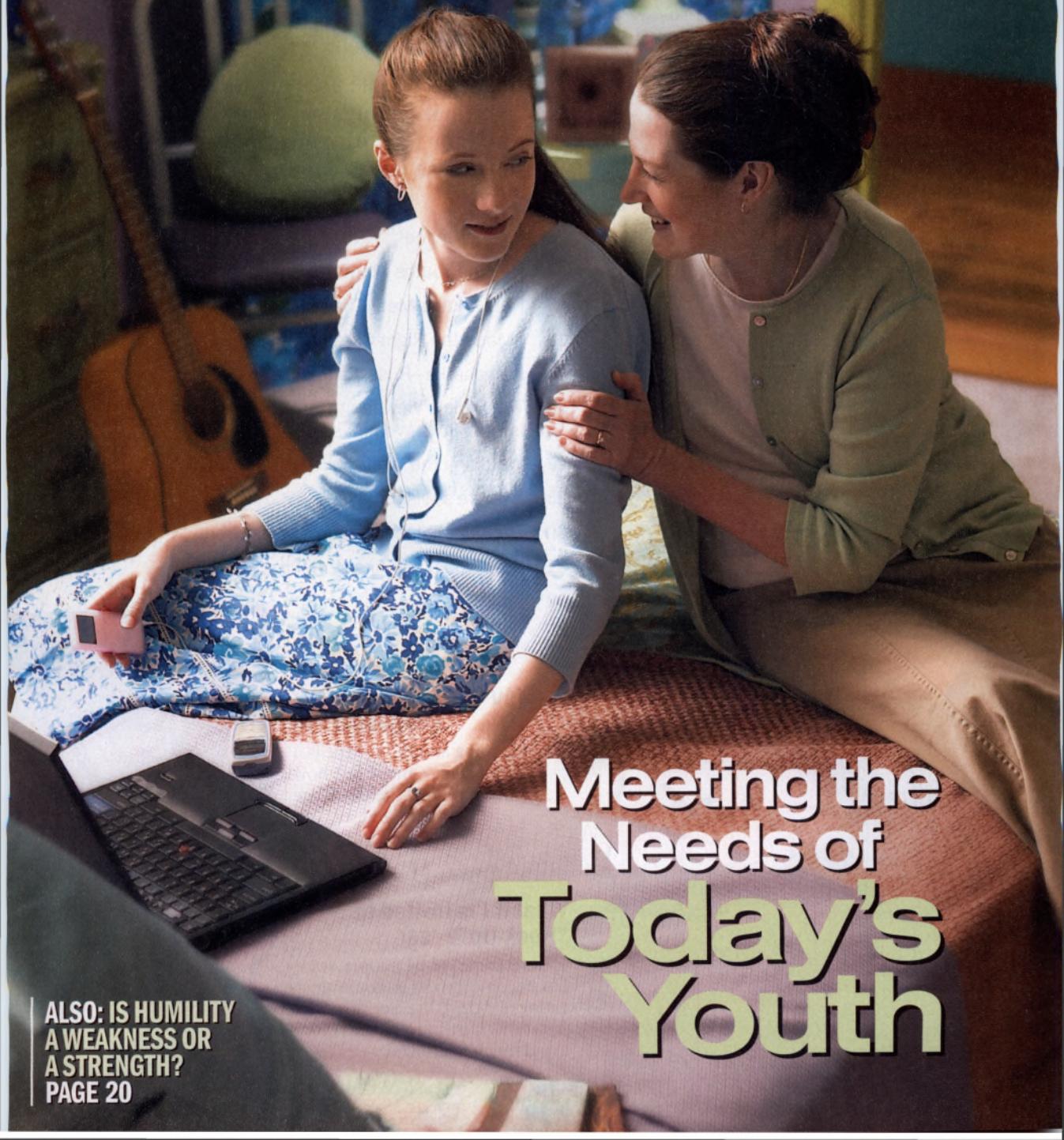


Awake!

MARCH 2007



Meeting the
Needs of
**Today's
Youth**

ALSO: IS HUMILITY
A WEAKNESS OR
A STRENGTH?
PAGE 20



Awake!

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Many young people are using the Internet to share their feelings with others and even to search for warmth and companionship. See how these needs can be satisfied in a better way.

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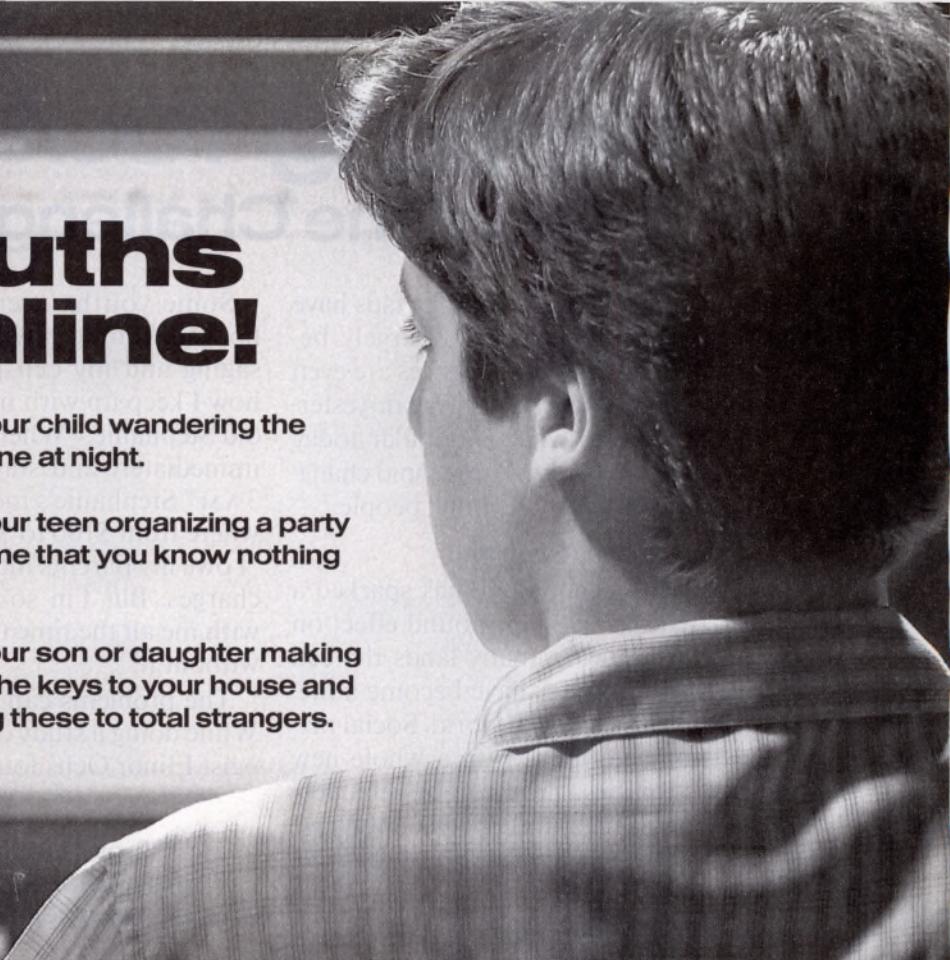


Youths Online!

Imagine your child wandering the streets alone at night.

Imagine your teen organizing a party in your home that you know nothing about.

Imagine your son or daughter making copies of the keys to your house and distributing these to total strangers.



IF YOUR child has access to the Internet, the above situations may not be as far-fetched as they seem. "The Internet provides an unprecedented number and variety of meeting places, from message boards to instant messaging to so-called social networking sites," says *Science News* magazine.

Young people have quickly adjusted to life online. Indeed, in 2004 nearly 9 of every 10 people in the United States between the ages of 12 and 17 used the Internet, which is accessible in virtually every corner of the globe.

Few people would deny the usefulness of the Internet. But no one should be oblivious to the dangers it poses. For instance, many youths are wandering alone in the online neighborhood, and some are creating social networks with people whom you—and

even your child—would never invite into the home.

Some naive young ones even post inappropriately personal details, thoughts, and images on the Internet. According to Professor Zheng Yan of the State University of New York, youths "often don't realize how many people have access to that information, including sexual predators."

Let us take a closer look at what many young people are doing online. This will enable us to see potential problems, to determine just what our children are looking for, and to see how we can help them satisfy their legitimate needs. It will also help Christian young people meet the challenge of remaining faithful to God during these difficult times.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Helping Youths Meet the Challenge

THE world, its lifestyles, and its fads have always undergone change. Largely because of modern technology, changes are even more pronounced today. What was in yesterday is out today, and what is popular today will be obsolete tomorrow. These rapid changes have a marked impact on young people.

A Social Revolution

In recent years, technology has sparked a revolution that has had a profound effect on youths. For example, in many lands the cell phone and the computer have become a life-line of the adolescent social world. Social networking sites have opened up a whole new world of possibilities. "You can be relatively friendless in real life and then suddenly have hundreds of friends online," says a 19-year-old girl in Australia.

Few would deny that the cell phone and the Internet have numerous benefits. For many people, however, these tools seem to have become addictive. University Professor Donald Roberts notes that some students "can't go the few minutes between their 10 o'clock and 11 o'clock classes without talking on their cell phones." He says: "It seems to me that there's almost a discomfort with not being stimulated—a kind of 'I can't stand the silence.'"

Some youths even admit that they feel hooked. "I'm totally addicted to instant messaging and my cell phone, because they're how I keep up with my friends," says 16-year-old Stephanie. "When I get home, I go online immediately and stay on . . . sometimes till 3 A.M." Stephanie's monthly phone bill is anywhere from \$100 to \$500. "By now," she says, "I owe my parents more than \$2,000 in excess charges. But I'm so used to having my cell with me all the time that I can't live normally without it."

The problems can be more than financial. While doing a study on family life, anthropologist Elinor Ochs found that when a working

"When I get home, I go online immediately and stay on . . . sometimes till 3 A.M."



parent came home, the spouse and kids were often so absorbed in what they were doing that 2 out of 3 times they did not even say a greeting! They just kept on monitoring their electronic gadgets. "We also saw how difficult it was for parents to penetrate the child's universe," says Ochs. She adds that during the study parents were observed actually back-

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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ing away, retreating from kids who were absorbed in whatever they were doing.

Online Social Networks—Harmless?

Many parents and educators are concerned about the amount of time youths spend visiting what are called online social networks. These are Internet sites that allow members to create a Web page and enhance it with pictures, videos, and diaries, called blogs.

One attraction of such sites is that they enable members to keep in touch with friends. Another is that setting up a Web page allows a youth to express his identity, to "make a statement." The appeal is understandable, for adolescence is a time of learning about oneself and revealing one's feelings in a way that reaches and moves others.

One problem that arises, though, is that some individuals create a Web-site persona that reflects who they *want to be* rather than who they *are*. "There's a kid in one of my classes who says he's 21 and lives in Las Vegas," states a 15-year-old boy. Both youths live about a thousand miles from that U.S. city.

Such deception is quite common. "You can do anything on the Net," confides an 18-year-old Australian girl. "You can become a whole different person because no one really knows you. You feel confident. You can make up things so that

"You can do anything on the Net. You can become a whole different person because no one really knows you"



you seem to be more interesting. You can put pictures of yourself wearing things or doing things that you would never wear or do in real life. You can write things you would never say in person. You feel as if you can get away with anything because you're hidden. No one knows who you really are."

As with any mode of communication, online social networks can have legitimate uses as well as potential abuses. As a parent, do you know what your children are doing online? Are you making sure that your children are using their time wisely?* (Ephesians 5:15, 16) Furthermore, misuse of the Internet can expose a youth to a number of serious dangers. What are some of these?



The Darker Side of Cyberspace

The anonymity of the Internet makes it a hunting ground for child predators. Youths can unwittingly become ensnared if they give out personal information online or agree to meet

* Rather than simply condemn the Internet, parents would do well to familiarize themselves with the sites that their children frequent. In this way, children can be helped to "train their perceptive powers to distinguish right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) Such parental lessons will serve the children well as they enter adulthood.

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[#] Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

^o MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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Social Networking One Girl's Story

"I began to use our school Web page to interact with fellow students and teachers. I started with one hour a week. Soon I was on every day. I felt so addicted that when I wasn't on the Internet, I was thinking about it. I couldn't concentrate on anything else. I got behind in my schoolwork, I wasn't listening at Christian meetings, and I even ignored my real friends. My parents finally realized what was going on and limited my use of the Internet. That was hard for me. I was very mad. But now I'm happy that things worked out this way, and I have adjusted very well. I never want to feel addicted again!"—Bianca.

a person with whom they have been corresponding. Some people argue that "children face more serious threats of violence or abuse in their own homes or on the playground," says the book *Parenting 911*. "Yet there is something insidious for most parents about sexual provocateurs being able to reach into their homes through a screen and tamper with the innocence of their children."

There are other ways communication technology has been exploited. Some youths have engaged in "cyberbullying"—relentless online teasing, ostracizing, harassing, or threatening. Web sites have been set up purely to humiliate someone, while e-mail, chat rooms, and the like have become conduits for slander. The director of an online safety group believes that up to 80 percent of children between the ages of 10 and 14 have been directly or indirectly affected by cyberbullying.

Granted, bullying is not new. But now rumors, gossip, and slander can travel much farther and infinitely faster. It often gets far nastier too. In some cases, cell phones with a built-in camera have been used to take rude and potentially embarrassing photographs and videos, perhaps in a school locker room or shower. These images have then been placed on the Internet and sent to any number of eager recipients.

Growing Public Concern

Such matters prompted the Department of Law and Public Safety in New Jersey, U.S.A., to send a letter to parents and guardians, urging them to "help us respond to an emerging concern regarding the inappropriate use of the Internet among children, both in and out of school." The letter expressed particular apprehension over the posting online of personal information and photos. Sites divulging such details are often magnets for unscrupulous youths and adults. "As a parent," the letter stated, "you need to know that concerns over these issues are very real, and that you can play an important role in keeping your children safe by getting more informed and involved in your children's use of the Internet."

Yet, some parents know surprisingly little about what their children are doing online. One mother, who closely monitors her 16-year-old daughter's online activities, states: "Parents would be absolutely horrified and embarrassed if they knew what their children were posting and discussing." According to an Internet safety expert, some young people are posting photos that are sexually very suggestive.

Negative Effects

Is all this alarm merely the paranoia of overconcerned adults who have forgotten what it is like to be a teenager? The statistics suggest otherwise. Consider: In some areas, nearly a third of boys and girls between 15 and 17

years of age have had sexual intercourse. More than half of teens between 13 and 19 say that they have had oral sex.

Has technology contributed to these sobering statistics? Undoubtedly. "Cellphones and the Internet, which offer teenagers an unparalleled level of privacy, make hooking up that much easier," says a *New York Times Magazine* report.* Indeed, setting up a clandestine meeting with a member of the opposite sex takes little more than a few keystrokes on the computer. In one survey, more than 4 out of 5 girls admitted that they are not as careful as they should be while online.

Some who are looking online for a date or a hookup get more than they bargained for. "We have seen an increase in sexual assaults," states Jennifer Welch of the Novato Police Department in California. She says that many victims first contact their future assailant online and then agree to meet in person.

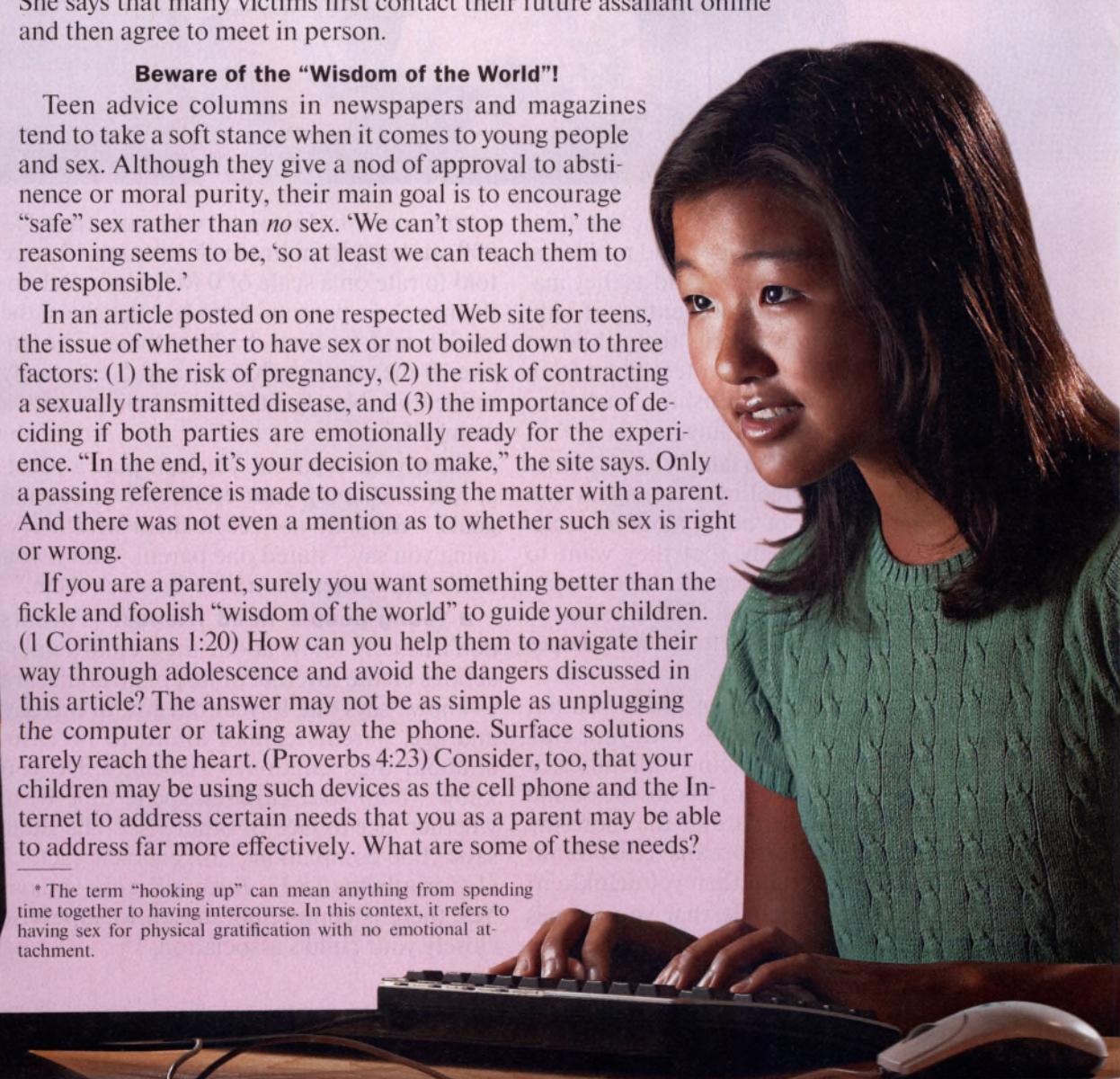
Beware of the "Wisdom of the World"!

Teen advice columns in newspapers and magazines tend to take a soft stance when it comes to young people and sex. Although they give a nod of approval to abstinence or moral purity, their main goal is to encourage "safe" sex rather than *no* sex. "We can't stop them," the reasoning seems to be, "so at least we can teach them to be responsible."

In an article posted on one respected Web site for teens, the issue of whether to have sex or not boiled down to three factors: (1) the risk of pregnancy, (2) the risk of contracting a sexually transmitted disease, and (3) the importance of deciding if both parties are emotionally ready for the experience. "In the end, it's your decision to make," the site says. Only a passing reference is made to discussing the matter with a parent. And there was not even a mention as to whether such sex is right or wrong.

If you are a parent, surely you want something better than the fickle and foolish "wisdom of the world" to guide your children. (1 Corinthians 1:20) How can you help them to navigate their way through adolescence and avoid the dangers discussed in this article? The answer may not be as simple as unplugging the computer or taking away the phone. Surface solutions rarely reach the heart. (Proverbs 4:23) Consider, too, that your children may be using such devices as the cell phone and the Internet to address certain needs that you as a parent may be able to address far more effectively. What are some of these needs?

"Parents would be absolutely horrified and embarrassed if they knew what their children were posting and discussing"



* The term "hooking up" can mean anything from spending time together to having intercourse. In this context, it refers to having sex for physical gratification with no emotional attachment.

Help Youths Meet Their Needs



YOUNG people need someone to talk to about their goals, hopes, and problems. They also need good friends. And as they mature, youths need a sense of identity, of individuality. When parents help their children to meet these needs, they protect them from potentially harmful relationships, including those readily developed online.

■ **Young people need to talk.** When it comes to expressing their feelings, teenagers can give the appearance of being aloof or secretive. Be assured, though, that they want to talk—yes, to *you*, their parent—about matters both serious and trivial. The question is, Are you ready and willing to listen?—James 1:19.

Do not let the demands of life crowd out precious opportunities to talk with your children. If you are experiencing difficulties, it may be time to think hard about the sound Biblical advice: “Make sure of the more important things.” (Philippians 1:10) What could be more important than your children?

Do not hastily conclude that young ones would rather go to their peers for advice than

to their parents. In one survey, more than 17,000 students from grades 6 through 12 were told to rate on a scale of 0 to 5 how much influence their parents, friends, celebrities, the media, and teachers had on them. The answer 0 meant no influence, and 5 extremely influential. Nearly half gave their parents a rating of 5.

Clearly, as a parent you can play a pivotal role in shaping your children’s values and goals. “You may not reach them with everything you say,” stated one parent. “But if you don’t talk to them, you’ll never reach them.”

■ **Young people need friends.** “Parents don’t usually know about their child’s interactions on the Internet or just plain don’t care to know,” says one 15-year-old girl. In this day and age, parents cannot afford to be casual about their children’s associates. Do you know whom your children spend time with, whether face-to-face or otherwise? The Bible says: “Bad companions ruin good character.” (1 Corinthians 15:33, *Today’s English Version*) Yes, there is compelling reason to supervise closely your child’s association.

Caring involves more than simply shielding young people from bad influences. Children need the right kind of friends. "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise," says the Bible. (Proverbs 13:20) Thus, there is a need to help your children find wholesome associates—including other youths who are setting a fine example in remembering their Creator.—Ecclesiastes 12:1.

Jehovah God is particular about the kind of persons he befriends, and we should try to imitate him. (Psalm 15:1-5; Ephesians 5:1) Indeed, one of the most valuable life skills you can teach your children—by word and example—is that of choosing wholesome associates.—2 Thessalonians 3:6, 7.

■ Young people need a sense of identity. A vital part of growing up is the forming of an identity—a set of unique traits that distinguish one child from all others. A Bible proverb states: "A child shows what he is by what he does." (Proverbs 20:11, *The Holy Bible in the Language of Today*, by William Beck) One of your tasks as a parent is to inculcate right principles into the hearts of your children.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

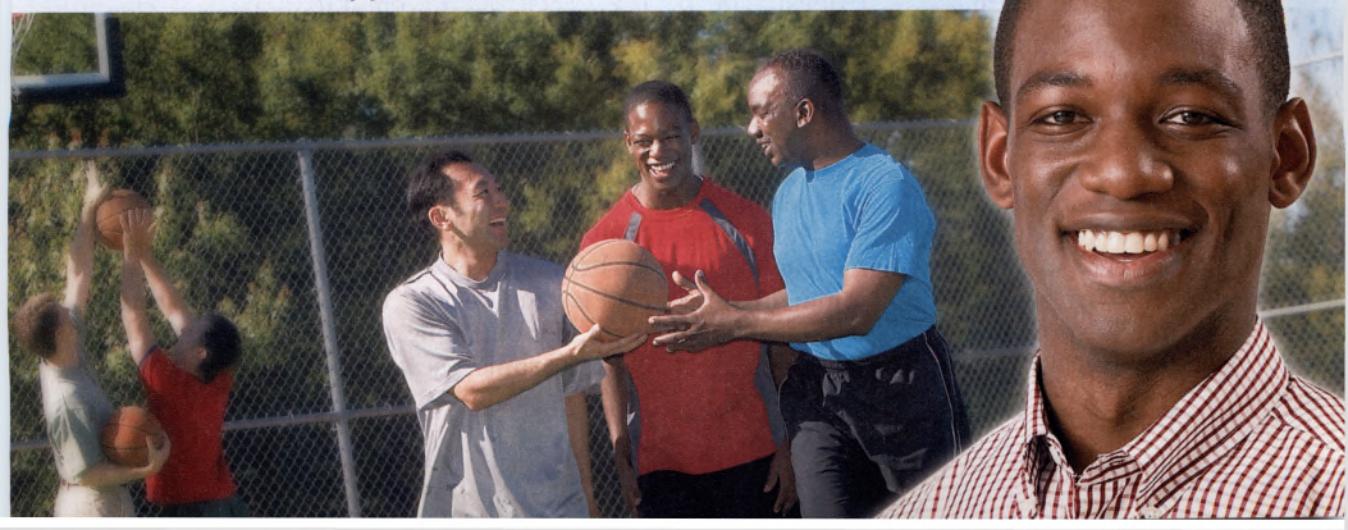
To illustrate: Parents usually choose what a young child will wear from day to day, hoping that he or she will learn good dress sense. But can you imagine a 30-year-old healthy adult still being dressed by his parents? The very

idea is absurd! Using the analogy of attire, the Bible encourages us: "Clothe yourselves with the new personality"—a Christlike personality. (Colossians 3:10) You can help your children to put on the new personality by means of loving discipline and "mental-regulating." (Ephesians 6:4) Then as they grow older and more independent, they may well make "the new personality" their choice of "attire" too, seeing it as truly beautiful and appealing.—Deuteronomy 30:19, 20.

Ask yourself: 'How do my children *really* feel about the values taught in God's Word? How can I help them "to live with soundness of mind"?' (Titus 2:12) Your goal is not to produce a superficially obedient child. Some children seem to excel at doing whatever they are told, never questioning, arguing, or rebelling. But a child who simply conforms to what you want him to do *today* may conform to what the world wants him to do *tomorrow*. Therefore, train your children to cultivate their "power of reason." (Romans 12:1) Help them to see *why* Bible principles are sound and how they benefit us all.—Isaiah 48:17, 18.

Yes, helping young people meet their needs takes effort. But the rewards are worth it! If your children live by right principles that you have instilled, you will be able to say with all your heart that children truly are "an inheritance from Jehovah."—Psalm 127:3.

Help your children choose wholesome Christian associates



遇到您真高興

Veseli me da vvi se srečujem



You can learn another language!

"I wouldn't trade the experience for anything," says Mike Phelps adds, "It was among the best decisions of my life."

Both are referring to having accepted the challenge of learning another language.

IN COUNTRIES around the world, a growing number of people are learning new tongues for a variety of reasons—some personal, some financial, and some religious. *Awake!* interviewed a number of people who are studying a foreign language. Among the questions asked were, What is it like to learn a new language as an adult, and what can help a person to learn? The following material is based on their comments. You may find the points both encouraging and insightful, especially if you are learning a new

language or are thinking about doing so. Consider, for example, some important qualities that the interviewees felt are vital to the mastery of another tongue.

Patience, Humility, and Adaptability

While young children can pick up two or more languages simultaneously—often just by being exposed to them—adults usually find learning a new tongue much more difficult. For one thing, they must be patient because learning a new language can take a long

time. And with their busy schedules, this often means putting other pursuits on hold.

"Humility is essential," says George. "When you are new to the language, you must be willing to speak like—and in some respects, be treated like—a child." The book *How to Learn a Foreign Language* points out: "You have to shed some of your own self-importance and your worries about dignity if you really want to make progress." So don't take yourself too seriously. "If you never make mistakes, you are not using your new language enough," notes Ben.

Do not worry if others laugh at your mistakes—instead, laugh along with them! In fact, the day will likely come when you will be telling entertaining stories about the things you have said. And don't be afraid to ask questions. Understanding why something is said in a certain way aids the memory.

Because learning a new language often means learning a new culture, it helps to be adaptable, to have an open mind. "Learning another language has helped me to realize that there is more than one way of looking at and doing things," says Julie. "One is not necessarily better than the others—just different." Jay recommends, "Reach out to make friends with people who speak the language, and enjoy being with them." Of course, Christians will make sure that such friends are good associates who use wholesome speech. (1 Corinthians 15:33; Ephesians 5:3, 4) Jay adds, "When they see that you are interested in them, their food, their music, and so on, they will naturally be drawn to you."

The more time you spend studying and, even more so, using the language, the faster your progress will be. "We acquire language skills the way a chicken eats—grain by grain," observes George. "The little specks are not much in themselves, but they keep adding up." Bill, who learned several languages as a missionary, says, "I took word lists with me everywhere I went and looked at them when-

ever I had a few minutes." Many have found that *regularly* devoting short periods of time to study is more effective than infrequently setting aside large chunks of time.

There is a dazzling array of aids available to help people learn a language, including books, recordings, flash cards, and more. Even with all these products, however, many people find that they learn best in a structured classroom atmosphere. Use whatever methods work well for you. Keep in mind, though, that there are no shortcuts around personal effort and perseverance. But there are ways to make learning easier and more

The desire to help others is a powerful motivation to learn a language

fun. One is to increase your exposure to the language and culture.

"After mastering some of the basics and having at least a beginner's vocabulary," notes George, "ideally you might spend some time in a land where you are surrounded by the language." Barb agrees, "Visiting the country allows you to absorb the flavor of the language." Most important, being immersed in the environment helps you to *think* in the new language. Of course, most people may not be in a position to go to another country. But there may be opportunities locally to become further immersed in the language and culture. For example, there may be morally acceptable and wholesome publications or radio or TV programs in the language you are learning. Seek out people in your area who speak the language well and talk to them. "In the end," notes *How to Learn a Foreign Language*, "practice is the single most important rule for making progress."*

Plateaus

As you continue working with the

* See the January 8, 2000, issue of *Awake!*, pages 12-13.

language, you may at times feel as though you are stuck on a plateau—struggling along at the same level without seeing any improvement. What can you do? First, reflect on your original reasons for learning the language. Many of Jehovah's Witnesses have taken up a new language in order to assist others to learn the Bible. Reflecting on your original goals or purpose can reinforce your resolve.

Second, have reasonable expectations. "You may never be able to pass for a native speaker," notes the book *How to Learn a Foreign Language*. "That's not the point. You just want people to be able to understand you." So, rather than lamenting that you are not as fluent as you are in your mother tongue, focus on communicating clearly using what you have already learned.

Third, look for milestones to gauge your progress. Learning a language is like watching grass grow—you don't notice the growth, but day by day the grass gets higher. Similarly, if you look back to when you first started, no doubt you will see that you've made advancement. Avoid judging your progress by that of others. A good principle to follow is found in the Bible at Galatians 6:4. It says: "Let each one prove what his own work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person."

Fourth, view the process as a long-term investment. Think of this: As a speaker, how capable is a three- or four-year-old child? Does he use sophisticated words and complex grammar? Of course not! Yet, he can carry on

a basic conversation. Indeed, even for a child, learning a language takes several years.

Fifth, use the new language as much as possible. "I seemed to stay on a plateau when I didn't use the language on a regular basis," says Ben. So keep at it. Converse, converse, converse! Naturally, it can be frustrating to try to communicate when you have the vocabulary of a small child. "The hardest part for me is not being able to say *what* I want to *when* I want to," laments Mileivi. But that very frustration can motivate you to persevere. "I hated being at a level where I couldn't understand stories and jokes," recalls Mike. "I think such feelings pushed me to work harder to pass through that stage."

How Others Can Help

What can those who already speak the language do to help a learner? Bill, quoted earlier, advises, "Speak slowly but correctly, not in baby talk." Julie says, "Be patient, and don't finish sentences for the learner." Tony recalls: "Bilingual people tended to speak to me in my language. But that actually slowed my progress." Thus, some learners have asked their friends to speak to them only in the new language at certain times and to point out specific things to work on. Learners also cherish those who genuinely commend them for their efforts. As George put it, "I couldn't have done it without the love and encouragement of my friends."

So, is learning another language worth the effort? "Definitely!" answers Bill, who, as mentioned earlier, speaks several languages. "It has broadened my outlook on life and helped me to view things from other perspectives. In particular, being able to study the Bible with people who speak these tongues and see them accept its truths and make spiritual progress more than outweighs the effort. In fact, a linguist who speaks 12 languages once said to me: 'I envy you. I learn languages just for the fun of it; you learn them truly to help people.'"

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- **What Does the Moral Breakdown Mean?**
- **Pollen—The Dust of Life**
- **Something More Lasting Than Art**

I made the right career choice

I was offered a promotion at the bank. The job meant a measure of prestige and a higher salary. However, I had just been invited to serve in a distant congregation as a full-time pioneer minister. Looking back 32 years later, I know that I chose wisely.

AS TOLD BY SONIA ACUÑA QUEVEDO

MOTHER was raised a Roman Catholic but questioned church doctrine. Why, she wondered, should images—the product of human hands—be venerated? Religious truth was important to her, and she went from one church to another for answers, but to no avail.

One day she was sitting outside our house in Tuxtla, Mexico, enjoying the breeze when one of Jehovah's Witnesses called. Impressed by his Biblical answers to her questions, she agreed to see him again. When he returned, Mother was waiting with an Adventist minister, a Catholic priest, and a Nazarene preacher. She raised a question about the Sabbath, and only the Witness gave a satisfying Scriptural answer. In fact, he alone had a Bible! In 1956, after just six months of Bible study, she was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I was eight years old.

Father's Sincere Concerns

Father did not oppose Mother in her study of the Bible. But when she started teaching us four children—two boys and two girls—and attending Christian meetings, Father destroyed her literature. Convinced that we were being misled, he tried to use a Catholic Bible to prove that the Witnesses had deceptively put God's name—Jehovah—in their version. When Mother showed him that very name in his Bible, he was very surprised, and his attitude toward the Witnesses began to change.—Psalm 83:18.

In Mexico, a girl's 15th birthday is a special occasion. Since birthday celebrations are unscriptural, I had stopped celebrating mine.* But Father insisted on doing something special for me. I thought the matter over and said, "I want *you* to be my gift by accompanying me to the next assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses." He accepted, and his interest in the Bible grew.

One night, after a severe storm, Father was badly injured when he came in contact with a downed power line. While he was recovering in the hospital, local Witnesses gave him 24-hour care—a display of Christian love he never forgot. Later, he began to share in the public ministry and dedicated his life to Jehovah. Sadly, on September 30, 1975, one month before he was to be baptized, he died. How we yearn to embrace him in the resurrection!
—Acts 24:15.

Healthy Family Influence

My older sister, Carmen, had always held the full-time ministry in high esteem. Soon after her baptism in 1967, she became a regular pioneer, spending about 100 hours in the ministry each month. In time, she moved to the city of Toluca, in central Mexico. I got a job with a bank and was baptized on July 18, 1970.

* The only two birthday celebrations mentioned in Scripture involved pagans and are recorded in a very negative light. (Genesis 40:20-22; Mark 6:21-28) God's Word does, however, encourage giving that is motivated by the heart, not by social or peer pressure.—Proverbs 11:25; Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35; 2 Corinthians 9:7.

The full-time ministry brought Carmen great happiness, and she encouraged me to join her in Toluca. That thought was on my mind one day as I listened to a talk showing that Jesus' followers were to use their precious spiritual assets to glorify God. (Matthew 25:14-30) I asked myself, 'Am I working hard with the spiritual gifts entrusted to me?' Such thoughts kindled within me the desire to do more for Jehovah.

Deciding Between Two Goals

In 1974, I applied to serve as a pioneer minister in another territory. Soon thereafter, I received a phone call at work from a Christian elder in Toluca. "We have been waiting for you. Why aren't you here?" he asked. To my surprise, I had been appointed to serve in Toluca as a special pioneer, but my assignment letter apparently went astray in the mail! (Special pioneers agree to serve full-time wherever Jehovah's organization directs them.)

I promptly advised the bank of my decision to leave. "Wait a minute, Sonia," said my boss, waving a piece of paper. "We have just been informed that you are one of seven women selected to become assistant managers. Our company has never appointed women to that position before. Won't you accept it?" As mentioned at the outset, this promotion meant a measure of prestige and a higher salary. Still, I thanked my boss and told him that I was resolved to serve God more fully. "Go ahead, then," he said. "But remember, the bank will always be open for you should you want a job." Two days later I was in Toluca.

Special Pioneering in Mexico

When I joined her, Carmen had been serving as a special pioneer in Toluca for two years. How happy we were to be together again! But our partnership was short-lived. Three months later Mother had an accident and would thereafter need constant home

care. After consulting the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses, Carmen and I agreed that she would return home and care for Mother, which she did for 17 years. During that time, Carmen served as a regular pioneer, inviting her Bible students to the house for their study so she would be on hand to help Mother.

In 1976, I was reassigned to Tecamachalco, a city of contrasts—the poor lived on one side of town, and the wealthy, on the other. I began a Bible study with an elderly lady who had never married and lived with her wealthy brother. When she told him that she wanted to become a Witness, he threatened to evict her. Nevertheless, this humble woman was not intimidated, and after she was baptized, her brother carried out his threat. Even though she was then 86 years of age, she trusted fully in Jehovah. Cared for by the congregation, she remained faithful until her death.

Gilead School, Then Bolivia

I enjoyed five wonderful years in Tecamachalco. Then I received an invitation to attend the first Gilead Extension School to be held in Mexico. As its name suggests, it was an extension of the school held in New York. Both Mother and Carmen insisted that I accept the invitation, so off I went to the branch office in Mexico City for the ten-week course, a spiritual highlight of my life. Our class graduated on February 1, 1981, and I was assigned to La Paz, Bolivia, along with Enriqueta Ayala (now Fernández).

When we arrived in La Paz, the brothers who were to meet us had not arrived. "Why waste time?" we said. So we began to witness to the people at the airport. Three enjoyable hours later, we met the brothers from the branch. After apologizing, they said that the streets were clogged because of the carnival.

Witnessing Above the Clouds

La Paz is almost 12,000 feet above sea level, so on most days we were above the clouds.



**I climbed a rocky mountainside
to study with this family**



**In the ministry with my sister,
Carmen (on right)**

The thin air made breathing difficult, and I felt exhausted after just a short time in the ministry. Although it took me a year to adjust to the high altitude, Jehovah's blessings far outweighed the physical demands. For example, one morning in 1984, I climbed a rocky mountainside to a house perched on a peak. Exhausted, I knocked at the door, and a lady came out. We had a delightful conversation, and I said that I would call back in a few days.

"I doubt it," she replied. I did return, though, and the lady asked me to teach her daughter the Bible. "That's the parents' responsibility," I said. "However, I'll help you if you want me to." She agreed and also accepted a Bible study herself. Because she was illiterate, we started out with the booklet *Learn to Read and Write*, prepared by Jehovah's Witnesses for such occasions.

In time the family grew to eight children. When I visited, some of the children would form a human chain to help me up the slope. Eventually, the entire family served Jehovah—father, mother, and eight children. Three of the girls are pioneers, and one of the boys is a congregation elder. At the time of his death

in 2000, the father was a ministerial servant in the congregation. How my heart warms when I think of this wonderful family and their faithfulness! I thank Jehovah for allowing me to help them.

Together Again With Carmen

After Mother died in 1997, Carmen was again invited to serve as a special pioneer. In 1998 she was assigned to Cochabamba, Bolivia, where I was serving. Yes, after 18 years we were together again, and Carmen was granted missionary status. We had a wonderful time in Cochabamba, where the climate is so pleasant that the swallows, it is said, never leave! At present, we are in Sucre, Bolivia, a beautiful city of 220,000, set in a high valley. Once dubbed Little Vatican because it had so many Catholic churches, the city now has five congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Combined, Carmen and I have pioneered for over 60 years, and we have enjoyed the incomparable privilege of helping over a hundred people to baptism. Yes, to serve Jehovah whole-souled is, without a doubt, the most rewarding way of life!—Mark 12:30.

Kamchatka

RUSSIA'S PACIFIC WONDERLAND

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN RUSSIA



MORE than three hundred years ago, Russian explorers pushing east through Asia came upon a mountainous peninsula that jutted south into the Pacific Ocean, separating the Sea of Okhotsk from the Bering Sea. A little larger than Italy, this land of mysterious beauty is still largely unknown to outsiders.

On nearly the same latitude as the British Isles, Kamchatka has a cool climate. Winters are milder near the coast, but some inland

places get over 20 feet of snow and sometimes nearly 40 feet! During summer, the peninsula is frequently shrouded in sea fog and swept by strong winds. The abundant rains that fall on Kamchatka's volcanic soil produce luxuriant plant life, including berry shrubs, grasses as tall as a man, and glorious wildflowers, such as the rose known as queen of the meadow.

Stone, or Erman's, birch trees cover almost a third of the peninsula, their trunks and limbs bent and twisted by fierce winds and



heavy snows. Hardy and slow growing, these birches are unusually sturdy, and their roots tenacious, enabling the trees to grow almost anywhere—even horizontally from cliff faces! Their leaves sprout in June, often with snow still about, and turn yellow in August, heralding the coming of winter.

Volcanoes, Geysers, and Hot Springs

Located on the Ring of Fire—a belt of high seismic activity rimming the Pacific

Ocean—Kamchatka has some 30 active volcanoes. Described as having “a perfect, incredibly beautiful cone,” the Klyuchevskaya volcano rises to a height of 15,584 feet above sea level, making it the largest active volcano in Eurasia. Since 1697—the year Russian explorers first set foot on Kamchatka—more than 600 eruptions have been recorded on the peninsula.

In 1975/76, cleft, or fissure, eruptions in the Tolbachik area created a flaming “torch” over 8,000 feet high! Lightning flashed in the ash clouds. Without letting up for almost a year and a half, the eruptions created four new volcanic cones. Lakes and rivers disappeared, and hot ash desiccated entire forests down to the roots. Vast stretches of countryside were turned into desert.

Fortunately, most eruptions have occurred far from inhabited areas, and very few people have been killed. But visitors have other reasons to be cautious, especially when going to the Valley of Death, which lies at the foot of the Kichpynch volcano. When the air is still, and especially during the spring thaw, poisonous volcanic gases concentrate in the valley, making it a death trap for wildlife. On one occasion, the valley was littered with the carcasses of ten bears and numerous smaller animals.

The vast crater known as the Uzon caldera features bubbling mud pots and steaming crater lakes that are alive with colorful alga. In the same area is the Valley of Geysers, discovered in 1941. Some geysers erupt every two to three minutes, and others, every few days. Helicopters take visitors to these amazing places, situated about 110 miles north of the city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy. However, the number of visitors is strictly

A SPECTACULAR CALDERA

Uzon caldera, the basin of an ancient volcano, is about six miles across. Its steep walls embrace a "collection of everything that Kamchatka is famous for," says a reference. The basin boasts hot and cold springs, cauldrons of bubbling mud, mud volcanoes, pristine lakes alive with fish and swans, and abundant vegetation.

The book *Miracles of Kamchatka Land* says that "there is hardly another place on Earth"

where autumn is as beautiful as it is short. The scarlet tundra contrasts with the rich yellows and golds of the birch trees, while here and there the boiling earth emits pillars of white vapor that stand out against the deep-blue sky. And in the early morning, the forest "sings" as countless millions of hoarfrosted leaves fall to the ground with a tinkle, gently announcing winter's imminence.



controlled to avoid upsetting the delicate ecological balance. To that end, six areas in Kamchatka are protected as World Heritage Sites.

Kamchatka boasts numerous hot springs, many of which, in the 85- to 100-degree-Fahrenheit range, delight visitors and provide some compensation for the long, cold winter

months. Geothermal heat has also been used to produce electricity. In fact, Russia's first geothermal power plant was built on this peninsula.

Bears, Salmon, and Sea Eagles

About 10,000 brown bears still roam Kamchatka. Their average weight is 350 to 450 pounds, although they can grow to nearly

A DEADLY LAKE!

In 1996 a volcano thought to be extinct erupted beneath Karymsky Lake, creating 30-foot waves that flattened surrounding forests. In minutes the lake became too acidic to support life. Nevertheless, no dead animals were found near the lake, despite the volcanic fallout and the waves that swept the shoreline, explains researcher Andrew Logan.

three times that size if left alone. In the folklore of the indigenous Itelmen people, the bear was their “brother,” and they respected these animals. This brotherhood ended with the arrival of firearms. Now conservationists fear for the animals’ future.

The bears are shy and thus seldom seen. But in June, when the salmon start to spawn in the rivers, bears come in large numbers to feast on the fish, and one bear can eat two dozen salmon! Why such a voracious appetite? During the summer, bears must accumulate enough body fat to sustain them through the lean, cold months of winter, which they spend asleep in sheltered dens in order to conserve energy.

Another animal with an appetite for salmon is Steller’s sea eagle, a magnificent bird with a wingspan of up to eight feet. Mostly black, it has a patch of white on the shoulders and a wedge-shaped, white tail. Now numbering about 5,000 and decreasing, the eagles are found only in this region of the world and, on occasion, in the Aleutian and Pribilof islands of Alaska. The birds use the same nests year after year, maintaining and adding to them. One nest reached ten feet in diameter and grew so heavy that it cracked the birch tree supporting it!

“Prior to the eruption,” he says, “several million fish (primarily salmon and trout) were known to live in Karymsky Lake. After the eruption the lake was devoid of life.” A number of fish may have survived, however. Scientists speculate that some kind of warning signal—perhaps a change in water chemistry—had alerted the fish, causing them to flee into the nearby Karymsky River.

Kamchatka's Human Inhabitants

The present-day inhabitants of Kamchatka are mostly Russians, but several thousand indigenous people remain, the largest group being the Koryak, who live in the north. Other groups include the Chukchi and Itelmen, each with its own language. Most of the inhabitants of Kamchatka live in Petropavlovsk-Kamchatskiy, the administrative center. The rest of the peninsula is sparsely populated, and most coastal and riverside villages are accessible only by boat or aircraft.

Fishing and crabbing are the economic mainstay. Kamchatka’s giant red crabs are especially popular. With a spread of five or six feet from claw to claw, they add interest and color to vending tables.

Since 1989, Jehovah’s Witnesses have visited Kamchatka with a different kind of fishing in mind. As “fishers of men,” they have been bringing the good news of God’s Kingdom to the isolated people of Kamchatka. (Matthew 4:19; 24:14) Some have responded, and now these help still others to know and worship the Creator, Jehovah God, rather than his creation. As a result, many local people are being set free from the common fear of evil spirits. (James 4:7) They are also learning about a future time when the entire earth, cleansed of all evil and evildoers, will be “filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea.”—Isaiah 11:9.

- 1 Corinthians 1:12.
- 2 Samuel 23:15-17. 6. Gethsemane, or Peter-John 1:42;
- 3. Jeremiah, 580 B.C.E. 4. Gad, 55 C.E. 5. David-Matthew 26:27, 28. ♦ Jesus, blood.
- ♦ Jesus’ body—Matthew 26:26. ♦ Jesus’ blood.
- 1. Jerusalem—Matthew 21:10, 17, 18; 26:17-19.

Is Humility a Weakness or a Strength?

THE proud and assertive are often portrayed by the world as the people to imitate. The humble and meek tend to be seen as feeble, timid, or fawning. But is genuine humility really a weakness? And is pride actually a strength? What does the Bible say?

At the outset, it must be stated that the Bible speaks well of certain forms of pride. For example, Christians should be proud that Jehovah is their God and that he knows them. (Psalm 47:4; Jeremiah 9:24; 2 Thessalonians 1:3, 4) Parents can be proud of their children when these set a fine example in Christian conduct and courageously stand firm for true worship. (Proverbs 27:11) However, pride also has a dark side.

A Closer Look at Pride and Humility

One definition of pride is inordinate self-esteem. That kind of pride gives one an improper feeling of self-importance and superiority, perhaps because of beauty, race, rank, talents, or wealth. (James 4:13-16) The Bible speaks of men being “puffed up with pride.” (2 Timothy 3:4) In other words, they have an inflated opinion of themselves, one that is unjustified.

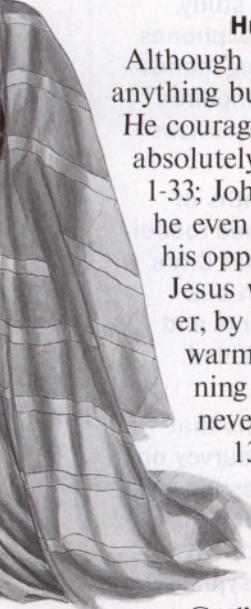
The humble, on the other hand, try to view themselves honestly and objectively, acknowledging their imperfections and their lowly position before God. (1 Peter 5:6) What is more, they recognize—and even rejoice in—the superior qualities they see in others.



Children were drawn to Jesus because he was a humble man

(Philippians 2:3) Hence, they do not become bitter with envy or consumed by jealousy. (Galatians 5:26) It stands to reason, therefore, that genuine humility fosters good relationships with others and contributes to emotional security and stability.

Consider the example of Jesus. Before coming to earth, he was a powerful spirit creature in heaven. And when on earth, he was a perfect, sinless man. (John 17:5; 1 Peter 2:21, 22) He had unmatched ability, intelligence, and knowledge. Yet, he never showed off but always remained humble. (Philippians 2:6) He even washed the feet of his apostles on one occasion; and he took a genuine interest in little children. (Luke 18:15, 16; John 13:4, 5) In fact, with a child at his side, Jesus said: “Whoever will humble himself like this young child is the one that is the greatest in the kingdom of the heavens.” (Matthew 18:2-4) Yes, in the eyes of Jesus—and of his Father—true



greatness is borne of humility, not of pride.
—James 4:10.

Humility Is a Strength

Although a model of humility, Jesus was anything but a fawning or timid weakling. He courageously spoke the truth and had absolutely no fear of man. (Matthew 23:1-33; John 8:13, 44-47; 19:10, 11) Hence, he even earned the respect of some of his opposers. (Mark 12:13, 17; 15:5) But Jesus was never domineering. Rather, by humility, kindness, and love, he warmly appealed to people, thus winning hearts in a way that the proud never can. (Matthew 11:28-30; John 13:1; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15) Even today, millions loyally submit to Christ out of genuine love and deep respect for him.—Revelation 7:9, 10.

God's Word encourages humility because the lowly in heart readily accept counsel and are a delight to teach. (Luke 10:21; Colossians 3:10, 12) Like Apollos, an eloquent early Christian teacher, they are happy to adjust their viewpoint when presented with accurate new information. (Acts 18:24-26) And they are unafraid to ask questions, whereas the proud often refrain from doing so, for fear of having their ignorance exposed.

Note the example of a first-century Ethiopian eunuch, who was puzzled about a certain passage of Scripture. "Do you actually know what you are reading?" the Christian disciple Philip asked him. The Ethiopian replied: "Really, how could I ever do so, unless someone guided me?" What humility—especially considering that the eunuch was like ly a man of note in his homeland! Thanks to

his humility, he received deep insight into the Scriptures.—Acts 8:26-38.

The Ethiopian presents a sharp contrast to the Jewish scribes and Pharisees, who considered themselves the religious elite of their time. (Matthew 23:5-7) Instead of humbly listening to Jesus and his followers, they sneered at them and tried to find fault with them. Thus, their pride kept them in spiritual darkness.—John 7:32, 47-49; Acts 5:29-33.

Are You Like Soft Clay or Hard Clay?

The Bible likens Jehovah to a potter and humans to clay. (Isaiah 64:8) Humility helps a person to be like soft clay in God's hands, someone he can mold into a desirable vessel; whereas the haughty are like dry, hard clay that can only be crushed. An infamous example of the latter is the proud Pharaoh of ancient Egypt who defied Jehovah at the cost of his life. (Exodus 5:2; 9:17; Psalm 136:15) Pharaoh's demise well illustrates the proverb: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling."—Proverbs 16:18.

The aforementioned does not imply that God's people never struggle with pride. Jesus' apostles, for example, often argued over who was the greatest among them. (Luke 22:24-27) Still, they were not consumed by pride but listened to Jesus and eventually changed their attitude.

"The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life," wrote Solomon. (Proverbs 22:4) What sound reasons we have for cultivating humility! Not only is it a strong and endearing quality but it also helps us to gain God's favor and the reward of everlasting life.—2 Samuel 22:28; James 4:10.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Are all forms of pride bad?—2 Thessalonians 1:3, 4.
- How does humility promote learning?—Acts 8:26-38.
- Do God's servants need to cultivate humility?—Luke 22:24-27.
- What future lies before the humble?—Proverbs 22:4.



Diabetes—A Worldwide Epidemic

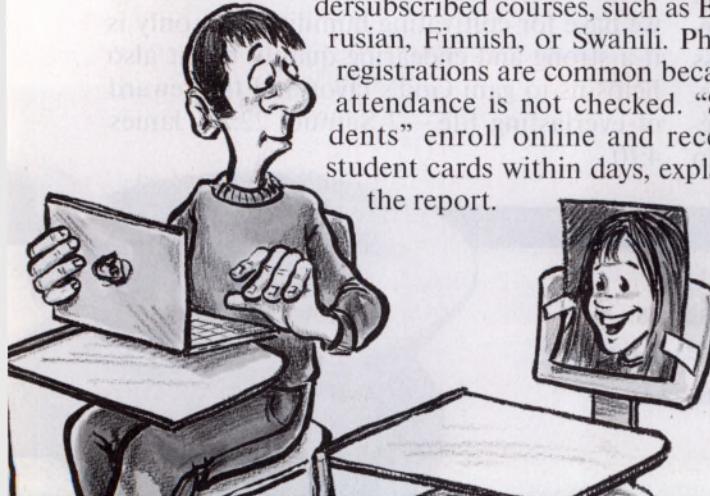
The *New York Times* says that data from the International Diabetes Federation indicates that in the last 20 years, the number of people worldwide diagnosed with diabetes has increased from 30 million to 230 million. Of the ten countries with the highest number of people with the disease, seven are in the developing world. "Diabetes is one of the biggest health catastrophes the world has ever seen," said Dr. Martin Silink, the federation's president. "In some of the world's poorest nations, the disease is a quick death sentence," notes the report.

World's Highest Railway

The world's highest railway, inaugurated in July 2006, links Beijing with Tibet's capital, Lhasa, a distance of about 2,500 miles. "The railway," says *The New York Times*, "is an engineering marvel that traverses unstable permafrost and reaches more than 16,000 feet above sea level." Among the challenges overcome by engineers was that of keeping the track bed frozen all year round to reduce instability. The altitudes reached make it necessary to pump air into the compartments, which are also equipped with oxygen for individual passenger use.

"Phantom Students"

From 10 to 20 percent of first-year students enrolled to study literature at one French university "never show up for lectures," reports the newspaper *Le Figaro*. Some take advantage of student status to obtain social security benefits and discounts on flights, hotels, public transportation, and movies. To receive benefits "phantom students" sign up for undersubscribed courses, such as Belarusian, Finnish, or Swahili. Phony registrations are common because attendance is not checked. "Students" enroll online and receive student cards within days, explains the report.



■ According to one study, "people who talk on cellphones while driving, even using 'hands-free' devices, are as impaired as drunk drivers."—REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, U.S.A.

■ The first five months of 2006 saw 30,200 armed robberies occur on Guatemala City's public buses. Fourteen bus drivers or their assistants and ten passengers were killed.

—PRENSA LIBRE, GUATEMALA.

■ Of the 124 nations that responded to a WHO survey on blood collection and testing practices, 56 "did not screen all of their donated blood for HIV, hepatitis B and C and syphilis."

—WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION, SWITZERLAND.

■ The number of Australians who lived together before marriage grew from about 5 percent in the 1960's to just over 70 percent in 2003.—UNIVERSITY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA.

'Sealed Off From the World'

Israeli scientists believe that they have discovered eight new species of invertebrates in a cave that "had been sealed off from the outside world" for countless centuries, says *The Jerusalem Post*. Excavators working in a quarry found a small opening that led down to a cave that had a total length of about one and a half miles and contained a chamber with a lake. The new species, some of which resemble scorpions, include two seawater and two freshwater crustaceans and four terrestrial species.

“Nature’s Wisdom”

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN JAPAN



THAT theme rang out from Aichi, Japan, the venue for Expo 2005, in which 121 countries participated. Visitors were encouraged to learn from nature and to “make serious efforts to discover paths to sustainable growth.” Located near Nagoya, in central Japan, the exposition site featured forests, ponds, and flowers. A unique attraction was a 1.6-mile-long elevated walkway called the Global Loop. Almost 70 feet wide, it afforded panoramic views, while at the same time preserving the natural beauty below.

At One With Nature

Resembling a massive cocoon, a woven bamboo outer “skin” made up of 23,000 lengths of bamboo covered the Japan pavilion, shielding it from the sun’s heat. The bamboo stems averaged 23 feet in length, and the building measured 62 feet high, 295 feet wide, and 230 feet deep, making it one of the largest bamboo structures in the world. The pavilion featured a 360-degree spherical video-imaging system. Inside the 42-foot diameter sphere and completely surrounded by

moving images, visitors could savor the sensation of being at one, so to speak, with the earth and its abundance of life.

Using multimedia displays, the Malaysia pavilion portrayed that country’s rain forests and coral reefs. In the Thailand pavilion, heartrending scenes of the December 26, 2004, tsunami reminded viewers that “man is not the master of nature.” Pointing to the specter of extinction, the South Africa exhibit featured the replica of a quagga foal, a zebra-like mammal that roamed the plains of southern Africa until it was hunted to extinction in the 19th century.

In a refrigerated display adjacent to the Expo’s theme pavilion were the remains of a mammoth unearthed in the permafrost of Siberia, Russia, in 2002. Named the Yukagir Mammoth, after its discovery site, this example of an extinct species of elephant had two huge, curved tusks, and its eyes were partially open. Its head was still covered with skin and tufts of hair. An amazing specimen, the mammoth served as another poignant reminder of extinction.



▲ Nanobubble display



▼ Driverless buses

A Better Future?

How can humans deal with threats to the future of our planet, such as pollution and global warming? Described as “the symbol of Expo 2005,” a massive “green” wall—called Bio-Lung—stood 490 feet long and up to 50 feet high. The wall was made up of 200,000 plants of 200 species, including flowers. It was suggested that a number of such “lungs,” which can be seasonally adjusted, could serve as a city’s respiratory organ and air filter, absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen.

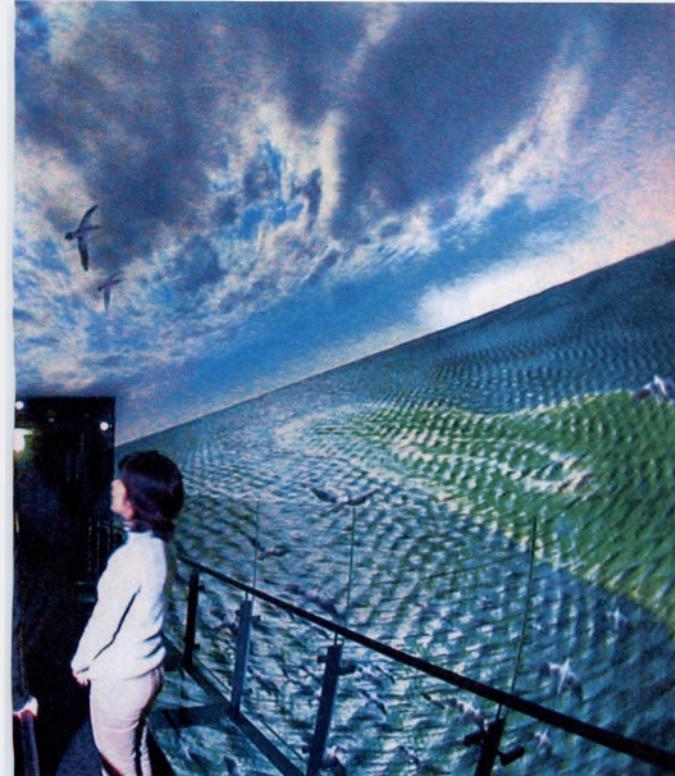
The Expo also featured transportation that included hybrid buses powered by electricity. As these vehicles shuttled people about, the only emission from their exhausts was water. Another treat for technology lovers was Japan’s first commercially operated maglev linear train, named *Linimo*. Using powerful magnets, *Linimo* rode quietly and smoothly about a quarter of an inch above its rails. Also on display were battery-powered trams, bicycle taxis, and buslike vehicles that could operate with or without drivers. Speeding along in two’s or three’s, these futuristic vehicles used natural gas, which is cleaner than regular fuels.

Imagine turning organic waste, such as food garbage, into electricity and fertilizer. An energy plant at the site used a process

called methane fermentation to do just that. Instead of incinerating garbage, the plant fermented it and turned it into methane gas, from which hydrogen was extracted. Fuel cells, which use chemical reactions to create electricity, oxidized the hydrogen to generate electricity. The by-products were water and fertilizer. In fact, the plant processed all the organic waste produced at the Expo, and the resulting electricity powered some of the pavilions.

Considerable research is being done in the field of robotics, with the goal of producing lightweight machines capable of serving as personal assistants to humans. Demonstrating some of the advances in robot technology, seven robots walked to center stage in one pavilion and drew in the crowds with music. Some played wind instruments, their “fingers” nimbly working the keys, while another played the drums. “Their movements were so smooth and agile that they could have passed for humans in disguise,” said an observer.

Two other high-tech inventions were biode-



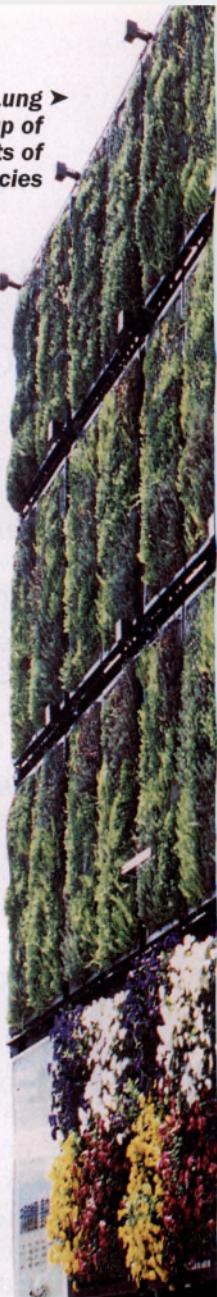
◀ **The 360-degree spherical video-imaging system**

The Bio-Lung ▶
was made up of
200,000 plants of
200 species

voices of ignorance, greed, and corruption are drowning out opposing voices. As a result, the earth has become "the Wounded Planet," as stated at one exhibit. But even the well intentioned have no reliable answers to mankind's problems and the earth's ecological woes. According to the Bible, these answers are beyond the scope of human knowledge and wisdom. (Jeremiah 10: 23) Yet, the situation is far from hopeless. How so?

The Bible tells us that the very highest Source of wisdom —our Creator—will intervene

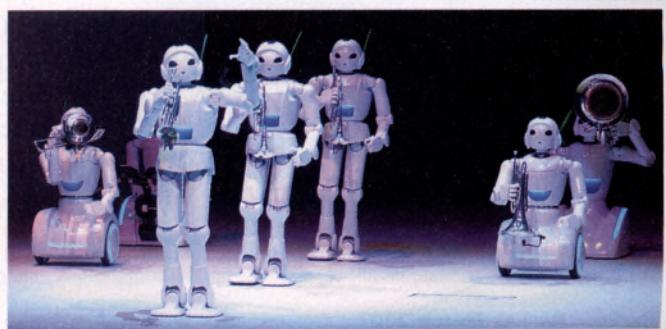
in earth's affairs before humans ruin his handiwork. (Revelation 4:11; 11:18) "Just a little while longer, and the wicked one will be no more . . . But the meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace," says Psalm 37:10, 11. True, we are wise to listen to nature, but we are much wiser to listen to the Creator by reading and applying his Word, the Holy Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) All who do so will see our ailing planet thoroughly healed and transformed into a paradise.—Luke 23:43.



gradable plastics made from cornstarch and similar products and nanobubbles —tiny gas bubbles less than 200 nanometers in diameter. A human hair is about 50,000 nanometers in diameter. Such tiny bubbles are normally very unstable and quickly disappear. Researchers in Japan, however, have developed technology for producing stable nanobubbles of oxygen, which enhance "the ability of fish and shellfish to adapt to environmental changes." In fact, an aquarium saturated with nanobubbles of oxygen was able to accommodate certain species of both freshwater and saltwater fish! Researchers hope to find applications of this new technology in fish farming, agriculture, and other areas.

Is the World Listening?

Although the Expo stressed the need to listen to "nature's wisdom," by and large, the world is not giving ear. The



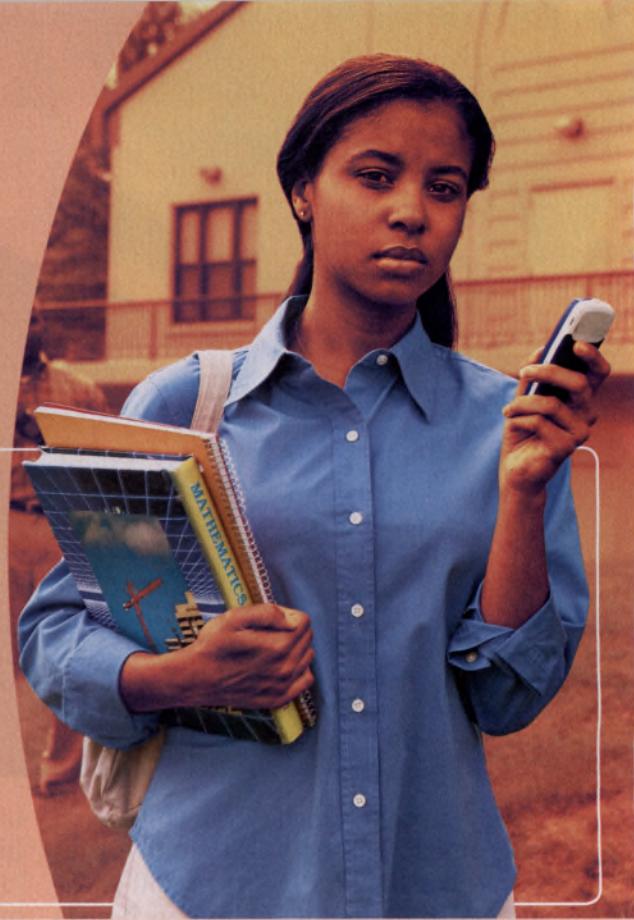
Robots entertained the audience with music ▶

What if I'm invited to "hook up"?

*"Kids hook up just to see how far they can go with each other and to see how many people they can have sex with."—Penny.**

"Boys speak openly about it. They brag about how they have a girlfriend but still have sex with many other girls."—Edward.

"Those who invited me to hook up were very up front about it. Saying no doesn't stop them!"—Ida.



IN SOME lands they're called hookups. In other places they're known by a different term. In Japan, for example, they're called take-outs, says young Akiko. "There is also the term *sefre*, meaning 'sex friend,'" she says. "The only reason for your friendship is to have sex."

Whatever the label, the meaning is the same—casual sex with no emotional strings attached.[#] Some youths even boast of having what are termed "friends with benefits"—acquaintances with whom they can have sex without the "complication" of long-term romance. "With a hookup, it's about instant gratification," says one young woman. "You get what you want, then you can walk away."

* Names in this article have been changed.

[#] The terms can also refer to other intimate conduct, such as fondling and passionate kissing.

As a Christian, you should "flee from fornication."^{*} (1 Corinthians 6:18) Knowing this, you likely strive to avoid situations that could get you into trouble. Sometimes, though, trouble comes to you. "At school, many boys have asked me to hook up with them," says Cindy. The same thing could happen at work. "My manager invited me to hook up," says Margaret. "He was so persistent that I had to quit my job!"

On the other hand, don't be surprised if part of you is tempted. "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate," the Bible says. (Jeremiah 17:9) A girl named Lourdes found that to be true. "I

* Fornication includes such things as sexual intercourse, oral and anal sex, homosexual acts, masturbating another person, and other acts between two people not married to each other that clearly involve the misuse of the genitals.

liked the guy who asked me to have sex with him," she admits. Jane had a similar experience. "My emotions were strong," she confides. "Saying no was one of the most difficult things I have ever had to do." Edward, quoted earlier, also admits that staying chaste is not easy. "Many girls have offered me sex, and resisting is the most difficult struggle I have as a Christian," he says. "It's hard to say no!"

If you have felt similarly to Lourdes, Jane, and Edward but did the right thing in Jehovah God's eyes, you are to be commended for doing what is right. You may be comforted to know that the apostle Paul also faced a continual battle with wrong inclinations.—Romans 7:21-24.

What Bible principles should you keep in mind if you are invited to have casual sex?

Know Why Casual Sex Is Wrong

The Bible condemns sexual relations outside of marriage. Indeed, fornication is so serious a sin that those who practice it "will not inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) To resist the temptation to engage in casual sex, you must personally view the practice as Jehovah does. Virtue must be *your* choice.

"I firmly believe that Jehovah's way is the best way to live."—Karen, Canada.

"Much is lost when one ignores Jehovah's moral laws just for a few moments of pleasure."—Vivian, Mexico.

"Remember that you are somebody's son or daughter, a friend to many people, and part of a congregation. You would let all these people down if you gave in!"—Peter, Britain.

The apostle Paul wrote: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:10) By acquiring Jehovah's view of fornication, you will be able to "hate what is bad," even though it may appeal to the imperfect flesh.—Psalm 97:10.

■ *Suggested reading:* Genesis 39:7-9. Notice Joseph's brave stand against sexual temptation and what enabled him to resist.

Be Proud of Your Beliefs

It is not unusual for youths to stand up proudly for and defend a cause that they believe in. As a Christian, your privilege is to defend God's name by your exemplary conduct. Don't be ashamed of your nonnegotiable view of premarital sex.

"Make it clear right from the start that you have moral principles."—Allen, Germany.

"Don't be apologetic about your beliefs."—Esther, Nigeria.

"Peers will not respect your position on hooking up if you say something like, 'My parents won't allow me to date.' You have to let your peers know that *you* are not interested in dating them."—Janet, South Africa.

"The boys I went to high school with knew who I was, and they knew that their attempts would be a waste of their breath."—Vicky, United States.

Taking a stand for your beliefs is a sign that you are becoming a mature Christian.—1 Corinthians 14:20.

■ *Suggested reading:* Proverbs 27:11. See how your actions can actually defend the greatest cause of all time—the sanctification of Jehovah's name!

■ The Bible says that a person who practices fornication "is sinning against his own body." (1 Corinthians 6:18) How is that true? See if you can think of some ways, and list them below.

Hint: To help you answer the above question, consult *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, page 188, and *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 1, page 863. Both books are published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



Be Firm!

Saying no is important. But some might misread your refusal as playing “hard to get.”

“Saying no could be viewed as a challenge, an obstacle to overcome, making it more like a chase.”—*Lauren, Canada*.

“Everything about you—including how you dress, how you talk, who you talk to, and how you relate to people—should convey your refusal.”—*Joy, Nigeria*.

“Your no must be firm and resounding.”—*Daniel, Australia*.

“Be strong! When a young man made a suggestive invitation to me, I said, ‘Get your hand off my shoulder!’ and I walked away with a stern look.”—*Ellen, Britain*.

“You have to be blunt and say that you are not interested and never will be. This is no time to seem meek!”—*Jean, Scotland*.

“One boy continued to bother me with in-

You need to make it clear that it is never going to happen

vitations and derisive comments. The time came when I had to be extremely firm. Only then did the harassment stop.”—*Juanita, Mexico*.

“You need to make it clear that *it is never going to happen*. Never accept gifts from boys who are trying to get their way with you. They can use it against you, as if you owe them something in return.”—*Lara, Britain*.

Jehovah will help you if you show yourself to be firm. Based on his personal experience, the psalmist David could say of Jehovah: “With someone loyal you will act in loyalty.”—Psalm 18:25.

■ *Suggested reading:* 2 Chronicles 16:9. Note how Jehovah is eager to help those whose heart is complete toward him.

Use Foresight

The Bible states: “Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself.” (Proverbs 22:3) How can you follow that advice? By using foresight!

“Separate yourself as much as possible from people who talk about such things.”—*Naomi, Japan*.

“Avoid associations and situations that could be dangerous. For example, I have known some who gave in to temptation when they were under the influence of alcohol.”—*Isha, Brazil*.

“Don’t give out personal information, such as your address or phone number.”—*Diana, Britain*.

TO THINK ABOUT

- Although illicit sex may appeal to the imperfect flesh, why is it wrong?
- What will you do if someone asks you to have casual sex?

More articles from the “Young People Ask . . .” series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

"Don't freely give hugs to your classmates."
—Esther, Nigeria.

"Watch how you dress. Your clothes should not be provocative."—Heidi, Germany.

"Having a good relationship with your parents and talking about this situation with them is a strong protection."—Akiko, Japan.

Analyze your speech, conduct, associations, and the places you frequent. Then ask yourself, 'Am I putting myself in a position—or unwittingly sending out signals—that will make invitations to engage in sex more likely?'

■ *Suggested reading:* Genesis 34:1, 2. See

how being in the wrong place had tragic consequences for a girl named Dinah.

Remember, "casual" sex is no casual matter to Jehovah God; neither should it be to you. The Bible says: "No fornicator or unclean person . . . has any inheritance in the kingdom of the Christ and of God." (Ephesians 5:5) By taking a stand for what is right, you can preserve a clean conscience and maintain self-respect. As a girl named Carly puts it, "Why let yourself be 'used' for someone else's instant gratification? Take care of what you have worked so hard to maintain!"

A NOTE TO PARENTS

"In school a classmate asked me to 'hook up' with him. It took me a while to figure out what he was asking for. I was just 11."—Leah.

The subject of sex is being introduced to children at a remarkably young age. The Bible long ago foretold that "the last days" would be marked by "critical times hard to deal with," in which people would be "without self-control" and "lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God." (2 Timothy 3:1, 3, 4) The trend of "hooking up," highlighted here in the article for youths, is one of many indications that this prophecy has proved true.

The world today is vastly different from the one in which you were raised. In some ways, though, the issues are the same. So do not feel overwhelmed or intimidated by the bad influences

that surround your children. Instead, be determined to help them to do as the apostle Paul urged Christians some 2,000 years ago: "Put on the complete suit of armor from God that you may be able to stand firm against the machinations of the Devil." (Ephesians 6:11) The fact is, many Christian youths are putting up a commendable fight to do what is right, despite the negative influences that surround them. How can you help your children to do the same?

One way is to use this information to open a discussion with your son or daughter. The "suggested reading" sections contain references to thought-provoking scrip-

tures. Some highlight the true-life examples of those who either took a stand for what was right and reaped blessings or ignored God's laws and paid the consequences. Other scriptures in the "suggested reading" sections contain principles that can help your children recognize the great privilege that they—and you—have of living by God's laws. Why not plan to review this material with them now?

Conforming to God's standards always works for our good. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Ignoring them inevitably leads to heartache. The publishers of Awake! wish you Jehovah's blessing as you strive to inculcate God's laws and principles into the hearts of your children.—Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.

■ SEARCH in almost every type of watery habitat around the world—mosses, ice, streambeds, hot springs, lakes, oceans, and maybe your own backyard—and you might chance upon a water bear, one of the hardiest little creatures in all creation. So tiny that it is barely visible, a water bear has a short, four-segmented body covered with a protective cuticle, and it has eight limbs, each ending in a set of claws. Its overall shape and gait resemble those of a lumbering bear, hence its name.

Water bears are tardigrades, meaning "slow walkers." Hundreds of species are known, and females lay from 1 to 30 eggs at a time. Tens of thousands of these tiny creatures may be found in just a few handfuls of wet sand or soil. A particularly good place to find them is in roof mosses.

Water bears can survive in the most extreme environments. "Specimens kept for eight days in a vacuum, transferred for three days into helium gas at room temperature, and then exposed for several hours to a tem-

perature of -272°C (-458°F) came to life again when they were brought to normal-room temperature," states the *Encyclopædia Britannica*. They can also survive many hundreds of times the levels of X-ray radiation that would kill a human. And, theoretically at least, they may be capable of surviving even the vacuum of space for a time!

Their secret is their ability to go into a deathlike state during which their metabolism slows to less than 0.01 percent of normal—virtually undetectable! To enter this state, they draw their legs inside their body, replace lost water with a special sugar, and curl into a tiny, wax-covered ball called a tun. When normal, moist conditions return, they become active again within a few minutes to a few hours. In one instance, water bears that were in a state of suspended animation for 100 years were successfully revived!

Yes, in their own quiet but wonderful way, these tiny "creeping things" praise Jehovah.
—Psalm 148:10, 13.

THE ALMOST INDESTRUCTIBLE WaterBear

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN JAPAN





WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

- 1.** Where did the Lord's Evening Meal first take place? Circle your answer on the map.
 ♦ What does the unleavened bread represent?
 ♦ What does the red wine represent?

■ For Discussion:
 What does the Lord's Evening Meal commemorate? What do you like about this event?

WHEN IN HISTORY?

Name the writer(s) of each of the Bible books below, and draw a line connecting the book to the date it was completed.



2
2 Samuel



3
2 Kings



4
2 Corinthians

1040 B.C.E.
1077 B.C.E.

580 B.C.E.

55 C.E.
66 C.E.

(Answers on page 19)

FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

Page 8 What do we need to make sure of? (Philippians 1:____)

Page 9 How can you become wise? (Proverbs 13:____)

Page 20 Who will be greatest in "the kingdom of the heavens"? (Matthew 18:____)

Page 29 Who will not inherit the Kingdom? (Ephesians 5:____)

WHO AM I?

- 5.** My friends brought me water to drink, but I poured it out as if it were blood.

WHO AM I?

- 6.** Some said they belonged to me; others said they belonged to Paul, to Apollos, or to Christ.



Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

An Event You Should Not Miss

“Keep doing this in remembrance of me.”

Those words of our Lord Jesus Christ, found at Luke 22:19, were spoken at the time that he instituted the Memorial of his death. It is Jesus' death that opened to humankind the prospect of attaining everlasting life in Paradise conditions. So his death is something we should remember.

Will you observe the Memorial of it this year?

Please accept this invitation from Jehovah's Witnesses to meet with them in memorializing this important event. This observance will be after sundown on the date that corresponds with Nisan 14 on the Bible's lunar calendar. This year that date is **Monday, April 2**. Jehovah's Witnesses locally can tell you the location and the exact time that this event will be observed in your community.

