaging doubts to develop in our mind and heart—doubts that can wreck our firmly established beliefs and relationships. This doubt is defined as an "uncertainty of belief or opinion that often interferes with decision-making." Do you remember how Satan infected Eve's mind with doubts about Jehovah? "Is it really so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?" he asked. (Genesis 3:1) The uncertainty created by that innocent-sounding question interfered with her decision-making. That is typical of Satan's methods. Like the so-called poison-pen letter writer, he is skilled at using innuendo, half-truths, and lies. Satan has destroyed countless wholesome, trusting relationships through insidious doubts planted in that way.—Galatians 5:7-9.

The disciple James clearly understood the damaging effect of this kind of doubt. He writes about the wonderful privilege we have of freely approaching God for help in time of trial. But, James warns, when you do pray to God, "keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all." Doubts in our relationship with God make us "like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about." We become like "an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways." (James 1:6, 8) We develop an uncertainty of belief that leaves us floundering. Then, as happened to Eve, we become vulnerable to all sorts of demonic teachings and philosophies.

### Maintaining Good Spiritual Health

How, then, can we protect ourselves from damaging doubts? The answer is remarkably simple: by firmly rejecting satanic propaganda and fully availing ourselves of God's provisions to make us "solid in the faith."—1 Peter 5:8-10.

Absolutely essential is good personal spiritual feeding. Author Wingate, mentioned earlier, explains: "Even when the body is at rest it needs a continuous supply of energy for chemical processes and for the work of its vital organs; and the materials of many tissues need constant replacement." It is the same with our spiritual health. Without constant spiritual feeding, our faith, like a body deprived of food, will be progressively damaged and will eventually die. Jesus Christ emphasized this when he said: "Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth."—Matthew 4:4.

Think about that. How did we build a strong faith in the first place? "Faith follows the thing heard," writes the apostle Paul. (Romans 10:17) He means that we initially built our faith and confidence in Jehovah, his promises, and his organization by feeding on God's Word. Of course, we did not just blindly believe all that we heard. We did what people living in the city of Beroea did. We 'carefully examined the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so.' (Acts 17:11) We 'proved to ourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God' and made sure that what we had heard was true. (Romans 12:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:21) Since then, we have likely reinforced our faith as we have come to see ever more clearly that God's Word and promises never fail.—Joshua 23:14; Isaiah 55:10, 11.

### Avoid Spiritual Starvation

Now the challenge is to maintain our faith and to avoid any uncertainty of belief that

can weaken our confidence in Jehovah and his organization. To do this we must continue to examine the Scriptures daily. The apostle Paul warns that "in later periods of time some [who may initially seem to have a strong faith] will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons." (1 Timothy 4:1) These misleading utterances and teachings create doubts in the minds of some and alienate them from God. What is our protection? To continue being "nourished with the words of the faith and of the fine teaching which [we] have followed closely."

—1 Timothy 4:6.

Sadly, though, some today choose not to be "nourished with the words of the faith"—even when such nourishment is freely available. As one of the writers of the book of Proverbs indicates, it is possible to be surrounded by good spiritual food, a spiritual banquet, as it were, and still not actually eat and digest the food.—Proverbs 19:24; 26:15.

This is dangerous. Author Wingate says: "As soon as the body begins to consume its own protein its health begins to suffer." When you are starved of food, your body begins to use up fuel reserves stored throughout the body. When these sources are exhausted, the body begins to consume protein that is essential for continued growth and repair of

tissue. Vital organs begin to break down. Your health then quickly deteriorates.

That is what happened in a spiritual sense to some in the early Christian congregation. They tried to live off their spiritual reserves. Likely, they neglected personal study, and they became spiritually weak. (Hebrews 5:12) The apostle Paul explained the danger in doing this when he wrote to Hebrew Christians: "It is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us, that we may never drift away." He knew how easy it would be to drift into bad habits if we "neglected a salvation of such greatness."—Hebrews 2:1, 3.

Interestingly, a person suffering from malnutrition does not necessarily look sickly or thin. Similarly, it may not be immediately obvious that someone is suffering from spiritual starvation. You can have an appearance of spiritual well-being even when you are not being nourished properly—but only for a short time! You will inevitably become weakened spiritually, susceptible to unfounded doubts, and unable to put up a hard fight for the faith. (Jude 3) You know—even if no one else does—the true extent of your personal spiritual feeding.

Hence, keep up your personal study. Fight doubts vigorously. To ignore what appears to be a trivial infection, to do nothing about nagging doubts, may have disastrous consequences. (2 Corinthians 11:3) 'Are we really living in the last days? Can you believe everything the Bible says? Is this truly Jehovah's organization?' Satan would love to plant doubts like these in your mind. Do not let a negligent attitude toward spiritual feeding leave you easy prey to his deceptive teachings. (Colossians 2:4-7) Follow the advice given to Timothy. Be a good student of "the holy writings" so that you can "continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe."—2 Timothy 3:13-15.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Is There Life After Death?

Be Joyful Harvest Workers!

Are You Truly Tolerant?

You may need help to do this. The writer quoted earlier goes on to say: "With severe starvation the digestive organs may be so injured by lack of vitamins and other necessities that they can no longer take up ordinary foods if they are provided. People in this state may need food that requires little digestion for some time." Special care is needed to remedy the effects of starvation on the body. Similarly, someone who has grossly neglected his personal study of the Bible may need much help and encouragement to regain his spiritual appetite. If that is your situation, seek help and gladly accept any assistance offered to rebuild your spiritual health and strength.—James 5:14, 15.

#### Do Not "Waver in a Lack of Faith"

Considering the circumstances of the patriarch Abraham, some may feel that he had legitimate grounds for doubt. It may appear quite reasonable to conclude that he was 'beyond hope of becoming the father of many nations'—despite God's promise. Why? Well, from a purely human point of view, things did not look promising. 'He considered his own body, now already deadened, and also the deadness of the womb of Sarah,' the Bible record says. Still, he resolutely refused to allow doubts about God and his promises to take root in his mind and heart. The apostle Paul writes: "He did not grow weak in faith," or "waver in a lack of faith." Abraham remained "fully convinced that what [God] had promised he was also able to do." (Romans 4:18-21) He had built a strong, personal, trusting relationship with Jehovah over many years. He rejected any doubts that might have weakened that relationship.

You can do the same if you "keep holding the pattern of healthful words"—if you feed yourself well spiritually. (2 Timothy 1:13) Take the danger of doubts seriously. Sa-

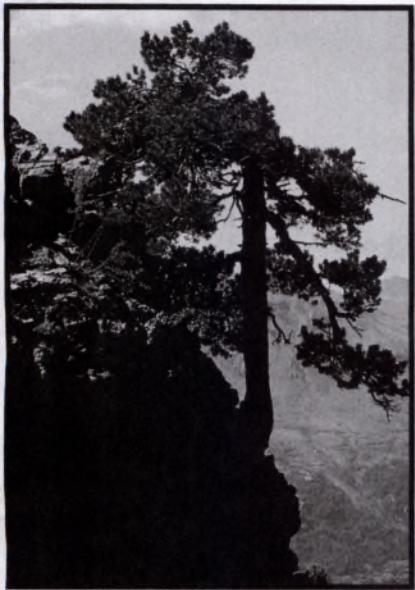
tan engages in what might be called spiritual bacteriologic warfare. If you neglect to take in good spiritual food through personal study of the Bible and through attendance at Christian meetings, you lay yourself wide open to such attacks. Make



*How well do you feed  
yourself spiritually?*

good use of the generous and timely supply of spiritual food provided by "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45) Continue to "assent to healthful words" and remain "healthy in faith." (1 Timothy 6:3; Titus 2:2) Do not allow doubts to destroy your faith.

# TREES THAT STAND *the Test of Time*



A CLIFF MIGHT NOT SEEM TO BE THE IDEAL PLACE TO MAKE YOUR HOME, ESPECIALLY IF IT IS LOCATED HIGH UP IN THE MOUNTAINS. DESPITE THE APPARENT DISADVANTAGES, HOWEVER, SOME ALPINE TREES CLING TENACIOUSLY TO SUCH ROCK FACES, BRAVING THE ICY COLD OF WINTER AND ENDURING THE DROUGHTS OF SUMMER.

**U**SUALLY, these hardy trees are not as majestic as their lowland cousins. Their trunks may be gnarled and twisted and their growth considerably stunted. Some even look like natural bonsai—shaped and pruned by the harsh climate and the scanty soil in which they grow.

Enduring as they do in one of the most inhospitable environments on earth, you might assume that such trees would have a short life span. But the contrary is true. Some claim that Methuselah, a bristlecone pine growing at an elevation of 10,000 feet in the White Mountains of California, is 4,700 years old. *The Guinness Book of Records 1997* cites this specimen as the oldest living tree on the planet. Edmund Schulman, who made a study of these ancient trees, explained: "The bristlecone pine . . . seems to survive because of adversity. All the older individuals [pine trees] in the White Mountains are found near 10,000 feet in a dry, rocky wilderness." Schulman also discovered that the oldest specimens of other pines likewise grew in harsh conditions.

Although they must overcome adversity, these examples of endurance make the most of the two advantages they have. Their lonely location, where vegetation is sparse, protects them against forest fires, one of the biggest threats to mature trees. And their roots anchor them so firmly to the rock face that only an earthquake can shift them.

In the Bible faithful servants of God are compared to trees. (Psalm 1:1-3; Jeremiah 17:7, 8) They too may face adversity because of the circumstances in which they find themselves. Per-

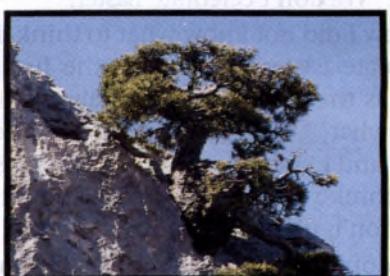


secution, poor health, or grinding poverty can severely test their faith, especially when the trials continue year after year. Nevertheless, their Creator, who designed the trees that withstand adversity so well, assures his worshipers that he will support them. The Bible promises those who stand their ground: "He will make you firm, he will make you strong."—1 Peter 5:9, 10.

'Standing one's ground, remaining steadfast, or persevering' is the thought behind the Greek verb often translated "endure" in the Bible. As with the alpine trees, a good anchorage is the key to endurance. In the case of Christians, they need to be firmly rooted in Jesus Christ in order to stand firm. "As you have accepted Christ Jesus the Lord," Paul wrote, "go on walking in union with him, rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith, just as you were taught, overflowing with faith in thanksgiving."—Colossians 2:6, 7.

Paul appreciated the need for strong spiritual roots. He himself struggled with "a thorn in the flesh," and he endured bitter persecution throughout his ministry. (2 Corinthians 11:23-27; 12:7) But he discovered that in God's strength he could keep going. "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me," he declared.—Philippians 4:13.

As the example of Paul shows, successful Christian endurance does not depend on favorable circumstances. Like alpine trees that successfully weather storms for centuries, we can stand our ground if we are rooted in Christ and depend on the power that God imparts. Furthermore, if we endure to the end, we have the prospect of experiencing for ourselves the realization of another divine promise: "Like the days of a tree will the days of my people be."—Isaiah 65:22; Matthew 24:13.





## WE PUT JEHOVAH TO THE TEST

AS TOLD BY  
**PAUL SCRIBNER**

"Good morning, Mrs. Stackhouse. I'm taking orders for Easter cakes this morning, and I'm sure you would enjoy having one for your family." It was the early spring of 1938, and I was in Atco, New Jersey, U.S.A., talking to one of the best customers on my sales route for the General Baking Company. To my surprise Mrs. Stackhouse turned me down.

**"I DON'T** think I'd be interested," she said.  
"We don't celebrate Easter."

Now I did not know what to think. Did not celebrate Easter? Of course, the first rule of sales is that the customer is always right. So now what? "Well," I ventured, "it's a very nice cake, and I know you like our products. Don't you think your family would enjoy it even if you don't, uh, celebrate Easter?"

"I don't think so," she repeated, "but I have been meaning to talk to you about something, Mr. Scribner, and this might be a good time to do it." That conversation was

to change my life totally! Mrs. Stackhouse, a member of the Berlin, New Jersey, Company (or, congregation) of Jehovah's Witnesses, explained where the Easter celebration originated and gave me three booklets. Their titles were *Safety, Uncovered*, and *Protection*. I went home with the booklets, curious but a little apprehensive. There was something familiar about what Mrs. Stackhouse had said, something from my childhood.

### Early Contact With the Bible Students

I was born on January 31, 1907, and in 1915, when I was eight years old, my father died of

cancer. As a result, Mother and I went to live with her parents in a big house in Malden, Massachusetts. Benjamin Ransom, my maternal uncle, and his wife also lived there, on the third floor. Uncle Ben had been associated with the International Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known, since before the turn of the century. I was very fond of Uncle Ben, but the rest of Mother's family, who were Methodists, thought he was strange. Years later, before she divorced him, his wife succeeded in having him committed briefly to a mental institution because of his religious beliefs! Since the doctors in the hospital quickly found out that there was nothing wrong with Uncle Ben's mind, they released him with apologies.

Uncle Ben took me with him to meetings of the International Bible Students in Boston, especially when there were visiting speakers or special events. One time, the visiting speaker was none other than Charles Taze Russell, who had oversight of the preaching work in those days. Another time, the special occasion was a showing of the "Photo-Drama of Creation." Although that was back in 1915, to this day I clearly remember the depiction of Abraham taking Isaac up to the mountain to offer him as a sacrifice. (Genesis, chapter 22) I can still see Abraham and Isaac trudging up that hill with a load of wood, as Abraham utterly trusted in Jehovah. Since I was a fatherless boy, that impressed me very much.

Then, Uncle Ben and his wife moved to Maine, and Mother remarried and moved us to New Jersey. So I did not see much of Uncle Ben for a long time. During my teenage years in New Jersey, I met Marion Neff, one of eight children in a Presbyterian family that I enjoyed visiting. I spent so many Sunday evenings with that family and their church youth group that I finally became a Presbyterian myself. Still, some of the things I had learned at the meetings of the Bible Students stayed with

me. Marion and I were married in 1928, and our daughters, Doris and Louise, were born in 1935 and 1938. With a toddler and a newborn in the family, we both sensed a need for spiritual direction in raising our family.

### Finding the Truth in Those Booklets

Marion and I were looking for a church to join and came up with a plan. Taking turns each Sunday, one of us stayed home with the children while the other visited a prospective church. One Sunday it was Marion's turn to stay home, but I offered to baby-sit instead so that I could read the booklet *Safety*, the first of the three that had been given to me by Mrs. Stackhouse. Once I started, I could not put it down! I became more and more convinced that I had found something no church could offer. The next week the same thing happened, and I was a willing baby-sitter while I read the second booklet, *Uncovered*. What I was reading seemed to

*With my mother in 1918,  
when I was 11*





**With Louise, Marion, and Doris in 1948  
when the girls were baptized**

be somewhat familiar. Was this what Uncle Ben believed? Our family had felt that his religion was crazy. What would Marion think? I need not have worried. When I came home from work a few days after reading *Uncovered*, Marion surprised me by saying, "I read those booklets you brought home. They are really interesting." That was a relief!

On the back of the booklets was information about the recently released book *Enemies*, a fiery exposé of false religion. We decided to obtain it. Before we could put our request in the mail, however, a Witness knocked on our door and offered us that very book. That did it! We stopped visiting churches and started going to the meetings of the Camden, New Jersey, Company of Jehovah's Witnesses. Just a few months later, on Sunday, July 31, 1938, a group of about 50 of us met on Sister Stackhouse's lawn—at the house where I had been trying to sell Easter cakes—and listened to a recorded talk by Judge Rutherford on baptism. Then we changed clothes in the house, and 19 of us got baptized in a nearby creek.

**Our wedding photo,  
October 1928**



**My daughters (far left and  
far right) and me at Yankee  
Stadium, 1955**

## Determined to Be a Pioneer

Soon after my baptism, one of the sisters in the company told me about people called pioneers, who made the public ministry their principal activity. I was immediately curious and soon got to know a whole family of pioneers. An older man, Brother Konig, his wife, and his grown daughter were all pioneers in a neighboring congregation. As the father of a young family, I was impressed by the deep joy that the Konig family had in the ministry. I often stopped by, parked my bakery truck, and spent time with them in the house-to-house ministry. Soon I wanted to be a pioneer myself. But how? Marion and I had two little children, and my work was demanding. In fact, as World War II began in Europe and more and more young men joined the military in the United States, there was an increasing amount of work for those of us left in civilian jobs. I was being urged to take on more routes, and I knew I could never pioneer with that schedule.

When I spoke to Brother Konig about my desire to pioneer, he said: "Just keep working hard in Jehovah's service, and keep your goal before him in prayer. He will help you reach it." For over a year, I kept doing just that. I often reflected on such scriptures as Matthew 6:8, which assures us that Jehovah knows our needs before we even ask him. And I kept trying to follow the counsel of Matthew 6:33, to keep on seeking first God's Kingdom and his righteousness. I was also encouraged by Brother Melvin Winchester, a zone servant (now called circuit overseer).

I spoke to Marion about my goals. We talked about the words of Malachi 3:10, which encourage us to put Jehovah to the test and see if he will not pour out a blessing on us. I was encouraged by her response: "If you want to pioneer, don't hold back on my account. I can take care of the girls while you pioneer. We don't need a lot materially anyway." After 12 years of marriage, I already

knew that Marion was a frugal and meticulous housewife. Over the years, she has been a wonderful pioneer partner, and one of the secrets of our success in some 60 years of full-time service has been her ability to be satisfied with a little and make it seem like a lot.

By the summer of 1941, after many months of prayerful planning, Marion and I had saved some money, and we purchased an 18-foot travel trailer that our family could live in. I quit my job and became a regular pioneer in July 1941, and I have been in the full-time service ever since. My first assignment was ten stops on Route 50 between New Jersey and St. Louis, Missouri, where our convention was to be held in early August. I was sent the names and addresses of brothers along the way, and I wrote ahead, telling them when to expect me. When we got to the convention, I was to find the pioneer desk and get another assignment.

## "I'm Going to Put Jehovah to the Test"

We loaded up our little travel trailer with literature and went to our last meeting in Camden to say good-bye to the brothers. With two very small girls to take care of and no destination in sight beyond the convention, our plans must have seemed unrealistic to some of the brothers, and several of them said: "You'll be back before long." I remember saying: "Well, I'm not saying that I won't. Jehovah said that he would take care of me, and I'm going to put Jehovah to the test."

After six decades of pioneering in 20 towns from Massachusetts to Mississippi, we can say that Jehovah has more than kept his promise. The blessings that he has poured out on Marion, me, and our two daughters are beyond anything I could have hoped for back in 1941. They include having our daughters serve as faithful pioneers in nearby congregations, and (at last count) having some one hundred spiritual sons and daughters scattered all over the East Coast of the United States. I

have studied with 52 persons who have dedicated their lives to Jehovah God and Marion with 48.

In August 1941, we got to St. Louis, and there I met Brother T. J. Sullivan from Bethel. He had my ordination letter, which I needed because of the war looming and the draft. I told Brother Sullivan that my wife was spending as much time as I was in the ministry and that she would like to pioneer with me. Even though the pioneer desk at the convention was not set up yet, Brother Sullivan on the spot signed Marion up as a pioneer and asked us: "Where are you going to pioneer after the convention?" We did not know. "Well, don't worry," he said: "You'll meet someone at the convention from an area that needs pioneers, and things will work out. Just write to us and tell us where you are, and we'll assign you." That is what happened. It turned out that Brother Jack DeWitt, a former zone servant, knew some people in New Market, Virginia, who had a pioneer home that needed a few more pioneers. So after the convention, we headed for New Market.

In New Market we had a special treat. Who should come down from Philadelphia to join us in the pioneer work but Benjamin Ransom! Yes, Uncle Ben. What a joy it was to work with him in the house-to-house ministry more than 25 years after he had planted those seeds of truth in my heart back in Boston! Despite having faced years of indifference, ridicule, and even persecution from the family, Uncle Ben had never lost his love for Jehovah and the ministry.

We enjoyed an eight-month stint at the pioneer home in New Market. During that time, we learned, among other things, how to exchange chickens and eggs for literature. Then Uncle Ben, Marion, and I, along with three others, were assigned to serve as special pioneers in Hanover, Pennsylvania—the first of six assignments we would have in Pennsylvania from 1942 to 1945.

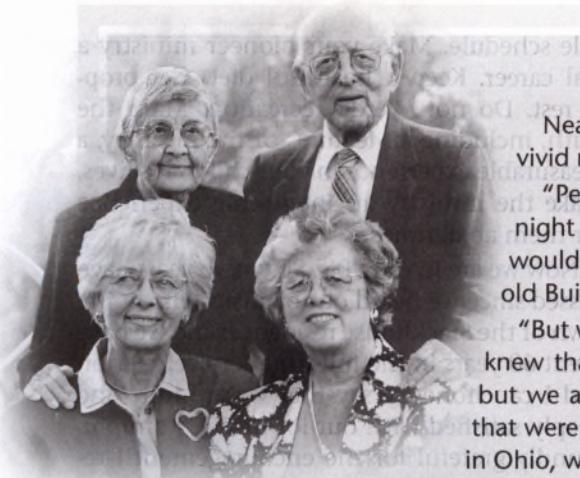
### Special Pioneers During World War II

There were times during World War II when we had to deal with hostility because of our neutral position, but Jehovah never failed to support us. One time in Provincetown, Massachusetts, our old Buick broke down, and I had to walk a couple of miles through a very hostile Catholic neighborhood to make a return visit. I passed by a group of young hooligans who recognized me and began shouting. I hurried along with rocks whizzing by my ears, hoping the youths were not chasing me. I made it to the house of the interested person without being hurt. But the householder, a respected member of the American Legion, apologized, saying: "I can't entertain you tonight because I forgot that we're going downtown to a movie." My heart sank as I remembered that pack of rock throwers on the corner, waiting for me to return. However, I cheered up when the gentleman added: "Why don't you just walk along with us? We can talk on the way." So I got to give him a witness, and I safely passed the trouble spot.

### Balancing Family and Ministry

After the war, we had several assignments in Virginia, including an eight-year stay as special and regular pioneers in Charlottesville. By 1956 the girls were grown up and had married, and Marion and I were on the move again, serving as pioneers in Harrisonburg, Virginia, and as special pioneers in Lincolnton, North Carolina.

In 1966, I was assigned to the circuit work, traveling from congregation to congregation and encouraging the brothers, much as Brother Winchester had encouraged me back in New Jersey in the '30's. For two years I served a circuit of congregations in Tennessee. Then Marion and I were asked to return to our greatest love, which is special pioneering. From 1968 to 1977, we served as special pioneers in the Deep South, across Georgia and Mississippi.



## MEMORIES FROM THE WAR YEARS

Nearly 60 years after the war, the whole family has vivid memories of those years.

"Pennsylvania could be *cold*," recalls Doris. "One night it was 30 below." Louise adds, "Doris and I would sit on each other's feet in the back seat of our old Buick to keep our feet from getting cold."

"But we never felt poor or deprived," says Doris. "We knew that we moved around more than most people, but we always ate well, and we had wonderful clothes that were passed on to us almost new from some friends in Ohio, who had girls just a little older than we were."

"Mom and Dad always made us feel loved and appreciated," Louise points out, "and we got to spend a lot of time with them in the ministry. It made us feel special and very close to them."

"I had a 1936 Buick Special," recalls Paul, "and those cars were famous for snapping axles. I think the engine was just too powerful for the rest of the car. It seemed that it always happened on the coldest night of the month, and then I'd be off to the junkyard for another axle. I got to be an expert at replacing them."

"Don't forget the ration cards," says Marion. "Everything was rationed—meat, gasoline, tires for the car, everything. Every time we got to a new assignment, we'd have to go before the local board and apply for a ration card. It could take months to get one, and it seemed that every time we finally received our card, we would be sent to the next assignment, and we'd have to start over again. But Jehovah always took care of us."

*Marion and me  
with Doris (left) and  
Louise, 2000*

In Eastman, Georgia, I was assigned as congregation overseer (now called presiding overseer) to replace Powell Kirkland, a dear, older brother who served many years as a circuit overseer but who was in failing health. He was wonderfully appreciative and supportive. His support was vital because there was some dissension in the congregation and a few prominent ones were involved. The issue became heated, and I spent a lot of time in prayer to Jehovah. Scriptures like Proverbs 3:5, 6 came to mind: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and

he himself will make your paths straight." By working hard to keep the lines of communication open, we were able to unify the congregation with good results for all.

By 1977 we had begun to feel our age a little, and we were reassigned to the Charlottesville area, where both our daughters were living with their families. For the last 23 years, it has been our joy to work in this area, helping to start the Ruckersville, Virginia, congregation and seeing the children and grandchildren of our early Bible students grow up to become congregation elders, pioneers, and Bethelites. Marion and I are still able to keep

up a good field service schedule, and I am privileged to serve actively as an elder in the East Congregation of Charlottesville, conducting a book study and giving public talks.

Over the years, we have experienced problems, as everyone does. For example, despite our efforts, Doris became spiritually weak for a time in her late teens and married a man who was not a Witness. But she never completely lost her love for Jehovah, and her son Bill has been serving for 15 years at Bethel in Wallkill, New York. Doris and Louise are both widowed now, but they serve joyfully nearby as regular pioneers.

### Lessons Learned Over the Years

I have learned to apply a few simple rules for success in serving Jehovah: Keep your life simple. Be an example in all your dealings, including in your private life. Apply the direction of "the faithful and discreet slave" in all things.  
—Matthew 24:45.

Marion has developed a short but effective list of suggestions for successful pioneering while raising children: Make and keep a work-

able schedule. Make your pioneer ministry a real career. Keep a healthful diet. Get proper rest. Do not overdo recreation. Make the truth, including all features of the ministry, a pleasurable experience in your children's lives. Make the ministry an interesting experience for them at all times.

Now we are in our 90's. Sixty-two years have passed since we heard our baptism talk on the lawn of the Stackhouse residence, and we have spent 60 years in the full-time service. Marion and I can honestly say that we are fully and deeply satisfied with our lot in life. I am profoundly grateful for the encouragement I received as a young father to put spiritual goals first and to keep working toward them, and I am grateful to my dear wife, Marion, and to the girls for their support over the years. While we do not have material riches, I often apply Ecclesiastes 2:25 to myself: "Who eats and who drinks better than I do?"

Truly, in our case Jehovah has superabundantly fulfilled his promise found at Malachi 3:10. He has, indeed, 'emptied out upon us a blessing until there is no more want'!

## ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 6, 2001

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 6, 2001, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:15 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the

Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

# He "Endured to the End"

IN A 1993 video presentation that is shown to new members of the headquarters staff of Jehovah's Witnesses, Lyman Alexander Swingle expressed his feelings about serving Jehovah: "Die with your boots on!"\*

Ninety-year-old Brother Swingle did just what he had encouraged others to do. He "endured to the end." (Matthew 24:13) Although suffering physically, on Wednesday, March 7, he attended a meeting of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses of which he was a member. The following Tuesday his condition worsened, and at 4:26 a.m., March 14, he was pronounced dead by his doctor.

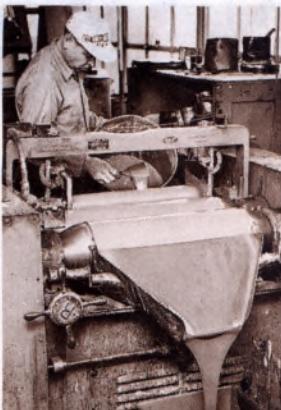
Lyman Swingle began his service at Jehovah's Witnesses' world headquarters in Brooklyn, New York, on April 5, 1930. He served there for nearly 71 years. Lyman was first assigned to the bindery, then to the pressroom, and he also helped make ink. In fact, Brother Swingle spent about 25 years in the ink room. He also served for some 20 years as a member of the headquarters' writing staff. For the final 17 years of his life, he worked in the Treasurer's Office.

Lyman was a bold proclaimer of God's Kingdom. In his early years in Brooklyn, he and his

\* This means to die while still actively engaged in one's work.



*Brother Swingle served some 25 years in the ink room*



roommate, Arthur Worsley, used to sail one of the Witnesses' boats up the Hudson River. Using amplifying equipment, they passed many weekends broadcasting the Kingdom message to onshore communities.

Brother Swingle was born on November 6, 1910, in Lincoln, Nebraska, but soon afterward the family moved to Salt Lake City, Utah. There, in 1913, his parents became Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. Over the years,

the Swingle household entertained many visiting speakers from the Witnesses' Brooklyn headquarters, and these men had a positive influence on Lyman. In 1923, at 12 years of age, he was baptized in symbol of his dedication to God.

After serving for more than 26 years in Brooklyn as a single man, Lyman's life was immeasurably enriched when he married Crystal Zircher on June 8, 1956. They were inseparable, sharing in the ministry together until Crystal's death in 1998. About three years earlier, Crystal had suffered a stroke that had left her badly disabled. Lyman's daily involvement in her care was an example of devotion that was inspiring to all, especially to those who saw Lyman lovingly pushing the wheelchair on the sidewalks of the neighborhood as Crystal presented *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* to passersby.

Brother Swingle was a frank, warmhearted man who endeared himself to those who came to know him. Like his father and mother, he entertained the Bible-based hope of living with Jesus Christ in the heavenly Kingdom, a hope that we are confident he has now realized.—1 Thessalonians 4:15-18; Revelation 14:13.

*Lyman and Crystal were inseparable*

# LASTING IMPRESSIONS

ACH year, Jehovah's Witnesses in their respective countries get together at Christian assemblies and conventions. They do this to enjoy spiritually upbuilding instruction and association. But other aspects of their gatherings can also leave a lasting impression on visitors.

In July 1999, for example, thousands of Witnesses in Mozambique assembled for three enriching days at the "God's Prophetic Word" District Conventions. Many of those present were attending a convention for the first time. They were impressed not only with the words they heard from the platform but also with what they saw around them.

One comment made at the Maputo Assembly Hall was: "I have never seen such a beautiful place as this in all my life! The bathrooms had soap and mirrors, and they even smelled clean. There were peaceful surroundings without the noise of children fighting. And no pushing! I saw happy, young people engaging in encouraging conversations. I was also impressed by the way everyone was so well dressed. Next time, I will bring my children and convince my husband that we must attend this convention."

Yes, the honesty, integrity, and physical cleanliness of Jehovah's Witnesses do not go unnoticed. Why are the Witnesses different? Because they truly try to apply what they learn from the Bible. Why not assemble with them this year at their national conventions or at their weekly meetings at a local Kingdom Hall and see for yourself?



ZAMBIA



KENYA



MOZAMBIQUE