

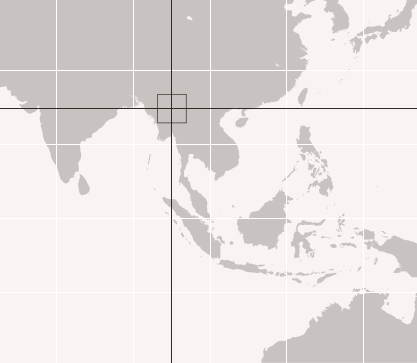
DECEMBER 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 4–MARCH 3, 2019



COVER IMAGE:
MYANMAR

Two sisters find many with whom they can share the good news at a market in Taunggyi

PUBLISHERS

4,296

BIBLE STUDIES

4,329

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2017)

8,659

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“See You in Paradise!”

“You will be with me in Paradise.”—LUKE 23:43.

IT WAS a very emotional scene. As foreign delegates left the stadium after a convention in Seoul, Korea, local Witnesses crowded around. Many of them waved, calling out, “See you in Paradise!” What paradise do you think they meant?

² Paradise means different things to different people. Some say that paradise is a fantasy. Others say that paradise is wherever they find joy and satisfaction. A starving man sitting at a banquet might feel that he is in paradise. On seeing a glen full of wildflowers, a 19th-century visitor cried out, “Oh, what a paradise!” That site is still named Paradise, though it receives over 50 feet (15 m) of snow yearly. What does Paradise mean to you? Do you hope for it?

³ The Bible speaks of both a paradise that once existed and a paradise still ahead. The idea of Paradise arises early in the Bible. In the Catholic *Douay Version*, which was translated from Latin, Genesis 2:8 reads: “The Lord God had planted a *paradise of pleasure* from the beginning: wherein he placed [Adam] whom he had formed.” (Italics ours.) The Hebrew text speaks of the garden of Eden. Eden means “Pleasure,”

- 1, 2. What are some differing ideas about paradise?
3. How does the Bible get us thinking about a paradise?

SONGS: 145, 139

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did God’s dealings with Abraham suggest a future paradise?

Regarding prophecies in Isaiah, what suggests that there will yet be a greater fulfillment?

What indicates that Jesus and the criminal next to him did not go to Paradise on the day that they died?

and that garden was indeed pleasant. There was ample food, beautiful scenery, and delightful interaction with many animals.—Gen. 1:29-31.

⁴ *Pa-ra'dei-sos* is the Greek term that translates the Hebrew word for “garden.” The *Cyclopaedia* by M’Clintock and Strong says about *pa-ra'dei-sos*: “A wide, open park, enclosed against injury, yet with its natural beauty unspoiled, with stately forest-trees, many of them bearing fruit, watered by clear streams, on whose banks roved large herds of antelopes or sheep—this was the scenery which connected itself in the mind of the Greek traveller.”—Compare Genesis 2:15, 16.

⁵ God put Adam and Eve in such a paradise, but they did not remain in it. Why? They disqualified themselves by disobeying God. Thus, Paradise was lost for them and their offspring. (Gen. 3:23, 24) Though without human occupants, that garden apparently remained until the Deluge of Noah’s day.

⁶ Some may wonder, ‘Will any man, woman, or child ever be able to enjoy Paradise on earth?’ What do the facts show? If you hope to live with your loved ones in Paradise, do you have a valid basis for your hope? Could you explain why Paradise is sure to come?

INDICATIONS OF PARADISE TO COME

⁷ The logical place to find answers is in the book inspired by the Creator of the

4. Why can we refer to the garden of Eden as a paradise?

5, 6. How was Paradise lost, leading to what question?

7, 8. (a) God made what promise to Abraham? (b) God’s promise might have led Abraham to think of what?

original Paradise. Consider what God told his friend Abraham. God said that he would multiply Abraham’s offspring “like the grains of sand on the seashore.” And Jehovah made this meaningful promise: “By means of your offspring *all nations of the earth* will obtain a blessing for themselves because you have listened to my voice.” (Gen. 22:17, 18) God repeated that basic promise to Abraham’s son and grandson.—**Read Genesis 26:4; 28:14.**

⁸ There is no indication in the Bible that Abraham thought that humans would get a final reward in a heavenly paradise. So when God spoke of “all nations of the earth” as being blessed, Abraham would reasonably think of blessings *on earth*. The promise was from God, so it suggested better conditions for “all nations of the earth.” Did further developments among God’s people support such thinking?

⁹ David, one of Abraham’s descendants, pointed to a future time when “evil men” and “wrongdoers” would pass away. The result? “The wicked will be no more.” (Ps. 37:1, 2, 10) Instead, “the meek will possess the earth, and they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” David was also inspired to predict: “The righteous will possess the earth, and *they will live forever* on it.” (Ps. 37:11, 29; 2 Sam. 23:2) What effect do you think those assurances had on people who wanted to do God’s will? They would have a basis for expecting that if only righteous people were living on earth, in time a paradise like the garden of Eden would be restored.

¹⁰ Over time, most Israelites claiming

9, 10. What later promises provided a basis for expecting coming blessings?

to serve Jehovah turned their backs on him and on true worship. So God let the Babylonians conquer his people, ruin their land, and carry many of them into exile. (2 Chron. 36:15-21; Jer. 4:22-27) Still, God's prophets foretold that after 70 years, his people would return to their homeland. Those prophecies were fulfilled. But they also have meaning for us. As we consider some of them, bear in mind our focus—a coming paradise on earth.

¹¹ **Read Isaiah 11:6-9.** God foretold through Isaiah that after His people returned to their homeland, they would not have to struggle against harsh, dangerous elements; nor would they need to fear attacks from animals or beastlike men. Young and old would be safe. Does that not bring to your mind conditions such as those God provided in the garden of Eden? (Isa. 51:3) That prophecy through Isaiah also said that the *whole earth*—not just the nation of Israel—would “be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters cover the sea.” When will that happen?

¹² **Read Isaiah 35:5-10.** Isaiah further emphasized that the returnees would not be threatened by animals or humans. Their land would produce abundant fruit, made possible by an ample supply of water, even as the garden of Eden was well-watered. (Gen. 2:10-14; Jer. 31:12) Would that be the only fulfillment? There is no evidence that those returning from exile were miraculously cured. For example, the blind did not re-

gain their sight. So God was indicating that literal healings would yet occur.

¹³ **Read Isaiah 65:21-23.** The Jews did not return to comfortable houses; nor did they find cultivated fields and vineyards. But that would change as God blessed them. What a joy for them to build houses and live in them! They could plant crops and enjoy the healthful fruitage.

¹⁴ Notice an important detail of that prophecy. Will the time come when our days “will be like the days of a tree”? Some trees live thousands of years. Humans would have to be healthy in order to have lifespans of such length. If they could live in the conditions that Isaiah foretold, it would be a dream come true, a paradise! And that prophecy will be fulfilled!

¹⁵ Reflect on how the promises just discussed point to a future paradise: People of the whole earth will be blessed by God. No one will face danger from animals or beastlike humans. The blind, deaf, and lame will be cured. People will be able to build their own homes and enjoy growing wholesome food. They will live longer than trees. Yes, we find indications in the Bible that such a future is ahead. Still, some might claim that we are reading more into those prophecies than is justified. How would you answer? What solid reason do you have to look forward to a real paradise on earth? The greatest man who ever lived provided a solid reason.

11. Isaiah 11:6-9 had what fulfillment, but what question remains?

12. (a) Those returning from exile in Babylon experienced what blessings? (b) What indicates that Isaiah 35:5-10 has another fulfillment?

13, 14. How did former exiles see the fulfillment of Isaiah 65:21-23, but what part of that prophecy yet needs fulfillment? (See opening picture.)

15. How would you summarize some of the blessings mentioned in the book of Isaiah?

YOU WILL BE IN PARADISE!

¹⁶ Though he was innocent, Jesus was condemned and hung on a stake to die, with a Jewish criminal on each side of him. Before dying, one of them acknowledged that Jesus was a king and made the request: “Jesus, remember me when you get into your Kingdom.” (Luke 23:39-42) Your future is involved in Jesus’ reply, found at Luke 23:43. Some modern scholars give this word-for-word rendering: “Truly I say to you, today with me you will be in Paradise.” Note the word “today.” What was Jesus indicating? There are different views.

¹⁷ In many modern languages, commas are used to convey or clarify the meaning of a sentence. But in the earliest available Greek manuscripts, punctuation was not consistently used. Thus, the question arises: Was Jesus saying, “I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise”? Or was he saying, “I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise”? Translators may insert a comma according to what they think that Jesus meant, and you can find either rendering in common Bible versions.

¹⁸ However, recall that Jesus had earlier told his followers: “The Son of man will be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.” He also said: “The Son of man is going to be betrayed into men’s hands, and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised up.” (Matt. 12:40; 16:21; 17:22, 23; Mark 10:34) The apostle Peter reports that this happened. (Acts 10:39, 40) So Jesus did not go to any Paradise on the day he

and that criminal died. Jesus was “in the Grave [or “Hades”]” for days, until God resurrected him.—Acts 2:31, 32; ftn.*

¹⁹ We can thus see that Jesus’ promise to the criminal was introduced with the words: “Truly I say to you today.” That manner of expression was common even in Moses’ time. He said: “These words that I am commanding you today must be on your heart.”—Deut. 6:6; 7:11; 8:1, 19; 30:15.

²⁰ A Bible translator from the Middle East said of Jesus’ reply: “The emphasis in this text is on the word ‘today’ and should read, ‘Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise.’ The promise was made on that day and it was to be fulfilled later. This is a characteristic of Oriental speech implying that the promise was made on a certain day and would surely be kept.” Accordingly, a fifth-century Syriac version renders Jesus’ reply: “Amen, I say to thee to-day that with me thou shalt be in the Garden of Eden.” We should all be encouraged by that promise.

²¹ That dying criminal did not know that Jesus had made a covenant with his faithful apostles to be with him in the heavenly Kingdom. (Luke 22:29) Furthermore, that criminal had not even been baptized. (John 3:3-6, 12) We can

* Professor C. Marvin Pate wrote: “Traditionally, the word ‘today’ has been understood to be a chronological reference to a twenty-four-hour period. The difficulty with this view is its apparent conflict with biblical teaching elsewhere which suggests that Jesus first ‘descended’ to hades after His death (Matt. 12:40; Acts 2:31; Rom. 10:7) and then afterward ascended to heaven.”

16, 17. In what situation did Jesus speak about Paradise?

18, 19. How can we reason on what Jesus must have meant?

20. What supports our understanding of what Jesus said?

21. What did not happen to the criminal, and why?

How would the promise that Jesus made about Paradise be fulfilled?
(See paragraphs 15, 16)



thus understand that what Jesus promised must be an *earthly* paradise. Years later, the apostle Paul related a vision of a man “caught away into paradise.” (2 Cor. 12:1-4) Unlike the dying criminal, Paul and the other faithful apostles were selected to go to heaven to share with Jesus in the Kingdom. Still, Paul was pointing to something to come in the future—a future “paradise.”* Would that involve the earth? And can you be there?

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT

²² Bear in mind that David foresaw the time when “the *righteous* will possess the earth.” (Ps. 37:29; 2 Pet. 3:13) David was referring to a time when people on earth would live according to God’s righteous ways. The prophecy at Isaiah 65:22 says: “The days of my people will be like the

days of a tree.” This implies that people will live for thousands of years. Can you expect that? Yes, for according to Revelation 21:1-4, God will turn his attention to mankind, and one of the promised blessings is that “death will be no more” for people serving God in his righteous new world.

²³ The picture is thus clear. Adam and Eve lost Paradise back in Eden, but it was not lost forever. As God promised, people on earth are yet to be blessed. Under inspiration, David said that the meek and righteous will inherit the earth and live on it forever. The prophecies in the book of Isaiah should whet our appetite for the delightful conditions that will prevail. When? When Jesus’ promise to the Jewish criminal comes to pass. You can be in that Paradise. At that time, the exclamation made to those delegates in Korea will be realized: “See you in Paradise!”

* See “Questions From Readers” in this issue.

22, 23. What can you hope for?

In what sense was the apostle Paul “caught away to the third heaven” and “into paradise”?—2 Cor. 12:2-4.

■ At 2 Corinthians 12:2, 3, Paul refers to a certain man who was “caught away to the third heaven.” Who was that? Writing to the Corinthian congregation, Paul stressed that God was using him as an apostle. (2 Cor. 11:5, 23) He then mentioned “visions and revelations of the Lord.” Paul did not in that context mention other brothers. Thus, he was logically referring to himself as being the man who had received visions and revelations.—2 Cor. 12:1, 5.

So Paul was the one who was “caught away to the third heaven” and “caught away into paradise.” (2 Cor. 12:2-4) He used the term “revelations,” which suggests a revealing of what will exist in the future.

What did Paul see as “the third heaven”?

In the Bible, “heaven” can refer to the physical heavens. (Gen. 11:4; 27:28; Matt. 6:26) But “heaven” is also used in other senses. Sometimes it refers to human rulership. (Dan. 4:20-22) Or it can refer to divine rulership, such as through the Kingdom of God.—Rev. 21:1.

Paul saw “*the third heaven*.” What was the point? The Bible occasionally repeats something three times for emphasis, to show intensity, or to imply added strength. (Isa. 6:3; Ezek. 21:27; Rev. 4:8) It seems that in speaking of “*the third heaven*,” Paul was stressing a superlative, an exalted, form of rul-

ership—the Messianic Kingdom by Jesus Christ and his 144,000 corulers. (See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Vol. 1, pp. 1059, 1062.) As the apostle Peter wrote, we are awaiting the “new heavens” according to God’s promise.—2 Pet. 3:13.

What about Paul’s mention of “paradise”?

The word “paradise” likewise can mean various things: (1) In view of man’s original home, “paradise” can logically refer to the literal earthly Paradise that is ahead. (2) It can refer to the spiritual condition that God’s people will enjoy in the new world. (3) Additionally, it can refer to the blessed conditions in heaven, “the paradise of God” mentioned at Revelation 2:7.—See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2015, p. 8. par. 8.

It is possible that Paul was alluding to all three of those aspects at 2 Corinthians 12:4 when describing his experience.

To summarize:

“The third heaven” mentioned at 2 Corinthians 12:2 is likely the Messianic Kingdom in the hands of Jesus Christ and the 144,000, the “new heavens.”—2 Pet. 3:13.

It is “the third heaven” because the Kingdom is a superlative, an elevated, form of rulership.

The “paradise” into which Paul was “caught away” in vision likely refers to (1) the physical Paradise to come on earth, (2) the spiritual paradise that will exist then, which will be more extensive than the spiritual paradise that exists now, and (3) “the paradise of God” in heaven that will coexist in the new world.

Accordingly, the new world will be a combination of the new heavens and the new earth. It will be a new arrangement, including both the heavenly Kingdom government and mankind serving Jehovah on a paradise earth.



Have you carefully read the recent issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

What Scriptural evidence is there that God has empathy for us?

When the ancient Israelites were slaves in Egypt, God was aware of their distress and felt their pain. (Ex. 3:7; Isa. 63:9) We are made in God's image, and we can have empathy. He has empathy for us even when we might feel unworthy of his love.—*wp18.3*, pp. 8-9.

How did Jesus' teachings help people conquer prejudice?

Many Jews in Jesus' time had prejudices. Christ stressed the need for humility and condemned racial pride. He urged his followers to view one another as brothers.—*w18.06*, pp. 9-10.

What do we learn from why God did not allow Moses to enter the Promised Land?

Moses had a close relationship with Jehovah. (Deut. 34:10) Near the end of the 40 years in the wilderness, the people complained a second time about a lack of water. God told Moses to speak to the crag. Instead, Moses struck the crag. Jehovah may have been indignant that Moses did not follow His instructions or that Moses did not give glory to God for the miracle. (Num. 20:6-12) This should

teach us the importance of obeying Jehovah and bringing him glory.—*w18.07*, pp. 13-14.

How might we easily err if we judge by outward appearances?

There are three areas in which many are influenced by outward appearances: race or ethnicity, economic situation, and age. It is important for us to try to see others through God's impartial eyes! (Acts 10:34, 35)—*w18.08*, pp. 8-12.

What are some ways in which older Christians can help others?

An older Christian who has had a change of assignment continues to be treasured by God and can do much to help others. He might reach out to unbelieving mates, help the inactive, conduct Bible studies, and expand his ministry.—*w18.09*, pp. 8-11.

Christians have what items in their Teaching Toolbox?

There are contact cards and invitations. Eight well-designed tracts as well as the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines are included. The toolbox also contains a few brochures, two principal study books, and four useful videos, including *Why Study the Bible?*—*w18.10*, p. 16.

How can a Christian "buy truth," as urged at Proverbs 23:23?

We do not pay money for truth. However, we do need to spend time and expend effort in order to acquire it.—*w18.11*, p. 4.

What can we learn from how Hosea dealt with his wife, Gomer?

Gomer repeatedly committed adultery, but Hosea forgave her and stayed married to her. If a Christian's mate commits sexual immorality, the innocent mate can extend forgiveness. When he or she resumes sexual relations with the guilty mate, the grounds for obtaining a Scriptural divorce would be canceled.—*w18.12*, p. 13.



Honor “What God Has Yoked Together”

“What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”

—MARK 10:9.

SONGS: 131, 132

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Jehovah and Jesus share what view about marriage?

What is the only Scriptural basis for divorce, but why might some decide not to divorce?

One who is considering separation should weigh what advice?

DO YOU enjoy honoring Jehovah? Certainly you do! He merits your honor and promises to honor you in return. (1 Sam. 2:30; Prov. 3:9; Rev. 4:11) He also wants you to show honor on a human level, such as to government officials. (Rom. 12:10; 13:7) But there is a personal area in which you especially need to show honor. That is in marriage.

² The apostle Paul wrote: “Let marriage be honorable among all, and let the marriage bed be without defilement.” (Heb. 13:4) Paul was not making a mere casual observation. Rather, that text was directing, yes urging, Christians personally to esteem marriage, to view it as precious. Is that your view of marriage in general and particularly of your own marriage if you have a mate?

³ In honoring marriage, you are in the best of company. Jesus honored marriage. When the Pharisees asked Jesus about divorce, he referred to what God had said regarding the first marriage: “For this reason a man will leave his father

1, 2. Hebrews 13:4 should move us to do what?

3. What important advice about marriage did Jesus give? (See opening picture.)

and his mother, and the two will be one flesh.” Jesus added: “What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—**Read Mark 10:2-12**; Gen. 2:24.

⁴ Jesus thus agreed that marriage is of divine origin and stressed its permanence. God did not tell Adam and Eve that marriage could be ended by divorce. The standard set in that Edenic marriage was monogamy, “the two” being joined together in a lasting union.

TEMPORARY CHANGES FOR MARRIAGE

⁵ You know, however, that Adam’s sin brought changes. One was death, which would affect marriage. We can see that from what the apostle Paul wrote when explaining that Christians are not under the Mosaic Law. He revealed that death ends a marriage and that the surviving mate can thereafter remarry.—Rom. 7:1-3.

⁶ The Law that God gave to the nation of Israel provided details about marriage. It allowed for polygamy, a practice that existed even before God gave Israel the Law. However, polygamy was regulated, prohibiting abuses. For example, if an Israelite married a slave and later took a second wife, he could not diminish his first wife’s food, clothing, and marital due. God required that he protect and care for her. (Ex. 21:9, 10) We are not under the Law, but we can still see from it Jehovah’s interest in marriage. Does that not help you to esteem marriage?

4. Jehovah set what standard for marriages?

5. What effect does death have on the marriage union?

6. How did the Mosaic Law reflect God’s view of marriage?

⁷ What of divorce under the Law? God maintained his high regard for marriage; yet, as a concession he did allow divorce. (**Read Deuteronomy 24:1.**) An Israelite man could divorce his wife if “he found something indecent about her.” The Law did not describe what was meant by “indecent.” It must have been something shameful or serious, not some petty offense. (Deut. 23:14) Sadly, by Jesus’ day many Jews divorced “on every sort of grounds.” (Matt. 19:3) We would surely not want to adopt their attitude.

⁸ The prophet Malachi revealed God’s view of divorce. That was at a time when it was common for a man treacherously to divorce ‘the wife of his youth,’ maybe to marry a younger, pagan woman. Regarding God’s view, Malachi wrote: “I hate divorce.” (Mal. 2:14-16) That was in line with what God’s Word says about the first marriage: “[A man] will stick to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (Gen. 2:24) Jesus upheld his Father’s view of marriage, saying: “What God has yoked together, let no man put apart.”—Matt. 19:6.

ONLY ONE BASIS FOR DIVORCE

⁹ Someone might ask, ‘Is there ever a basis for a Christian to divorce and remarry?’ Well, Jesus stated his view on divorce: “Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery against her, and if ever a woman after divorcing her husband marries another, she commits adultery.” (Mark 10:11, 12; Luke 16:18) Clearly, Jesus thus honored

7, 8. (a) According to Deuteronomy 24:1, the Law contained what provision for divorce? (b) What is Jehovah’s view of divorce?

9. How are Jesus’ words at Mark 10:11, 12 to be understood?

God's Response to Israel's Adultery

Both Israel and Judah became unfaithful to Jehovah. They made alliances with pagan nations and practiced false religion. God condemned them for “committing adultery with stones and with trees.” (Jer. 2:13, 20; 3:1-3, 9; compare Ezekiel 16:28; James 4:4.) When they would not change and continued like “a wife who commits prostitution,” God made a choice. He said: “When I saw that, I sent unfaithful Israel away with a full certificate of divorce because of her adultery.” —Jer. 3:6-8.

The Only Scriptural Grounds

On two occasions, Jesus indicated that the only grounds for a divorce that would free an innocent mate to remarry is *por-nei'a*. What does that Greek term mean? *Por-nei'a* applies to illicit sexual relations outside Scriptural marriage. It includes adultery, prostitution, and sex relations between unmarried individuals as well as oral and anal sex and the sexual manipulation of the genitals of an individual to whom one is not married. —See *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2006, “Questions From Readers.”

marriage and wanted others to do so. A man divorcing his faithful wife (or a woman, her faithful husband) on some pretext and marrying another was committing adultery. This is true because merely divorcing one's mate does not end the marriage. In God's eyes, the two would still be “one flesh.” Moreover, Jesus said that a man's divorcing his innocent wife would make her subject to adultery. How so? Back then, a divorced woman might feel compelled to remarry in order to gain financial support. Such a remarriage would amount to adultery.

¹⁰ Jesus did state the grounds on which a marriage can be ended: “I say to you that whoever divorces his wife, except on the grounds of **sexual immorality** [Greek, *por-nei'a*], and marries another commits adultery.” (Matt. 19:9) He had made the same point in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matt. 5:31, 32) On

both occasions, Jesus spoke of “sexual immorality.” That expression covers a range of sexual sins outside of marriage: adultery, prostitution, sex relations between unmarried individuals, homosexuality, and bestiality. If, for example, a married man engages in sexual immorality, his wife can decide whether to divorce him or not. If she divorces him, that would end the marriage in God's eyes.

¹¹ Significantly, Jesus did not say that a mate's immorality (*por-nei'a*) *must* absolutely lead to divorce. For example, a wife might choose to maintain the marriage despite her husband's having been immoral. She might still love him; she might be willing to forgive him and work with him to improve their marriage. Realistically, if she got a divorce but did not remarry, she would face challenges.

10. On what grounds can a Christian divorce and be free to remarry?

11. Why might a Christian decide not to get a divorce even though having Scriptural grounds to do so?

What of her material and sexual needs? What about loneliness? Are there children to consider? Would a divorce make it harder to raise them in the truth? (1 Cor. 7:14) Clearly, the divorced innocent one would face serious issues.

¹² The prophet Hosea's experience is enlightening. God told Hosea to take a wife (Gomer), who would become "a woman of prostitution and [would have] children of prostitution." Gomer "conceived and bore [Hosea] a son." (Hos. 1:2, 3) Later, she had a daughter and a son, both likely the results of her adultery. Despite Gomer's repeated adultery, Hosea stayed married to her. Finally, she left Hosea and became a slave. Still, he bought her back. (Hos. 3: 1, 2) Jehovah was using Hosea to illustrate how He repeatedly forgave Israel's adulterous course. What might we learn from this?

¹³ If a Christian's mate committed immorality, the innocent Christian would face a decision. Jesus said that the innocent one would have a basis for getting a divorce and then be free to remarry. On the other hand, the innocent mate could extend forgiveness. That would not be wrong. Hosea took back Gomer. Once Gomer was back with Hosea, she was not to have relations with any other man. Hosea did "not have relations" with Gomer for a while. (Hos. 3:3, ftn.) In time, though, Hosea must have resumed marital relations with her, thereby reflecting God's willingness to accept his people back and resume his dealings with them. (Hos. 1:11; 3:3-5) What bear-

ing does that have on a marriage today? If an innocent mate decided to maintain the marriage, resuming marital relations would show forgiveness. (1 Cor. 7:3, 5) That course would cancel what had been grounds for divorce. Thereafter as a couple, they should work to reflect God's view of marriage.

HONOR EVEN IN A TROUBLED MARRIAGE

¹⁴ All Christians should strive to show regard for marriage, even as Jesus and Jehovah do. However, some may fail to do so, for humans are imperfect. (Rom. 7:18-23) Thus, it should not shock us that some Christians in the first century had troubled marriages. Paul wrote that "a wife should not separate from her husband"; yet, in some cases that did occur.—**Read 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11.**

¹⁵ Paul did not explain what led to such a separation. The problem was not, for example, that the husband had been immoral, giving the wife a basis for divorce and remarriage. Paul wrote that a wife who was separated from her husband should "remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband." So the two were still united in God's eyes. Paul advised that whatever the underlying problems, if sexual immorality is not involved, the goal should be reconciliation. The two could seek Bible-based help from congregation elders. While the elders avoid taking sides, they could offer Scriptural advice.

¹⁶ There would likely be more complications if just one mate was a believer

12, 13. (a) What developed in Hosea's marriage? (b) Why did Hosea take Gomer back, and what can we learn from that as to marriage now?

14. According to 1 Corinthians 7:10, 11, what may happen in a marriage?

15, 16. (a) Even if a marriage has problems, what is the goal, and why? (b) How does this apply if a mate is not a believer?



What can be done to save even a troubled marriage?
(See paragraph 15)

seeking to live by God's standards. In the event of problems, is separation a justifiable solution? As noted, the Scriptures say that sexual immorality is a possible basis for divorce, but they do not outline various grounds for separation. Paul wrote: "If a woman has an unbelieving husband and he is agreeable to staying with her, let her not leave her husband." (1 Cor. 7:12, 13) That applies in our day too.

¹⁷ Admittedly, there have been instances where an "unbelieving husband" seems to prove that he is not "agreeable to staying with her." He might be extremely physically abusive, even to the point that she feels that her health or life is in danger. He might refuse to support her and the family or severely endanger her spirituality. In such cases, some Christians have personally decided that, despite what he might say, the mate is

17, 18. Why have some Christians stayed in a troubled marriage?

not "agreeable to staying" together and that a separation is necessary. But other Christians in comparably difficult situations have not; they have endured and tried to work at improving matters. Why?

¹⁸ In such a separation, the two are still marriage mates. If they lived apart, each one would face challenges, as mentioned earlier. The apostle Paul gave another reason for staying united. He wrote: "The unbelieving husband is sanctified in relation to his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified in relation to the brother; otherwise, your children would be unclean, but now they are holy." (1 Cor. 7:14) Many loyal Christians have remained with an unbelieving mate under very trying circumstances. They can testify that doing so was worthwhile in a special sense when their mate became a true worshipper.—**Read 1 Corinthians 7:16; 1 Pet. 3:1, 2.**

¹⁹ Jesus provided comments about divorce, and the apostle Paul offered inspired advice about separation. Both wanted God's servants to honor marriage. Worldwide today, the Christian congregation abounds with successful marriages. You can likely find many happy couples in your local congregation. They are made up of loyal brothers who love their wife and devoted wives who prove to be loving mates, all showing that marriage can be honorable. We can rejoice that millions are living proof of the truthfulness of God's words: "For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and he will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh." —Eph. 5:31, 33.

19. Why do successful marriages abound in the Christian congregation?

“Jehovah Has Dealt Kindly” With Us

AS TOLD BY JEAN-MARIE BOCKAERT



MY WIFE, Danièle, and I had just checked in at the hotel when the receptionist said to me, “Sir, can you please call the border police?” A few hours earlier, we had arrived in Gabon, a West African country, where our work was under ban in the 1970’s.

With her usual quickness of mind, Danièle whispered in my ear, “Do not bother to call the police, they are already here!” Just behind us, a vehicle pulled up in front of the hotel. A few minutes later, we were both arrested by soldiers. But thanks to Danièle’s warning, I had time to entrust some documents to another brother.

As we were escorted to the police station, I reflected on how fortunate I was to have such a bold and spiritual wife. This was just one of the many occasions when Danièle and I worked as a team. Let me explain what led us to visit countries where our preaching activity was under restrictions.

JEHOVAH KINDLY OPENED MY EYES

I was born into a very Catholic family in 1930, in Croix, a small town in northern France. Our family attended Mass every week, and my father was quite involved in the parish. However, when I was nearly 14 years old, an event opened my eyes to the hypocrisy of the church.

France was occupied by the German army during the second world war. In his sermons, our priest regularly encouraged us to support the pro-Nazi government of Vichy. We were horrified by his speeches. Like many in France, we secretly listened to the BBC radio, which broadcast news from the Allied forces. Then the priest did an about-face and arranged for a thanksgiving service to celebrate the advance of the Allies in September 1944. I was shocked by this. It undermined my trust in the clergy.

Shortly after the war, my father passed away. My older sister was already married and living in Belgium, so I felt responsible for my mother. I got a job in the textile industry. My boss and his sons were devout Catholics. Though I had a bright future in their company, I would soon face a test.

My sister Simone, who had become a Witness, came to visit us in 1953. Using her Bible, she skillfully exposed the false teachings of the Catholic Church on hellfire, the Trinity, and the immortality of the soul. At first, I argued that she was not



We visited congregations
in our small car



We were so happy
to attend Gilead School together!

using the Catholic Bible, but I was soon convinced that she was telling me the truth. She later brought me old issues of *The Watchtower*, which I devoured in my bedroom at night. I quickly recognized the clear ring of truth; yet, I was afraid that taking a stand for Jehovah would cost me my job.

For a few months, I kept studying the Bible and the *Watchtower* articles on my own. I eventually decided to go to a Kingdom Hall. The loving atmosphere in the congregation really touched me. After studying the Bible with an experienced brother for six months, I got baptized in September 1954. Soon I had the joy of seeing my mother and younger sister become Witnesses.

RELYING ON JEHOVAH IN THE FULL-TIME SERVICE

Sadly, my mother died a few weeks before the 1958 international convention in New York, which I had the privilege of attending. On my re-

turn, I was without family responsibilities, so I quit my secular job and started to pioneer. In the meantime, I got engaged to a zealous pioneer sister, Danièle Delie, who became my dear wife in May 1959.

Danièle had begun her full-time service in rural Brittany, far away from her home. She needed courage to preach in that Catholic region and to travel by bicycle to rural territories. Like me, she was moved by a deep sense of urgency; we did not know how close the end might be. (Matt. 25: 13) Her self-sacrificing spirit helped us to persevere in the full-time ministry.

We were assigned to the circuit work a few days after we got married. We adapted to rather simple living conditions. The first congregation we visited was made up of 14 publishers, and the brothers had little means to host us. So we slept on mattresses on the platform of the Kingdom Hall. It was not really comfortable or ideal, but it was excellent for the spine!

Despite our busy schedule, Danièle adjusted well to the traveling work. She often had to wait for me in our small car after an unscheduled elders' meeting, but she never complained. We spent only two years in the circuit work, during which we learned how important it is for a married couple to communicate honestly and to work as a team.—Eccl. 4:9.

ENJOYING NEW SERVICE ASSIGNMENTS

In 1962 we were invited to the ten-month course of the 37th class of Gilead School, in Brooklyn, New York. Out of 100 students, there were 13 couples, so we felt privileged to be able to attend together. I still have fond memories of our association with such pillars of faith as Frederick Franz, Ulysses Glass, and Alexander H. Macmillan.

During our training, we were urged to develop our powers of observation. On some Saturday afternoons when class was over, our training included some sightseeing in New York City. We

knew that on Monday we would have a written review about what we had seen. We often came back worn out on Saturday evening, but our tour guide, a Bethel volunteer, would ask us review questions to help us remember key points for the written test. One Saturday we walked around all afternoon in the city. We visited an observatory where we learned about meteors and meteorites. At the American Museum of Natural History, we learned the difference between an alligator and a crocodile. Back at Bethel, our tour guide asked us, “So, what is the difference between a meteor and a meteorite?” Danièle was tired and answered, “Well, meteorites have longer teeth!”

Much to our surprise, we were assigned to the France branch, where we served together for over 53 years. In 1976, I was appointed Branch Committee coordinator and was also assigned to visit countries in Africa and the Middle East where our preaching activity was under ban or restrictions. This led us to travel to Gabon, where we had the experience mentioned at the outset. To be honest, I did not always feel up to handling these unexpected responsibilities. But Danièle was of invaluable help in tackling almost any assignment.

FACING A SEVERE ORDEAL TOGETHER

Right from the beginning, we loved our life at Bethel. Danièle, who had learned English within five months before attending Gilead, became a skilled translator of our publications. We found much satisfaction in our Bethel work, but our involvement in congregation life doubled our joy. I fondly remember taking the Paris metro with Danièle late at night, tired but so happy that we had conducted progressive Bible studies together. Sadly, though, a sudden change in Danièle’s health prevented her from being as active as she wanted to be.

In 1993 she was diagnosed with breast cancer. The treatment proved to be very harsh, involving surgery and aggressive chemotherapy. Fifteen



We enjoyed visiting our faithful brothers and sisters in Africa

Interpreting a talk by Brother Theodore Jaracz at the “Divine Justice” Convention in Paris, 1988

years later, she was once again diagnosed with cancer, a more invasive one. However, she cherished her assignment as a translator so much that she managed to resume her work when her condition stabilized.

Despite Danièle’s cruel illness, leaving Bethel never crossed our minds. Still, being sick at Bethel brings its own challenges, especially if others are unaware of how serious the condition is. (Prov. 14:13) Even when Danièle was in her late 70’s, her sweet face and natural elegance did not reflect her physical condition. She did not feel sorry for herself. Rather, she focused on helping others. She knew that a listening ear can greatly help sufferers. (Prov. 17:17) Danièle never claimed to be a counselor; yet, she used her experience to help many sisters not to fear cancer.

We also had the challenge of facing new limitations. When Danièle was no longer able to work full-time, she made it a point to support me in



It was as if Jehovah had made the way out to help us deal with our anxieties.

We learned to cope with anxiety by taking one day at a time. As Jesus said, “each day has enough of its own troubles.” (Matt. 6:34) A positive outlook and a sense of humor also helped. For example, when Danièle found herself without chemotherapy for two months, she said to me with her mischievous smile, “You know, I’ve never felt better!” (Prov. 17:22) Despite her suffering, she took pleasure in rehearsing the new Kingdom songs aloud with a confident voice.

Her positive disposition helped me to cope with my own limitations. To be honest, in the 57 years we were married, she took care of my various needs. She did not even want to show me how to fry eggs! So when she became seriously limited, I had to learn how to do the dishes and the laundry as well as how to prepare simple meals. I have broken a few drinking glasses along the way, but I found a lot of joy in doing things to please her.*

GRATEFUL FOR JEHOVAH'S LOVING KINDNESS

Looking back, I can see that I have learned useful lessons from the limitations imposed on us by health problems and advancing age. First, we should never be too busy to cherish our beloved mate. We must make the best use of the years when we have full vigor to take care of our loved ones. (Eccl. 9:9) Second, we should not worry too much about minor things; otherwise, we may overlook the many blessings we do enjoy every day.—Prov. 15:15.

When I reflect on our life in the full-time service, I have the undeniable feeling that we were blessed by Jehovah beyond what we could have imagined. I share the feelings expressed by the psalmist who said: “Jehovah has dealt kindly with me.”—Ps. 116:7.

* Sister Danièle Bockaert died while this article was being prepared. She was 78.

more ways. She did a lot to make my life easier, which allowed me to keep serving as Branch Committee coordinator for 37 years. For example, she used to prepare everything so that we could have our noon meal in our room and relax a bit together every day.—Prov. 18:22.

COPING DAILY WITH ANXIETY

Danièle was always remarkably optimistic and desirous of living. Then she developed cancer for the third time. We felt powerless. Sessions of chemotherapy and radiotherapy took such a toll on her strength that at times she could barely walk. I felt cut to the heart when my dear wife, who was a skillful translator, struggled to find her words.

Though we felt rather lost, we persevered in prayer, convinced that Jehovah would never allow us to suffer beyond what we could bear. (1 Cor. 10:13) We always tried to remain appreciative of the help Jehovah provided through his Word, the Bethel medical staff, and the loving support of our spiritual family.

We often asked Jehovah for his guidance as to which treatment we should accept. At one point, we were without any treatment. The doctor who had assisted Danièle for 23 years could not explain why she was losing consciousness after each chemotherapy session. He could not suggest any alternative. We felt that we were on our own and wondered how things would turn out. Then a different oncologist agreed to take care of Danièle.



Young Ones, Your Creator Wants You to Be Happy

“He satisfies you with good things all your life.”—PS. 103:5.

IF YOU are a young person, you have likely received much advice about your future. Teachers, guidance counselors, or others may have encouraged you to pursue higher education and a lucrative career. Jehovah, however, advises you to take a different course. To be sure, he wants you to work hard while you are at school so that you are able to earn a living after you graduate. (Col. 3:23) But when you are deciding on your priorities in life, he encourages you to be guided by sound principles that take into account his purpose and his will for us during this time of the end.—Matt. 24:14.

² Keep in mind, too, that Jehovah sees the full picture because he knows what lies ahead for the present world and he knows how soon its end will come. (Isa. 46:10; Matt. 24:3, 36) He also knows us—what gives us true satisfaction and happiness as well as what leads us to disappointment and unhappiness. So no matter how reasonable human advice may

1, 2. When choosing goals in life, why is it wise to listen to our Creator? (See opening pictures.)

SONGS: 135, 39

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why is there “no wisdom . . . in opposition to Jehovah”?

Why should you recognize your spiritual need?

What other “good things” does Jehovah give you, and how do you view them?

seem, if it does not take God's Word into account, it is not wisdom at all.—Prov. 19:21.

“THERE IS NO WISDOM . . . IN OPPOSITION TO JEHOVAH”

³ Bad advice has its roots very early in human history when Satan entered the scene. A presumptuous, self-appointed adviser, he told Eve that she and her husband would be happier if they chose their own course in life. (Gen. 3:1-6) In reality, though, Satan's motives were selfish. He wanted Adam and Eve—and their future offspring—to submit to and worship *him* rather than worship Jehovah. But what had he done for them? It was Jehovah who had given them everything they had—each other, their beautiful garden home, and their perfect bodies with the potential of living forever.

⁴ Sadly, Adam and Eve disobeyed God, cutting themselves off from him. The results, as you know, were tragic. Like flowers cut from a plant, they slowly began to wither and die. Their children also suffered from the curse of sin. (Rom. 5:12) Even so, most people still choose not to submit to God. They want to live life their own way. (Eph. 2:1-3) The results clearly show that “there is no wisdom . . . in opposition to Jehovah.”—Prov. 21:30.

⁵ Still, Jehovah knew that some humans, including many fine young people, would search for him and serve him. (Ps. 103:17, 18; 110:3) How he cherishes such ones! Do you count yourself among them? If so, you are no doubt en-

joying many “good things” from God that contribute greatly to your happiness. **(Read Psalm 103:5; Prov. 10:22)** As we shall now see, these “good things” include an abundance of fine spiritual food, the very best kind of friends, worthwhile goals, and true freedom.

JEHOVAH SATISFIES YOUR SPIRITUAL NEED

⁶ Unlike the animals, you have a spiritual need, which only your Creator can satisfy. (Matt. 4:4) When you listen appreciatively to him, you gain insight, wisdom, and happiness. “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need,” Jesus said. (Matt. 5:3) God satisfies your spiritual need by means of his Word and the abundance of spiritual food that he provides through “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) And how varied and rich that food is!—Isa. 65:13, 14.

⁷ The spiritual food that God provides will give you wisdom and thinking ability, which can protect you in many ways. **(Read Proverbs 2:10-14.)** For example, these qualities open your eyes to false teachings, such as the view that there is no Creator. They protect you against the lie that money and possessions are the key to happiness. And they help you to recognize and resist wrong desires and self-destructive behavior. So continue to search for godly wisdom and thinking ability, viewing them as treasures! As you acquire those precious qualities, you will come to know from personal experience that Jehovah loves you and

3, 4. How did heeding bad advice affect Adam and Eve and their descendants?

5. What confidence did God have in his human creation, and was this confidence justified?

6. Why should you care for your spiritual need, and how does Jehovah provide for you?

7. What are some benefits that come from absorbing the spiritual food that God provides?

Jehovah wants us to have the best kind of friends and to set spiritual goals (See paragraphs 9-12)



wants the very best for you.—Ps. 34:8; Isa. 48:17, 18.

⁸ Soon, every part of Satan’s world will come crashing down, and Jehovah will be our only security. Indeed, the time may come when we will depend on him for our very next meal! (Hab. 3:2, 12-19) Yes, now is the time to draw close to your heavenly Father and strengthen your trust in him. (2 Pet. 2:9) If you do, then no matter what happens around you, you will feel as did the psalmist David, who wrote: “I keep Jehovah before me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I will never be shaken.”—Ps. 16:8.

JEHOVAH GIVES YOU THE VERY BEST KIND OF FRIENDS

⁹ Jehovah draws those whom he allows to become members of his spiritual

8. Why should you draw close to God now, and how will this benefit you in the future?

9. (a) According to John 6:44, what does Jehovah do? (b) What is unique about meeting other Witnesses?

family, gently attracting honesthearted ones to true worship. **(Read John 6: 44.)** When you first meet someone who is not in the truth, what do you know about that person? Other than his name and physical appearance, probably very little. That is not the case when you first meet someone who knows and loves Jehovah. Even if that person is from a different background, country, tribe, or culture, you already know much about him—and he about you!

¹⁰ For example, you quickly recognize each other’s “language”—the “pure language” of truth. (Zeph. 3:9) As a result, you each know what the other believes about God, moral standards, and the hope for the future, to name just a few. Moreover, those are the most important things to know about a person, the things that build confidence and trust. They also form the basis for wholesome and enduring friendships.

10, 11. What do Jehovah’s people have in common, and how does this benefit us?

¹¹ It is no exaggeration to say that as a worshipper of Jehovah, you have the very best kind of friends, and they are all around the world. It is just that you have yet to meet most of them! Who other than Jehovah's people enjoy this precious gift?

JEHOVAH GIVES YOU WORTHWHILE GOALS

¹² **Read Ecclesiastes 11:9–12:1.** Do you have one or more spiritual goals that you are working toward? Perhaps you are trying to read portions of the Bible each day. Or you may be trying to improve your speaking and teaching abilities. Whatever the case, when you see positive results—or others see them and commend you—how do you feel? No doubt you feel a sense of achievement and joy. And so you should, in no small part because you are putting God's will ahead of your own, in imitation of Jesus.—Ps. 40:8; Prov. 27:11.

¹³ By focusing on spiritual pursuits, you are also doing a work that is truly satisfying because it is not in the least futile. The apostle Paul wrote: "Be steadfast, immovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that *your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord.*" (1 Cor. 15:58) By comparison, a life marked by secular ambitions and pursuits—even if these seem very successful—is ultimately a life of futility. (Luke 9:25) Someone who proved that to himself—and to us—was King Solomon.—Rom. 15:4.

12. What fine spiritual goals can you set for yourself?

13. Compared with secular pursuits, what makes serving God special and unique?

¹⁴ Fabulously rich and powerful, Solomon embarked on an experiment to "try out pleasure and see what good [would come]." (Eccl. 2:1-10) He built houses, designed gardens and parks, and pursued whatever he desired. How did he feel afterward? Contented? Fulfilled? Satisfied? We need not guess. Solomon himself told us. He wrote: "When I reflected on all the works that my own hands had done . . . , I saw that everything was futile . . . There was nothing of real value." (Eccl. 2:11) What a powerful lesson! Will you wisely take it to heart?

¹⁵ Jehovah wants to spare you the pain of learning life's lessons the hard way. Granted, you need faith in order to obey God and put his will first in your life. That faith is invaluable, and it *never* disappoints. Yes, Jehovah will *never* forget "the love you showed for his name." (Heb. 6:10) So work hard to build a strong faith, and thus see for yourself that your heavenly Father has your best interests at heart.—**Read Psalm 32:8.**

GOD GIVES YOU TRUE FREEDOM

¹⁶ "Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom," wrote Paul. (2 Cor. 3:17) Yes, Jehovah loves freedom, and he put that love in your heart. At the same time, however, he wants you to use your freedom responsibly, which is a protection for you. Perhaps you know young ones who view pornography or who engage in sexual immorality, high-risk sports, or drug and alcohol abuse.

14. What can you learn from Solomon's experiment with pleasures?

15. Why is faith important, and what are its benefits, as mentioned at Psalm 32:8?

16. Why should we value freedom and use it wisely?

To be sure, they may enjoy a few moments of excitement or pleasure. But often that comes at great cost, perhaps in the form of disease, addiction, or even death. (Gal. 6:7, 8) Clearly, their “freedom” is a cruel self-deception.—Titus 3:3.

¹⁷ By comparison, how many people do you know who became sick *because* they adhered to Bible standards? Clearly, obedience to Jehovah is both healthful and liberating. (Ps. 19:7-11) What is more, when you use your freedom wisely—that is, within the bounds of God’s perfect laws and principles—you show God, as well as your parents, that you can be trusted with more freedom. In fact, it is God’s purpose ultimately to give his faithful servants perfect freedom, described in the Bible as “the glorious freedom of the children of God.”—Rom. 8:21.

¹⁸ Adam and Eve had a taste of that freedom. In the garden of Eden, how many restrictive commands did God give them? Just one. They were not to eat the fruit of one tree. (Gen. 2:9, 17) Would you consider that single restriction harsh or oppressive? Of course not! Compare it with the countless man-made laws that men have been forced to learn and obey.

¹⁹ Jehovah takes a very wise approach to his servants. Instead of giving us endless laws, he patiently teaches us to follow the law of love. He wants us to live by godly principles and to hate what is

bad. (Rom. 12:9) Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount is a fine example of that teaching, for it addresses the root causes of wrongdoing. (Matt. 5:27, 28) As King of God’s Kingdom, Christ will continue to educate us in the new world so that our attitude toward righteousness and lawlessness will perfectly mirror his. (Heb. 1:9) He will also elevate us to physical and mental perfection. Imagine, you will no longer feel the tug of sin or experience the horrible effects of sin. Then, at last, you will enjoy “the glorious freedom” that Jehovah promised you.

²⁰ Of course, our freedom will never be absolute. It will be governed by love for God and for fellow humans. In fact, Jehovah is simply asking us to imitate him. He has unlimited freedom; yet, he has chosen to be guided by love in his dealings with his intelligent creation. (1 John 4:7, 8) So it stands to reason that our freedom will have its fullest expression only when it is guided by god-like love.

²¹ Do you appreciate the many “good things” that Jehovah has given you, such as an abundance of spiritual food, good friends, worthwhile goals, and the prospect of perfect freedom? (Ps. 103:5) If so, may the prayerful thoughts found at Psalm 16:11 be yours as well: “You make known to me the path of life. In your presence is abundant joy; there is happiness at your right hand forever.” The next article will examine some additional spiritual gems as found in Psalm 16. These will shed still more light on the keys to a truly satisfying life.

17, 18. (a) How is obedience to God liberating? (b) How does the freedom initially enjoyed by Adam and Eve compare with that of humans today?

19. In what ways are we being taught to become a free people?

20. (a) How does Jehovah use his freedom? (b) How can you benefit from God’s example?

21. (a) How did David feel toward Jehovah? (b) What will we consider in the next article?



Young Ones, You Can Have a Satisfying Life

“You make known to me the path of life.”—PS. 16:11.

SONGS: 133, 89

HOW CAN PSALM 16 HELP YOU TO . . .

make Jehovah your
“portion”?

choose good friends
and set worthwhile goals?

cultivate a love for what is
good and a hatred for what
is bad?

A STUDENT named Tony was on his way to becoming a high school dropout. A fatherless boy, he had little interest in school and would spend his weekends at the movies or with friends. He was not violent, and he was not a drug addict. He simply had no purpose in life. And he had doubts about God’s existence. Then he met a Witness couple and talked with them about his doubts and questions. They gave him two brochures—*The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking* and *Was Life Created?*

² When the couple returned, Tony had a changed attitude. He had studied the brochures, so much so that they were dog-eared and creased. “There has to be a God,” he said. He accepted a Bible study, and gradually his outlook on life changed. He also went from being a poor student to being one of the best in his school. Even the principal, who was aware of Tony’s newfound faith, was amazed. “You have made major improvements in your attitude and your grades,” he said. “Is that because of your association with Jehovah’s

1, 2. What kind of change is possible, as illustrated by the experience of a high school student?

Witnesses?” Tony said yes and then gave a fine witness. He successfully completed high school and today serves as a regular pioneer and a ministerial servant. He is also happy that he now has a wonderful Father, Jehovah.—Ps. 68:5.

OBEY JEHOVAH, AND YOU WILL SUCCEED

³ Tony’s experience reminds us of Jehovah’s deep interest in you young ones among us. He wants you to enjoy a truly successful and satisfying life. Hence, he advises you: “Remember . . . your Grand Creator in the days of your youth.” (Eccl. 12:1) In today’s world, that is not always easy. However, it is by no means impossible. With God’s help, you can succeed, not just in your youth but throughout your life. To illustrate, consider a lesson we can learn from the Israelites’ conquest of the Promised Land and from David’s encounter with Goliath.

⁴ When the Israelites neared the Promised Land, God did not command them to sharpen their fighting skills or train for war. (Deut. 28:1, 2) Rather, he told them that they needed to obey his commandments and trust in him. (Josh. 1:7-9) From a human viewpoint, that advice would make no sense! But it was the very best advice, for Jehovah gave his people victory after victory over the Canaanites. (Josh. 24:11-13) Yes, obedience to God calls for faith, but that faith *always* leads to success. This truth does

not change with the passing of time. It is just as valid today.

⁵ A mighty warrior, Goliath was some nine and a half feet (2.9 m) tall and well-armed. (1 Sam. 17:4-7) David, however, had two things: a sling and faith in his God, Jehovah. To those lacking faith, David surely seemed foolish. But how wrong they were! Goliath was the foolish one.—1 Sam. 17:48-51.

⁶ The preceding article considered four things that contribute to our happiness and success in life. These were satisfying our spiritual need, appreciating our God-given friends, setting worthwhile goals, and cherishing our freedom as God’s people. Let us now explore these topics further, this time considering some principles found in Psalm 16.

SATISFY YOUR SPIRITUAL NEED

⁷ A spiritual person has faith in God and has God’s mind on matters. He looks to God for guidance and is determined to obey him. (1 Cor. 2:12, 13) David is a good example. He sang: “Jehovah is my portion, my allotted share, and my cup.” (Ps. 16:5) That “portion” included David’s approved relationship with God, in whom he took refuge. (Ps. 16:1) The result? “My whole being is joyful,” he wrote. Yes, nothing gave David more joy than intimacy with God.—**Read Psalm 16:9, 11.**

⁸ The joy that David experienced does not come to those who center their lives on pleasures and riches. (1 Tim. 6:9, 10)

3. What course does Jehovah recommend for young ones?

4, 5. What valuable lesson can we learn from the Israelites’ conquest of Canaan and from David’s encounter with Goliath? (See opening pictures.)

6. What will we now consider in further detail?

7. (a) How would you describe a spiritual person? (b) What was David’s “portion,” and how did this affect him?

8. What are some factors that contribute to a truly satisfying life?

“True satisfaction,” says a brother in Canada, “comes, not from what we can get out of life, but from what we give to the Giver of every good gift, Jehovah God.” (Jas. 1:17) Yes, developing faith in Jehovah and serving him will give your life meaning and provide you with satisfaction. How can you grow in faith? You must spend time with him, as it were, by reading his Word, observing his creation, and thinking about his qualities, including his love for you.—Rom. 1:20; 5:8.

⁹ God’s love for us is sometimes expressed through fatherly correction. David welcomed such kindly counsel. He said: “I will praise Jehovah, who has given me advice. Even during the night, my innermost thoughts correct me.” (Ps. 16:7) Yes, he meditated on God’s thoughts, making them his own and allowing them to mold him. When you in faith do the same, you too will grow in love for God and in your desire to obey him. You will also gain spiritual maturity and depth. A sister named Christin said, “When I do research and meditate on what I read, I get the feeling that Jehovah had this penned just for me!”

¹⁰ It is no exaggeration to say that a spiritual outlook on life also gives you exceptional knowledge and insight by enabling you to see the world and its future through God’s eyes. Why does God give you such knowledge and insight? He wants you to set sound priorities in your life, to make wise decisions, and to look forward to the future with confi-

dence! **(Read Isaiah 26:3.)** A brother named Joshua, who lives in the United States, observes, “Staying close to Jehovah keeps everything in the proper perspective.” How true, and what satisfaction that brings!

MAKE TRUE FRIENDS

¹¹ **Read Psalm 16:3.** David knew the secret to finding true friends. He found “great delight” in the company of those who loved Jehovah. Described as “holy ones,” they were morally clean, upright. Another psalmist felt the same way about his choice of friends. He wrote: “I am a friend of all who fear you and of those who keep your orders.” (Ps. 119:63) As we saw in the preceding article, you too can find many good friends among those who fear and obey Jehovah. That includes, of course, those of various ages.

¹² The psalmist David did not limit his circle of friends to just his peers. Can you recall the name of a “majestic” one who became his dear friend? His name was Jonathan. In fact, their friendship was one of the most beautiful recorded in the Scriptures. Did you know, however, that Jonathan was about 30 years older than David? What, then, was the basis for their friendship? Faith in God, mutual respect, and seeing each other’s courage as they fought God’s enemies.—1 Sam. 13:3; 14:13; 17:48-50; 18:1.

¹³ Like David and Jonathan, we too find “great delight” in loving those who

9. How can you allow God’s Word to mold you, as it did David?

10. As noted at Isaiah 26:3, a spiritual outlook on life has what advantages?

11. How did David reveal the key to making true friends?

12. What was the basis for the friendship between David and Jonathan?

13. How can you broaden your circle of friends? Give an example.



SOME PRACTICAL GOALS

- Getting more out of my Bible reading
- Becoming more conversational in the ministry
- Reaching dedication and baptism
- Becoming a ministerial servant
- Improving as a teacher
- Starting a Bible study
- Serving as an auxiliary or a regular pioneer
- Serving at Bethel
- Learning another language
- Serving where the need is greater
- Helping with Kingdom Hall construction or disaster relief

love Jehovah and who show their faith in him. Kiera, who has served God for years, says, “I’ve made friends with people from around the world, people of many different backgrounds and cultures.” When you broaden out in this way, you will see clear evidence of the uniting power of God’s Word and spirit.

PURSUE WORTHWHILE GOALS

¹⁴ Read Psalm 16:8. David’s life was focused on serving God. You too will enjoy a truly satisfying life if you keep service to Jehovah to the fore and set goals with him in mind. A brother named Steven said, “Working toward a goal, accomplishing it, and then looking back on the improvements I have made brings me satisfaction.” A young brother from Germany who now serves in another land stated, “When I’m old, I don’t want to look back on my life and see that everything I did was just about me.” We hope that you feel the same

14. (a) What can help you to set worthwhile goals in life? (b) How have some young ones felt about setting spiritual goals?

way. If you do, use your gifts to honor God and to do things for others. (Gal. 6:10) Set spiritual goals for yourself, and ask Jehovah in prayer to help you to reach them. He delights to answer such prayers.—1 John 3:22; 5:14, 15.

¹⁵ What goals might you set? They could include giving comments in your own words at Christian meetings, sharing in pioneer service, or going to Bethel. You might try to learn another language with a view to serving in a foreign-language field. Barak, a young full-time servant, says, “Waking up every day knowing that I’m giving all my strength to Jehovah is a feeling that no other activity can produce.”

CHERISH YOUR GOD-GIVEN FREEDOM

¹⁶ Read Psalm 16:2, 4. As we saw in the preceding article, God’s righteous laws and principles liberate us by

15. What goals might you set for yourself? (See the box “Some Practical Goals.”)

16. How did David feel about Jehovah’s righteous standards, and why?

helping us to cultivate love for what is good and hatred for what is bad. (Amos 5:15) The psalmist David recognized Jehovah as his “Source of goodness.” Goodness is moral excellence, or virtue. David worked hard to imitate his God, to make God’s goodness his own. David also cultivated a hatred for what is bad in God’s eyes. That includes idolatry, a practice that debases humans and robs Jehovah of the glory owed to him.—Isa. 2:8, 9; Rev. 4:11.

¹⁷ In Bible times, false worship often included gross sexual immorality. (Hos. 4:13, 14) To be sure, that form of worship appealed to the sinful flesh. But it did not bring lasting happiness. To the contrary! ‘Those who pursued other gods multiplied their sorrows,’ said David. They also brought untold suffering to countless children. (Isa. 57:5) Jehovah detested such cruelty! (Jer. 7:31) Had you lived in those times, you would no doubt have been very thankful if your parents had faith in Jehovah and obeyed him.

¹⁸ Today, too, false worship often condones sexual immorality, even homosexuality. But the end results of reveling in so-called moral freedom have not really changed since Bible times. (1 Cor. 6: 18, 19) People “multiply their sorrows,” as you may have observed. So young ones, listen to your heavenly Father. Be fully convinced that obedience to him is in your best interests. Impress on your heart that the harm caused by wrongdoing far outweighs any temporary pleasure. (Gal. 6:8) Joshua, quoted

earlier, said, “We can use our freedom any way we want, but misusing it isn’t satisfying.”

¹⁹ Jesus said to his followers: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8: 31, 32) That freedom includes freedom from false religion, ignorance, and superstition. And it involves more. As we have seen, it will ultimately include “the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Rom. 8:21) Taste that freedom even now by ‘remaining in Christ’s word,’ or teachings. In this way, you will come to “know the truth” not just by learning about it but also by living it.

²⁰ Young ones, cherish the freedom God has given you. Use that freedom wisely, and thereby lay a fine foundation for the future. One young brother said: “Using freedom wisely as a young person really helps when later you are faced with bigger decisions, such as finding a suitable job or choosing whether to marry or to remain single for a time.”

²¹ In this old system, even a so-called good life is at best uncertain and short. We do not know what tomorrow will bring. (Jas. 4:13, 14) The wise course, then, is to stay on the path that leads to “the real life”—everlasting life. (1 Tim. 6:19) Of course, God does not force us to walk that path. The choice is ours. Make Jehovah your “portion.” Cherish the many “good things” he has given you. (Ps. 103:5) And have faith that he can give you “abundant joy” and “happiness . . . forever.”—Ps. 16:11.

17, 18. (a) What did David observe about the consequences of false worship? (b) What causes people today to “multiply their sorrows”?

19, 20. What blessings await young ones who have faith in Jehovah and obey him?

21. How can you remain on the path to “the real life”?

“The Righteous One Will Rejoice in Jehovah”



DIANA is over 80 years old. Her husband suffered from Alzheimer’s disease and was in a nursing home for some years before his death. She also had to cope with the death of her two sons and endured a battle with breast cancer. Yet, when members of Diana’s congregation see her at the Kingdom Hall or in the ministry, they note that she is always joyful.

John was a traveling overseer for over 43 years. He loved that form of service—it was his life! However, he discontinued serving in the traveling work to care for a sick relative, and now he serves in a local congregation. When those who knew John in the past meet him at an assembly or a convention, it seems that he has not changed at all. He still radiates joy.

How is it possible for Diana and John to have joy? How can someone suffering emotionally and physically be joyful? And how can a person who no longer has a cherished privilege still be happy? The Bible gives us insight,

saying: “The righteous one will rejoice in Jehovah.” (Ps. 64:10) We can understand this vital truth more fully if we discern what causes inner joy and what does not.

JOY THAT IS TEMPORARY

You certainly know that some things almost always bring joy. Think of a couple in love who are getting married. Or what of becoming a parent or receiving a theocratic privilege? Such things bring joy and rightly so, for those aspects of life originate with Jehovah. He instituted marriage, made it possible to procreate, and gives work assignments through the Christian congregation.—Gen. 2:18, 22; Ps. 127:3; 1 Tim. 3:1.

However, some causes for joy can be temporary. Sadly, a spouse can become unfaithful or die. (Ezek. 24:18; Hos. 3:1) Some children disobey their parents and God, perhaps even being disfellowshipped. Samuel’s sons did not serve Jehovah acceptably, and David’s actions caused him calamity from within his own house. (1 Sam. 8:1-3; 2 Sam. 12:11)

Such events bring grief and distress. They surely do not bring us joy.

Similarly, privileges of service among God's people can end, possibly because of poor health, family obligations, or theocratic adjustments. Many of those going through such changes have admitted that they miss the satisfaction their work brought them.

We can easily see that to some extent such sources of joy can be relative or temporary. Hence, is there another kind of joy, one that remains even when circumstances take an unfavorable turn? There must be, for Samuel, David, and others maintained a measure of joy while experiencing trials.

JOY THAT IS LASTING

Jesus knew what joy really is. During his prehuman existence in heaven, when circumstances were certainly favorable, he “rejoiced before [Jehovah] all the time.” (Prov. 8:30) On earth, however, he was at times confronted with severe difficulties. Still, Jesus found delight in doing his Father's will. (John 4:34)

What of his final painful hours? We read: “For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake.” (Heb. 12:2) We thus have good reason to consider two of Jesus' comments about real joy.

Once, 70 disciples returned to Jesus after a preaching assignment. They were joyful because they had performed powerful works, even expelling demons. Then Jesus said to them: “Do not rejoice because the spirits are made subject to you, but rejoice because your names have been written in the heavens.” (Luke 10:1-9, 17, 20) Yes, more important than enjoying a certain special privilege was having Jehovah's approval. He would favorably remember the faithful disciples—a cause for much greater joy.

On another occasion, Jesus was addressing a crowd. A Jewish woman expressed her feelings that the mother of this remarkable teacher, Jesus, must be very happy. But Jesus corrected her, saying: “No, rather, happy are those hearing the word of God and keeping it!” (Luke 11:27, 28) Being a proud parent

What has helped John to continue to find deep joy?



can be a wonderful experience; yet, having a relationship with Jehovah because of obedience is a much greater reason for joy.

Indeed, sensing Jehovah's approval is the key to having deep inner joy. Trials, though not enjoyable in themselves, do not change this awareness. On the contrary, enduring them with integrity is a victory that results in a good heart condition. (Rom. 5:3-5) Additionally, Jehovah gives his spirit to those who trust in him, and joy is part of its fruitage. (Gal. 5:22) That helps us to understand why Psalm 64:10 aptly states: "The righteous one will rejoice in Jehovah."

This explains why Diana and John, mentioned earlier, could maintain lasting joy when they dealt with difficult circumstances. Diana comments: "I have taken refuge in Jehovah, as a child would with a parent." How does she sense God's approval? "I feel that he has blessed me with the ability to continue to preach on a regular basis with a smile on my face." John, who kept active in the ministry after the end of his cherished traveling work, explains what greatly helped him: "Since 1998 when I was assigned to teach Ministerial Training School, I have done more personal study than ever before." Speaking for himself and his wife, he adds: "Our general attitude about serving Jehovah over the years in whatever capacity we could has made this adjustment relatively easy. We have done it with no regrets."

Many others have also experienced the truthfulness of Psalm 64:10. Take, for instance, a couple who served for over 30 years at Bethel in the United States. They were then assigned to the field as special pioneers. Realistically, they admitted: "Grief is a natural process when you lose something you love,"

but they added: "You can't grieve forever." They quickly got involved in the ministry with the congregation. The couple also commented: "We prayed about some very specific things. Then seeing our prayers answered encouraged us and brought us joy. Soon after we arrived, others in the congregation started pioneering, and we were blessed with two progressive Bible studies."

"JOYFUL FOREVER"

Admittedly, it is not always easy to be joyful, and there will be ups and downs. Yet, Jehovah inspired the reassuring words that we find at Psalm 64:10. Even at times when we are discouraged, we can trust that those who prove themselves 'righteous ones' by remaining faithful despite changes in their circumstances "will rejoice in Jehovah." Moreover, we can look forward to the fulfillment of Jehovah's promise of "new heavens and a new earth." Then imperfection will be completely removed. All of God's people will "exult and be joyful forever" in what he is creating and providing.—Isa. 65:17, 18.

Imagine what this will mean: enjoying perfect health and starting each day full of energy. No matter what deep emotional wounds there were in the past, painful memories of them will not remain. We are assured that "the former things will not be called to mind, nor will they come up into the heart." The miracle of the resurrection will reunite loved ones. Countless millions will feel as did the parents whose 12-year-old girl Jesus brought back to life: "They were beside themselves with great ecstasy." (Mark 5:42) Ultimately, every person on earth will be a "righteous one" in the fullest sense of the word and, to all eternity, will "rejoice in Jehovah."

FOR THE WATCHTOWER AND AWAKE! 2018

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