

AUGUST 1, 2003

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## POVERTY

What Can Be  
Done About It?



# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

## IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 The Poor Get Poorer
- 4 Poverty—Finding the Permanent Solution
- 8 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 9 Jehovah, the God of Truth
- 14 Imitating the God of Truth
- 20 "You Received Free, Give Free"
- 23 Happy Is the One Whose God Is Jehovah
- 28 Questions From Readers
- 29 Learning the Art of Being Tactful
- 32 "Two People Knocked on Our Door"

## WATCHTOWER STUDIES

### SEPTEMBER 1-7:

Jehovah, the God of Truth.  
Page 9. Songs to be used: 49, 154.

### SEPTEMBER 8-14:

Imitating the God of Truth.  
Page 14. Songs to be used: 148, 135.

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# THE POOR Get Poorer

*"No society can surely be flourishing and happy, of which the far greater part of the members are poor and miserable."*

ECONOMIST Adam Smith made that statement back in the 18th century. Many are convinced that the truth of what he said is even more obvious today. The contrast between the haves and the have-nots has become even starker. In the Philippines, one third of the population live on less than \$1 (U.S.) per day, an amount that is often earned in minutes in wealthier nations. The United Nations *Human Development Report 2002* says that "the richest 5% of the world's people have incomes 114 times those of the poorest 5%."

While some live in relative comfort, millions live as squatters, setting up shacks wherever they can. Others are not that fortunate; they live on the street, with perhaps

only a piece of cardboard or plastic between them and the ground. Many of them eke out a living in whatever way they can—scavenging in garbage dumps, hauling heavy loads, or collecting recyclables in pushcarts.

Not only are inequalities between rich and poor found in developing nations but, as the World Bank states, "'pockets of poverty' are common in all countries." From Bangladesh to the United States, no matter how well-off some may be, there are those who struggle to have enough to eat or to have a roof over their head. *The New York Times* quoted a 2001 U.S. Census Bureau report indicating that the gap between rich and poor in the United States has continued to grow. It said: "The most affluent fifth of the population received half of all household income last year . . . The poorest fifth received 3.5 percent." The situation is the same or worse in scores of other countries. A World Bank report showed that about 57 percent of the world's population live on less than \$2 per day.

To make matters worse, in 2002, millions were disturbed by reports of executives who became wealthy under questionable circumstances. Even if nothing



outrightly illegal was done, many have felt that these company officials, as stated in *Fortune* magazine, "were getting immensely, extraordinarily, obscenely wealthy." Putting it in the context of what is happening in the world, some wonder how such extreme windfalls, estimated in the hundreds of millions of dollars for some individuals, can be justified when so many live in poverty.

### Poverty Here to Stay?

This is not to say that no one is trying to do something about the plight of the poor.

Well-meaning government officials and help organizations have certainly put forth proposals for change. Nevertheless, the facts remain discouraging. The *Human Development Report 2002* says that "many countries are poorer than 10, 20 and in some cases 30 years ago," in spite of many noble efforts to make improvement.

Does this leave the poor without hope? We invite you to read the next article to consider some practical wisdom that can help right now as well as solutions that you might not have thought of.

## POVERTY Finding the Permanent Solution

IN SPITE of negative reports from around the world about poverty, there are those who remain optimistic that something concrete can be done. For example, according to a headline in the *Manila Bulletin*, the Asian Development Bank reported that "Asia can eradicate poverty in 25 years." The bank recommended economic growth as a way to pull people from the depths of poverty.

Other organizations and governments have put forth a long list of suggestions and plans to try to solve the problem. Among them are: social insurance programs, improved education, canceling debts developing nations owe to industrialized nations, removing import barriers so that nations with

a large percentage of poor people can sell their products more easily, and low-income housing for the poor.

In the year 2000, the United Nations General Assembly set goals to be achieved by 2015. These included the eliminating of extreme poverty and hunger as well as gross inequality of income within countries. However noble such goals may be, many doubt that they can be achieved in this disunited world.

### Practical Steps to Deal With Poverty

Since hope for real progress on a worldwide scale is slim, where can a person turn for help? As mentioned earlier, there is a



source of practical wisdom that can help people right now. What is it? It is God's Word, the Bible.

What makes the Bible different from all other sources of information? It comes from the highest authority, our Creator. He has included in its pages gems of wisdom—practical principles that are applicable to all people, in all places, and at all times. If followed, these principles can help the poor to enjoy a more satisfying life even now. Let us look at a few examples.

*Have a proper view of money.* The Bible says: "Wisdom is for a protection the same as money is for a protection; but the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners." (Ecclesiastes 7:12) What is the point? Money is not everything. True, it provides a measure of security. It enables us to buy certain things we need, but it has its limitations. There are things of greater value that money cannot buy. Recognition of this fact will help us keep material things in proper perspective, thus avoiding the frustrations of those whose lives center on the accumulation of money. Money cannot buy life, but acting in wisdom can protect life now and can even open up the possibility of endless life.

*Live within your means.* Our wants are not necessarily the same as our needs. Priority should be given to our needs. We can easily convince ourselves that we need something, when in reality it is a want and not a need. The wise person will first allot earned income to immediate needs—food, clothing, shelter, and so on. Then, before spending on anything extra, he will determine if his remaining funds can cover additional items. In one of his illustrations, Jesus recommended that a person "first sit down and calculate the expense, to see if he has enough."—Luke 14:28.

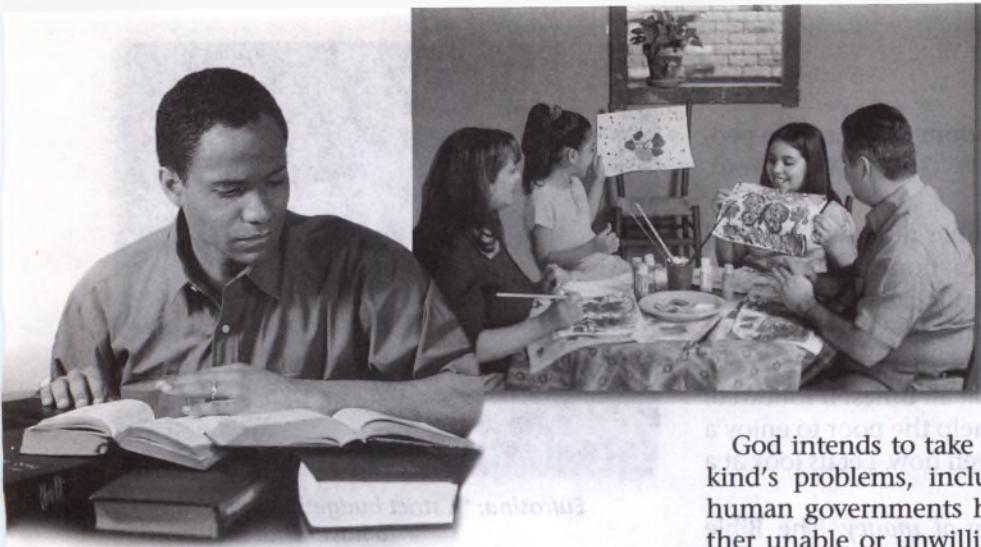
In the Philippines, Eufrosina, a single parent with three children, has had the chal-



*Eufrosina: "A strict budget helps my family to have what they need"*

lenge of earning a living and following a strict budget since her husband left her some years ago. While doing so, she has trained her children to recognize priorities in the budget. For example, the children may see something that they would like. Instead of just saying no, she reasons with them by saying: "Well, you can have that if you like, but you will have to decide. We have enough money for only one thing. We can buy this thing that you like, or we can buy a little meat or vegetables to go along with our rice for this week. Now, which would you like? You decide." Usually, the children quickly see the point and agree that they would like to have food rather than something else.

*Be content.* "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things," states another Bible principle. (1 Timothy 6:8) Money in itself does not bring happiness. A lot of wealthy people are unhappy, while many poor people are very happy. These latter ones have learned to be satisfied with just the simple things needed in life. Jesus spoke of having a 'simple eye' that is focused on the more important things. (Matthew 6:22) This helps a person to be content. Many poor people feel quite satisfied because they have cultivated a good relationship with



**A good relationship with God and a happy family life cannot be bought with money**

God and have a happy family life—things that cannot be purchased with money.

These are just a few examples of the Bible's practical suggestions that can help those who are poor to cope with their situation. There are many more. For instance, avoid such vices as smoking and gambling, which waste resources; identify the more important things in life, particularly spiritual goals; where employment is limited, try to provide a skill or service that others need. (Proverbs 22:29; 23:21; Philippians 1:9-11) The Bible recommends application of such "practical wisdom and thinking ability" because "they will prove to be life to your soul."—Proverbs 3:21, 22.

While the Bible's suggestions may provide some helpful relief to those wrestling with poverty, questions about the future still remain. Are the poor doomed to stay in the clutches of poverty forever? Will the inequalities between the very wealthy and the extremely poor ever be rectified? Let us examine a solution that many are not aware of.

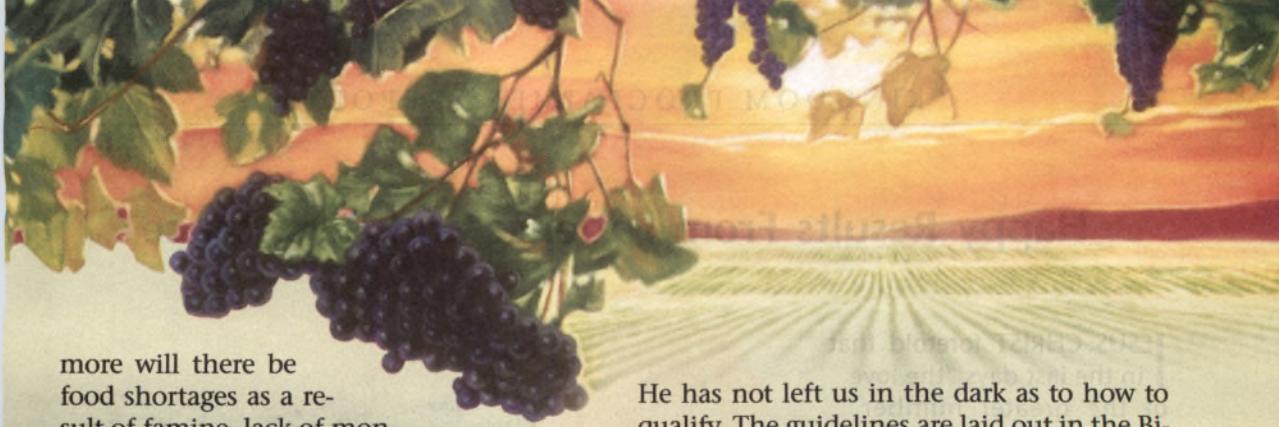
### The Bible Gives Reason for Hope

Many admit that the Bible is a good book. However, they are often unaware that it offers specific information that points to big changes soon to take place.

God intends to take action to solve mankind's problems, including poverty. Since human governments have proved to be either unable or unwilling to do so, God intends to replace them. How? The Bible states emphatically at Daniel 2:44: "The God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. And the kingdom itself will not be passed on to any other people. It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite."

Having removed these "kingdoms," or governments, God's own appointed Ruler will act. That Ruler is not a human but a powerful heavenly being like God himself, possessing the ability to make the drastic changes needed to eliminate the present inequalities. God has selected his own Son to do this. (Acts 17:31) Psalm 72:12-14 describes what this Ruler will do, stating: "He will deliver the poor one crying for help, also the afflicted one and whoever has no helper. He will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save. From oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul, and their blood will be precious in his eyes." What a wonderful prospect! Relief at last! God's appointed Ruler will act in behalf of the poor and the lowly.

So many problems associated with poverty will be solved at that time. Verse 16 of Psalm 72 says: "There will come to be plenty of grain on the earth; on the top of the mountains there will be an overflow." No



more will there be food shortages as a result of famine, lack of money, or faulty administration.

Other problems will be solved too. For example, today a large percentage of earth's inhabitants cannot claim a home of their own. However, God promises: "They will certainly build houses and have occupancy; and they will certainly plant vineyards and eat their fruitage. They will not build and someone else have occupancy; they will not plant and someone else do the eating. For like the days of a tree will the days of my people be; and the work of their own hands my chosen ones will use to the full." (Isaiah 65:21, 22) Everyone will have his own home and enjoy his work. So God is promising a total and permanent solution to poverty. There will be no more huge gaps between rich and poor, no more people just barely eking out an existence.

Upon first hearing these Bible promises, one may feel that it is not realistic. However, a closer examination of the Bible shows that all of God's promises in the past have come true. (Isaiah 55:11) So it is not a matter of *if* it will happen. Rather, the real question is, What must you do to benefit when it happens?

#### Will You Be There?

Since the government is God's, we must be the type of people whom God will accept as citizens under that rulership.

He has not left us in the dark as to how to qualify. The guidelines are laid out in the Bible.

The appointed Ruler, God's Son, is righteous. (Isaiah 11:3-5) Thus, those accepted for life under this government will also be expected to be righteous. Proverbs 2:21, 22 says: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

Is there any way to learn how to meet these requirements? Yes, there is. By studying the Bible and applying its directions, you can put yourself in line for this marvelous future. (John 17:3) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you with that study. We invite you to take advantage of this opportunity to be included in a society that will never experience poverty and injustice.



## Happy Results From Patience and Persistence

JESUS CHRIST foretold that in the last days "the love of the greater number [would] cool off." As a result, in many parts of the world today, people in general are apathetic to the Kingdom good news. Some even view religion with disdain.—Matthew 24:12, 14.

Even so, with faith and patience, Kingdom publishers are successfully meeting the challenge, as the following experience from the Czech Republic shows.

Two Witnesses talked to a lady through a closed door. After a while, the door cracked open slightly, a hand reached out and grasped the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines that the Witnesses were offering. A voice said "thank you," and the door was shut. "Should we call back?" the Witnesses wondered. One of them, a pioneer, or full-time minister, decided to go back, but the same thing happened again, and this continued for a year.

Having decided that she should change her approach, the pioneer prayed to Jehovah for help. The next time she offered the magazines, she asked the woman friendly questions: "How are you? How did you enjoy the magazines?" At first, there was no response, but after a few more visits, the lady began to warm up. One time she opened the door wide, but the conversation was brief.

In view of the woman's reluctance to talk at the door, the pioneer decided to write her a



letter to explain the purpose of the visits and to offer a home Bible study. Finally, after a year and a half of patient effort, the pioneer succeeded in starting a Bible study with the householder. She was surprised but encouraged when the woman later told her: "I have believed in God since the time you started to bring me the magazines."

Indeed, patience and persistence can bring happy results in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

# JEHOVAH, THE GOD OF TRUTH

*"You have redeemed me, O Jehovah the God of truth."*—PSALM 31:5.

**T**HREE was a time when there was no untruth. Inhabiting the invisible heavens were perfect spirit creatures, serving their Creator, "the God of truth." (Psalm 31:5) There was no falsehood, no deception. Jehovah communicated what was truthful to his spirit sons. He did so because he loved them and because he was deeply interested in their welfare. The situation on earth was the same. Jehovah created the first man and woman, and through his appointed channel, he always communicated with them in a clear, straightforward, and truthful manner. How wonderful that must have been!

<sup>2</sup> Eventually, however, a spirit son of God brazenly set out to establish himself as a rival god, opposing Jehovah. This spirit creature, who became known as Satan the Devil, wanted others to worship him. To achieve his goal, he introduced untruth as a means to bring others under his control. In so doing, he became both "a liar and the father of the lie."—John 8:44.

<sup>3</sup> By means of a serpent, Satan told the first woman, Eve, that if she disregarded God's command and ate the forbidden fruit, she would not die. That was a lie. He further told her that by eating she would become like God, knowing good and bad. That, too, was a lie. Though Eve had never before been lied to, she must have recognized that what she

1. What were the conditions in heaven and on earth when there was no untruth?
2. Who introduced untruth, and why?
3. How did Adam and Eve react to Satan's lies, and what were the results?

heard from the serpent was not in harmony with what God had told her husband, Adam. Still, she chose to believe Satan, not Jehovah. Thoroughly deceived, she took the fruit and ate. Later, Adam also ate of the fruit. (Genesis 3:1-6) Like Eve, Adam had never before heard a lie, yet he was not deceived. (1 Timothy 2:14) By his actions, he showed that he rejected his Maker. The consequences to humankind were disastrous. Because of Adam's disobedience, sin and death—along with corruption and untold misery—spread to all his offspring.—Romans 5:12.

<sup>4</sup> Untruth also spread. We must recognize that those lies told in the garden of Eden were assaults against the truthfulness of Jehovah himself. Satan asserted that God was deceitfully depriving the first human couple of something good. That, of course, was not so. Adam and Eve did not benefit from their disobedience. They died, just as Jehovah had said they would. Nonetheless, Satan's slanderous assault against Jehovah continued, to the extent that centuries later the apostle John was inspired to write that Satan "is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) To avoid being misled by Satan the Devil, we must have complete confidence in the truthfulness of Jehovah and his Word. How can you develop and strengthen your trust in Jehovah and fortify yourself against the deception and lies promoted by his Adversary?

4. (a) What was the nature of the lies told in Eden?  
(b) What must we do so as not to be misled by Satan?



***The God of truth knows everything about what he has created***

### Jehovah Knows the Truth

<sup>5</sup> The Bible consistently identifies Jehovah as the one who “created all things.” (Ephesians 3:9) He is “the One who made the heaven and the earth and the sea and all the things in them.” (Acts 4:24) Since Jehovah is the Creator, he knows the truth about everything. To illustrate: Consider a man who designs and then builds his own house, laying every timber and driving every nail. He will know that house inside and out and will possess an understanding of it greater than that of any observer. People know about the things they design and make. Similarly, the Creator knows all that there is to know about what he has created.

<sup>6</sup> The prophet Isaiah beautifully expressed the scope of Jehovah’s knowledge. We read: “Who has measured the waters in the mere hollow of his hand, and taken the proportions of the heavens themselves with a mere

span and included in a measure the dust of the earth, or weighed with an indicator the mountains, and the hills in the scales? Who has taken the proportions of the spirit of Jehovah, and who as his man of counsel can make him know anything? With whom did he consult together that one might make him understand, or who teaches him in the path of justice, or teaches him knowledge, or makes him know the very way of real understanding?” (Isaiah 40:12-14) Truly, Jehovah is “a God of knowledge” and is “perfect in knowledge.” (1 Samuel 2:3; Job 36:4; 37:16) How little we know in comparison! Despite the impressive knowledge that has been amassed by humankind, our understanding of the material creation does not extend even to “the fringes of [God’s] ways.” It is like “a whisper” compared with “mighty thunder.” —Job 26:14.

<sup>7</sup> Since Jehovah created us, it follows that he knows us well. King David recognized this.

7. What did David recognize about Jehovah’s knowledge, and thus what must we acknowledge?

5, 6. (a) What knowledge does Jehovah possess? (b) How does human knowledge compare with that of Jehovah?

He wrote: "O Jehovah, you have searched through me, and you know me. You yourself have come to know my sitting down and my rising up. You have considered my thought from far off. My journeying and my lying outstretched you have measured off, and you have become familiar even with all my ways. For there is not a word on my tongue, but, look! O Jehovah, you already know it all." (Psalm 139:1-4) David, of course, realized that humans exercise free will—God has given us the capacity either to obey or to disobey him. (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20; Joshua 24:15) Nevertheless, Jehovah knows us far better than we know ourselves. He wants what is best for us, and he is in a position to direct our ways. (Jeremiah 10:23) Indeed, there is no teacher, no expert, no counselor better equipped to teach us the truth and to make us wise and happy.

### Jehovah Is Truthful

<sup>8</sup> It is one thing to know the truth, but it is quite another always to tell the truth, to be truthful. The Devil, for example, chose not to "stand fast in the truth." (John 8:44) In contrast, Jehovah is "abundant in . . . truth." (Exodus 34:6) The Scriptures consistently testify to Jehovah's truthfulness. The apostle Paul stated that "it is impossible for God to lie," and that God "cannot lie." (Hebrews 6:18; Titus 1:2) Truthfulness is an important part of God's personality. We can rely on and trust in Jehovah because he is truthful; he never deceives his loyal ones.

<sup>9</sup> Jehovah's very name testifies to his truthfulness. The divine name means "He Causes to Become." This identifies Jehovah as the one who progressively becomes the Fulfiller of all that he promises. No one else is in that position. Because Jehovah is the Supreme One, nothing can thwart the realization of

8. How do we know that Jehovah is truthful?
9. How is Jehovah's name linked to truth?

his purposes. Not only is Jehovah truthful but he alone has the power and the wisdom to make all that he says come true.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Joshua was one of many who witnessed remarkable events that testified to Jehovah's truthfulness. Joshua was in Egypt when Jehovah brought the ten plagues upon that nation, foretelling each in advance. Among other things, Joshua experienced the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises to deliver the Israelites from Egypt and to lead them into the Promised Land, subduing the powerful Canaanite armies that opposed them. Toward the end of his life, Joshua told the older men of the nation of Israel: "You well know with all your hearts and with all your souls that not one word out of all the good words that Jehovah your God has spoken to you has failed. They have all come true for you. Not one word of them has failed." (Joshua 23:14) Though you have not witnessed the miracles Joshua did, have you experienced the truthfulness of God's promises in your lifetime?

### Jehovah Reveals the Truth

<sup>11</sup> Imagine a parent who has vast knowledge but who rarely speaks to his children. Are you not thankful that Jehovah is not like that? Jehovah lovingly communicates with mankind, and he does it generously. The Scriptures call him the "Grand Instructor." (Isaiah 30:20) In his loving-kindness, he reaches out even to those who are not inclined to listen to him. For example, Ezekiel was assigned to preach to those whom Jehovah knew would be unreceptive. Jehovah said: "Son of man, go, enter in among the house of Israel, and you must speak with my words to them." Then he warned: "They will

10. (a) How did Joshua witness Jehovah's truthfulness? (b) What promises of Jehovah have you seen fulfilled?
11. What shows that Jehovah wants to communicate the truth to mankind?

not want to listen to you, for they are not wanting to listen to me; because all those of the house of Israel are hardheaded and hardhearted." That was a difficult assignment, but Ezekiel carried it out faithfully, and in doing so, he reflected Jehovah's compassion. If you find yourself in a challenging preaching assignment and you rely on God, you may be confident that he will strengthen you just as he did his prophet Ezekiel.—Ezekiel 3:4, 7-9.

<sup>12</sup> Jehovah desires that "all sorts of men . . . be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) He has spoken through prophets, through angels, and even through his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:1, 2; 2:2) To Pilate, Jesus said: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone that is on the side of the truth listens to my voice." Pilate had a priceless opportunity to learn the truth about Jehovah's provision for salvation directly from the Son of God. However, Pilate was not on the side of the truth, and he did not want to learn from Jesus. Instead, Pilate cynically replied: "What is truth?" (John 18:37, 38) How sad for him! Yet, many did listen to the truth Jesus proclaimed. To his disciples he said: "Happy are your eyes because they behold, and your ears because they hear."—Matthew 13:16.

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah has preserved the truth by means of the Bible and has made it available to people everywhere. The Bible reveals things as they actually are. It describes God's attributes, purposes, and commands, as well as the true state of affairs among mankind.

12, 13. In what ways has God communicated with humans?

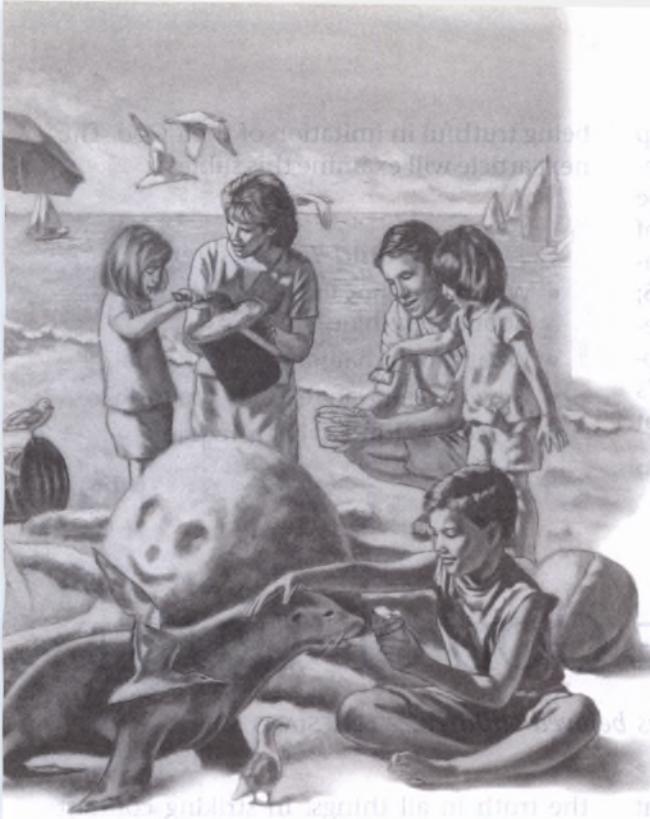


Jesus said in prayer to Jehovah: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Because of this, the Bible is a unique book. It alone was written under inspiration of the God who knows all things. (2 Timothy 3:16) It is a precious gift to humankind, one that God's servants treasure. We are wise to read it daily.

#### Hold Fast to the Truth

<sup>14</sup> We should take seriously what Jehovah tells us in his Word. He is what he says he is, and he will do what he says he will do. We have every reason to trust in God. We can believe it when Jehovah says that he will bring "vengeance upon those who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus." (2 Thessalonians 1:8) We may also take Jehovah at his word when he says that he loves those who pursue righteousness, when he says that he will

14. What are some things Jehovah says he will do, and why should we believe him?



grant everlasting life to those who exercise faith, and when he says that he will eliminate pain, outcry, and even death. Jehovah underscored the reliability of this last promise by giving this instruction to the apostle John: "Write, because these words are faithful and true."—Revelation 21:4, 5; Proverbs 15:9; John 3:36.

<sup>15</sup> Satan is the exact opposite of Jehovah. Rather than enlighten, he deceives. To achieve his aim to turn people away from pure worship, Satan promotes an array of lies. For example, Satan would have us believe that God is emotionally distant and insensitive to the suffering on earth. Yet, the Bible shows that Jehovah cares deeply for his creatures and deplores badness and suffering. (Acts 17:24-30) Satan also wants people to believe that spiritual pursuits are a waste of time. On the contrary, the Scriptures assure us that "God is not unrighteous so as to for-

15. What are some lies that Satan promotes?

### **Jehovah's promises will come true**

get your work and the love you showed for his name." Moreover, they clearly state that "he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Hebrews 6:10; 11:6.

<sup>16</sup> Concerning Satan, the apostle Paul wrote: "The god of this system of things has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, that the illumination of the glorious good news about the Christ, who is the image of God, might not shine through." (2 Corinthians 4:4) Like Eve, some are thoroughly deceived by Satan the Devil. Others follow the course of Adam, who was not deceived but who deliberately chose the path of disobedience. (Jude 5, 11) Thus, it is essential that Christians remain vigilant and hold fast to the truth.

### **Jehovah Requires**

#### **"Faith Without Hypocrisy"**

<sup>17</sup> Because he is truthful in all his ways, Jehovah expects those who worship him to be truthful also. The psalmist wrote: "O Jehovah, who will be a guest in your tent? Who will reside in your holy mountain? He who is walking faultlessly and practicing righteousness and speaking the truth in his heart." (Psalm 15:1, 2) To the Jews who sang those words, mention of Jehovah's holy mountain doubtless brought to mind Mount Zion, where King David brought the ark of the covenant to the tent he had erected there. (2 Samuel 6:12, 17) The mountain and the tent called to mind the place where Jehovah symbolically dwelt. There people could approach God in order to implore his favor.

16. Why must Christians remain vigilant and hold fast to the truth?

17. What must we do to have Jehovah's favor?

<sup>18</sup> Anyone who wants Jehovah's friendship must speak the truth "in his heart," not merely with his lips. True friends of God must be honest of heart and must give evidence of "faith without hypocrisy," for acts of truthfulness come from the heart. (1 Timothy 1:5; Matthew 12:34, 35) A friend of God is not devious or deceptive, for "a man of . . . deception Jehovah detests." (Psalm 5:6) Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth work hard at

18. (a) What does friendship with God require?  
(b) What will be discussed in the next article?

being truthful in imitation of their God. The next article will examine this subject.

#### How Would You Answer?

- Why does Jehovah know the truth about everything?
- What shows that Jehovah is truthful?
- How has Jehovah revealed the truth?
- As regards truth, what is required of us?

## IMITATING THE GOD OF TRUTH

*"Become imitators of God, as beloved children."*—EPHESIANS 5:1.

**“W**HAT is truth?" (John 18:38) That question, cynically posed by Pontius Pilate nearly 2,000 years ago, implies that truth is too elusive to be pursued. Many today would agree. The very nature of truth is under attack. You may have heard it said that everyone makes his own truth, or that truth is relative, or that truth is ever changing. Such reasoning is flawed. The very goal of research and education is to learn the facts, the truth, about the world in which we live. Truth is not a matter of personal opinion. For example, either the human soul is immortal or it is not. Either Satan exists or he does not. Either there is a purpose to life or there is not. In each case, there can be only one correct answer. One is true, and the other is false; both cannot be true.

<sup>2</sup> In the preceding article, we considered that Jehovah is the God of truth. He knows

1. What do some believe about truth, and why is their reasoning flawed?
2. In what ways is Jehovah the God of truth, and what questions will now be discussed?

the truth in all things. In striking contrast with his deceitful adversary Satan the Devil, Jehovah is ever truthful. What is more, Jehovah generously reveals the truth to others. The apostle Paul urged fellow Christians: "Become imitators of God, as beloved children." (Ephesians 5:1) As Witnesses of Jehovah, how might we imitate him in speaking and living the truth? Why is it important to do so? And what assurance do we have that Jehovah approves of those who pursue a course of truthfulness? Let us see.

<sup>3</sup> We live in an era in which religious untruth abounds. As foretold by the apostle Paul under divine inspiration, many people in these "last days" have a form of godly devotion but prove false to its power. Some resist the truth, being "completely corrupted in mind." Furthermore, "wicked men and impostors . . . advance from bad to worse, misleading and being misled." Though such

- 3, 4. How did the apostles Paul and Peter describe what was to occur during "the last days"?

people are always learning, they never come to "an accurate knowledge of truth."—2 Timothy 3:1, 5, 7, 8, 13.

<sup>4</sup> The apostle Peter was also inspired to write about the last days. Just as he prophesied, people not only reject the truth but also ridicule God's Word and those who proclaim its truth. "According to their wish," such ridiculers ignore the fact that the world of Noah's day was deluged with water, setting a pattern for a future day of judgment. Their wishful thinking will spell disaster for them when God's time comes to destroy ungodly ones.—2 Peter 3:3-7.

### Jehovah's Servants Know the Truth

<sup>5</sup> In a description of "the time of the end," the prophet Daniel foretold quite a different development among God's people—a revival of religious truth. He wrote: "Many will rove about, and the true knowledge will become abundant." (Daniel 12:4) Jehovah's people are not confused or blinded by the great Deceiver. Roving through the pages of the Bible, they have come to acquire true knowledge. In the first century, Jesus enlightened his disciples. He "opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures." (Luke 24:45) In our day, Jehovah has acted similarly. Through his Word, his spirit, and his organization, he has enabled millions throughout the earth to understand what he already knows—the truth.

<sup>6</sup> As God's people, we understand many things that we could not otherwise have known. We know the answers to questions that worldly-wise men have grappled with for millenniums. For example, we know why suffering exists, why people die, and why hu-

5. According to the prophet Daniel, what would happen in "the time of the end," and how has this prophecy been fulfilled?

6. God's people today understand what Bible truths?

mans cannot achieve global peace and unity. We have also been blessed with a vision of what the future holds—the Kingdom of God, a paradise earth, and endless life in perfection. We have come to know Jehovah, the Supreme One. We have learned about his appealing personality along with what we must do to enjoy his blessing. Knowing the truth enables us to recognize what is not true. Applying the truth protects us from fruitless pursuits, enables us to get the best out of life, and gives us a marvelous hope for the future.

<sup>7</sup> Do you understand Bible truth? If so, you have been richly blessed. When an author writes a book, he or she usually fashions it to appeal to a specific group of people. Some books are written for the highly educated, others for children, still others for those in specialized fields. While the Bible is easily available to all, it is meant to be understood and appreciated by a particular group of people. Jehovah crafted it for the humble, the meek ones of the earth. Such people can grasp the sense of the Bible, whatever their education, culture, station in life, or ethnic group. (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) On the other hand, an understanding of Bible truth is denied to those not rightly disposed, no matter how intelligent or educated they may be. The haughty, the proud, cannot grasp the precious truths of God's Word. (Matthew 13:11-15; Luke 10:21; Acts 13:48) Only God could produce such a book.

### Jehovah's Servants Are Truthful

<sup>8</sup> Like Jehovah, his faithful Witnesses are truthful. Jesus Christ, the preeminent Witness of Jehovah, affirmed the truth by the things he taught and by the way he lived and died. He upheld the truth of Jehovah's word

7. To whom are Bible truths accessible, and to whom are they not?

8. Why was Jesus the very embodiment of the truth?

and promises. Consequently, Jesus was the very embodiment of the truth, as he himself stated.—John 14:6; Revelation 3:14; 19:10.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus was “full of undeserved kindness and truth” and “there was no deception in his mouth.” (John 1:14; Isaiah 53:9) True Christians follow the pattern that Jesus set in being truthful with others. Paul counseled fellow believers: “Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another.” (Ephesians 4:25) Earlier, the prophet Zechariah wrote: “Speak truthfully with one another.” (Zechariah 8:16) Christians are truthful because they want to please God. Jehovah is truthful and knows the harm that results from falsehood. Therefore, he rightfully expects his servants to tell the truth.

<sup>10</sup> To many, lying may seem a convenient tool to obtain certain advantages. People lie to escape punishment, to profit in some way, or to gain the praise of others. Yet, a practice of lying is a vice. What is more, a liar cannot gain God’s approval. (Revelation 21:8, 27; 22:15) When we are known to be truthful, others believe what we say; they trust us. However, if we are caught telling even a single lie, others may doubt the truthfulness of anything we say in the future. An African proverb states: “One falsehood spoils a thousand truths.” Another proverb says: “A liar will not be believed, even when he speaks the truth.”

<sup>11</sup> Truthfulness means more than merely telling the truth. It is a way of life. It defines who we are. We make the truth known to others not only by what we say but also by what we do. “Do you . . . the one teaching someone else, not teach yourself?” asked the

9. What do the Scriptures say about speaking the truth?
10. Why do people lie, and with what negative results?
11. In what way is truthfulness more than merely telling the truth?

apostle Paul. “You, the one preaching ‘Do not steal,’ do you steal? You, the one saying ‘Do not commit adultery,’ do you commit adultery?” (Romans 2:21, 22) If we are to impart truth to others, we must be truthful in all our ways. Our reputation for truthfulness and honesty will have a powerful impact on how people respond to what we teach.

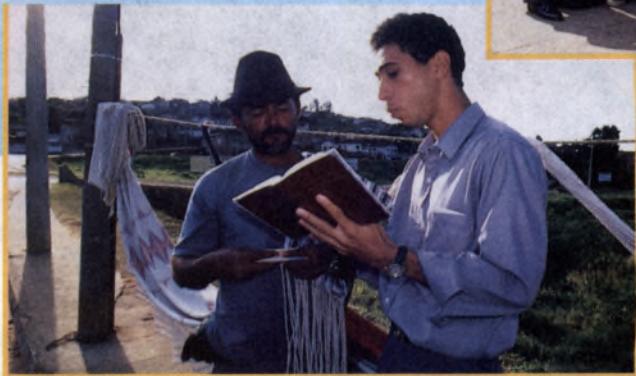
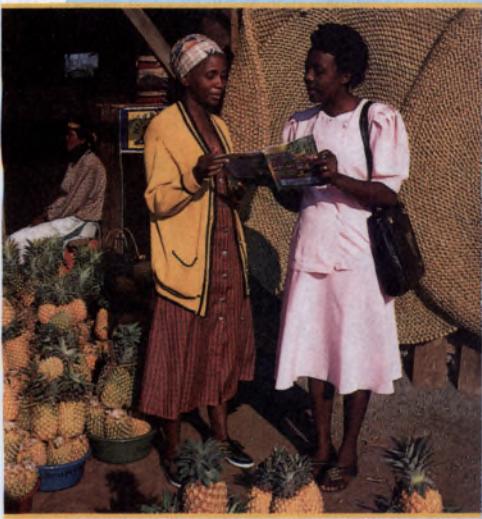
<sup>12</sup> Young ones among Jehovah’s servants also understand the importance of being truthful. In a school essay, Jenny, who at the time was 13 years old, wrote: “Honesty is something I truly value. Unfortunately, not many people are completely honest today. I promise myself that I will always maintain honesty in my life. I will also be honest even if telling the truth won’t immediately benefit me or my friends. I make sure that my friends are those who tell the truth and are honest people.”

<sup>13</sup> In commenting on this essay, Jenny’s teacher noted: “You are very young to have developed such a strong moral and ethical code. I know you will stick with your code because you have strength of character.” What was responsible for this schoolgirl’s moral strength? In the introduction to her essay, Jenny stated that her religion “sets the standards for [her] life.” Seven years have passed since Jenny wrote that essay. As her teacher surmised, Jenny continues to manifest a high moral standard in her life as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

#### Jehovah’s Servants Reveal the Truth

<sup>14</sup> Of course, others besides Jehovah’s Witnesses may tell the truth and try to be honest. However, as servants of God, we have a particularly great responsibility to uphold

- 12, 13. What did one young person write about truthfulness, and what was the reason for her high moral standard?
14. Why do God’s servants have a particularly great responsibility to uphold what is true?



what is true. We have been entrusted with Bible truths—truths that can lead one to everlasting life. Hence, we have an obligation to share that knowledge with others. “Everyone to whom much was given,” said Jesus, “much will be demanded of him.” (Luke 12:48) Certainly ‘much is demanded’ of those who have been blessed with the precious knowledge of God.

<sup>15</sup> There is happiness in imparting Bible truth to others. Like Jesus’ first-century disciples, we declare the good news—a heartwarming message of hope—to those “skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd” and to those blinded and confused by “teachings of demons.” (Matthew 9:36; 1 Timothy 4:1) The apostle John wrote: “No greater cause for thankfulness do I have than these things, that I should be hearing that my children go on walking in the truth.” (3 John 4) The faithfulness of John’s “children”—perhaps those he introduced to the truth—brought him great joy. It brings joy to us when we see people respond with appreciation to the Word of God.

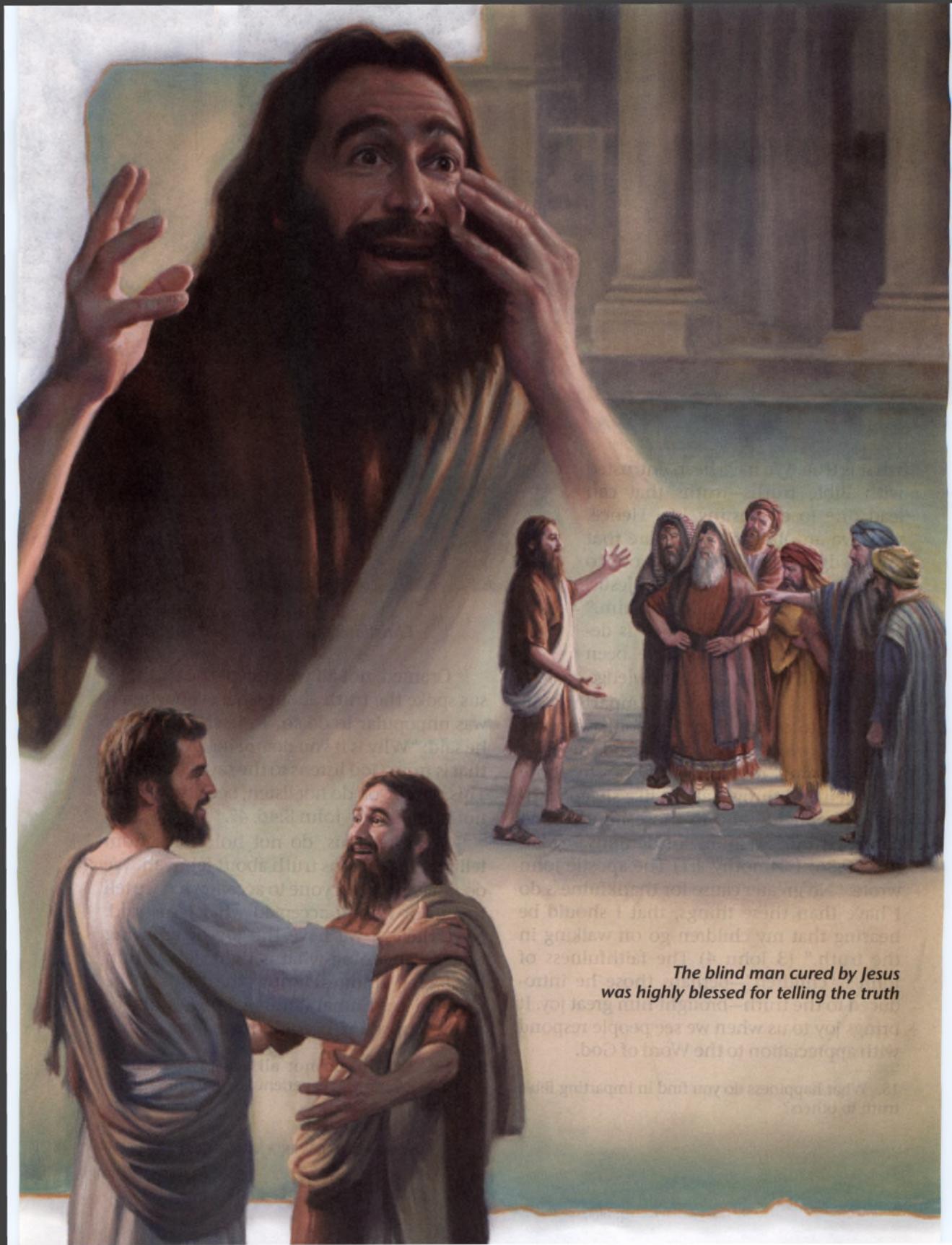
15. What happiness do you find in imparting Bible truth to others?

*Entrusted with Bible truth,  
Christians zealously share it with others*

<sup>16</sup> Granted, not all will accept the truth. Jesus spoke the truth about God, even when it was unpopular to do so. To Jewish opposers he said: “Why is it you do not believe me? He that is from God listens to the sayings of God. This is why you do not listen, because you are not from God.”—John 8:46, 47.

<sup>17</sup> We, like Jesus, do not hold back from telling the precious truth about Jehovah. We do not expect everyone to accept what we tell them, for not all accepted what Jesus said. Nevertheless, we have the joy of knowing that we are doing what is right. Jehovah in his loving-kindness wants the truth to be revealed to humankind. As possessors of truth, Christians become light bearers in a

16, 17. (a) Why do not all accept the truth?  
(b) What joy can you experience as you proclaim Bible truth?



*The blind man cured by Jesus  
was highly blessed for telling the truth*

bedarkened world. By letting the light of truth shine through our words and deeds, we can help others to give glory to our heavenly Father. (Matthew 5:14, 16) We publicly make known that we reject Satan's counterfeit version of the truth and uphold the pure and unadulterated Word of God. The truth that we know and share can impart true freedom to those who accept it.—John 8:32.

### Pursue the Course of Truthfulness

<sup>18</sup> Jesus loved and spoke the truth. During his ministry on earth, he showed favor to those who were truthful. Concerning Nathanael, Jesus said: "See, an Israelite for a certainty, in whom there is no deceit." (John 1:47) Subsequently, Nathanael, who was likely also called Bartholomew, was chosen to be one of the 12 apostles. (Matthew 10:2-4) What an honor!

<sup>19</sup> An entire chapter in the Bible book of John relates the account of another honest man who was blessed by Jesus. We do not know his name. What we do know is that the man was a beggar who was blind from birth. People marveled when Jesus restored his sight. The news of this miraculous cure reached the ears of some of the Pharisees, haters of truth, who had agreed among themselves that anyone exercising faith in Jesus was to be expelled from the synagogue. Knowing their scheme, the fearful parents of the once blind man lied to the Pharisees, saying that they did not know how their son could now see or who was responsible. —John 9:1-23.

<sup>20</sup> The cured man was again called before the Pharisees. Disregarding any consequences, he boldly told the truth. He explained how he was cured and that it was

18. Why and how did Jesus favor Nathanael?

19-21. How was a once blind man blessed for his courageous truthfulness?

Jesus who did it. Astounded that these prominent and educated men did not believe that Jesus was from God, the healed man fearlessly urged them to accept the obvious: "If this man were not from God, he could do nothing at all." Having no counterargument, the Pharisees accused the man of insolence and threw him out.—John 9:24-34.

<sup>21</sup> When Jesus learned of this, he lovingly took the time to find the man. After doing so, he built on the faith that the once blind man had shown. Jesus openly identified himself as the Messiah. How that man was blessed for telling the truth! Surely divine favor rests upon those who speak the truth.—John 9:35-37.

<sup>22</sup> Practicing truth is a pursuit that we should take seriously. It is fundamental in forging and maintaining good relations with people and with God. To be truthful is to be open, genuine, approachable, and trustworthy, and it wins Jehovah's approval. (Psalm 15:1, 2) To be untruthful is to be deceitful, unreliable, and false, and it incurs Jehovah's disfavor. (Proverbs 6:16-19) Therefore, be resolved to pursue the course of truthfulness. Indeed, to imitate the God of truth, we must know the truth, speak the truth, and live the truth.

22. Why should we pursue the course of truthfulness?

### How Would You Answer?

- Why can we be grateful that we know the truth?
- How may we imitate Jehovah in being truthful?
- What benefits are there in imparting Bible truth to others?
- Why is it important to pursue the course of truthfulness?

# "You Received Free, Give Free"

**"Y**OU received free, give free." (Matthew 10:8) Jesus issued that instruction to his apostles when he sent them forth to preach the good news. Did the apostles obey this directive? Yes, and they continued to do so even after Jesus departed from the earth.

For instance, when the former sorcerer Simon saw the miraculous powers possessed by the apostles Peter and John, he offered to pay them to impart that power to him. But Peter rebuked Simon, saying: "May your silver perish with you, because you thought through money to get possession of the free gift of God."—Acts 8:18-20.

The apostle Paul displayed a spirit similar to Peter's. Paul could have allowed himself to be a financial burden to his Christian brothers in Corinth. However, he worked with his own hands to support himself. (Acts 18:1-3) Thus, he could say with confidence that he had preached the good news to the Corinthians "without cost."—1 Corinthians 4:12; 9:18.

Sad to say, many who claim to be followers of Christ have not shown the same willingness to "give free." Indeed, many of the religious leaders in Christendom will "instruct just for a price." (Micah 3:11) Some religious leaders have even become wealthy from money collected from their flocks. In 1989, one U.S. evangelist was sentenced to a jail term of 45 years. The reason? He had been "defrauding supporters of millions of dollars and using some of the money to buy homes, cars, holidays and even an air-conditioned dog kennel."—*People's Daily Graphic*, October 7, 1989.



In Ghana, according to the *Ghanaian Times* of March 31, 1990, a Roman Catholic priest took money that had been collected during one church service and hurled it back at the congregation. "His reason," says the paper, "was that, as adults, they were expected to contribute in higher denominations." Not surprisingly, many churches even try to appeal to greed in its members, actively promoting gambling activities and other schemes in order to raise money.

By way of contrast, Jehovah's Witnesses endeavor to imitate Jesus and his early disciples. They have no paid clergy. Each Witness is a minister charged with the responsibility of preaching the "good news of the kingdom" to others. (Matthew 24:14) Over six million of them worldwide are therefore engaged in bringing "life's water" free to the people. (Revelation 22:17) In this way, even those who "have no money" can benefit from the Bible's message. (Isaiah 55:1) Although their worldwide work is funded by voluntary donations, they never solicit money. As true ministers of God, they are not "peddlers of the word of God," but they speak "out of sin-



### ***God's free gift of the ransom motivates Christians to share the good news free of charge***

"...cerity, yes, as sent from God."—2 Corinthians 2:17.

Why, though, are Jehovah's Witnesses willing to help others, doing so at their own expense? What motivates them? Does giving free mean that they do so entirely without reward for their efforts?

### **An Answer to Satan's Challenge**

True Christians today are motivated primarily by a desire to please Jehovah—not to enrich themselves. Thus they are able to provide an answer to a challenge raised by Satan the Devil centuries ago. Regarding a righteous man named Job, Satan challenged Jehovah with the question: "Is it for nothing that Job has feared God?" Satan alleged that Job served God only because He had put a hedge of protection about him. If Job was deprived of his material goods, argued Satan, Job would curse God to his face!—Job 1:7-11.

To answer this challenge, God allowed Satan to put Job to the test, saying: "Everything that he has is in your hand." (Job 1:12) The outcome? Job proved Satan a liar. No matter what adversities befell him, Job remained loyal. "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" he said.—Job 27:5, 6.

True worshipers today show an attitude similar to Job's. Their service to God is not motivated by material concerns.

### **God's Free Gift of Undeserved Kindness**

Another reason true Christians are willing to "give free" is that they themselves have "received free" from God. Mankind is in bondage to sin and death because of the sin of our forefather Adam. (Romans 5:12) Lovingly, Jehovah arranged for his Son to die a sacrificial death—something that cost God dearly. Mankind is certainly not entitled to this. No, it is a gift from God.—Romans 4:4; 5:8; 6:23.

As recorded at Romans 3:23, 24, Paul thus told anointed Christians: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." Those who have the hope of living forever on earth are likewise recipients of "a free gift." This gift includes the privilege of being declared righteous as Jehovah's friends.—James 2:23; Revelation 7:14.

Christ's ransom sacrifice also makes it possible for all Christians to serve as ministers of God. The apostle Paul wrote: "I became a minister of this [sacred secret] according to the free gift of the undeserved kindness of God." (Ephesians 3:4-7) Having been called to this ministry by means of a provision they did not deserve or could not earn, true ministers of God could hardly expect to be paid materially for sharing the news of this provision with others.

## **Everlasting Life—A Selfish Inducement?**

Does this mean, then, that God expects Christians to serve him without any hope of a reward? No, for the apostle Paul told his fellow believers: “God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name.” (Hebrews 6:10) Nor is Jehovah unjust. (Deuteronomy 32:4) On the contrary, Jehovah is “the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.” (Hebrews 11:6) But is not the promise of everlasting life in Paradise an appeal to selfishness?—Luke 23:43.

Not at all. For one thing, the desire to live forever in Paradise on earth originates with

## **True Christians today are motivated primarily by a desire to please Jehovah—not to enrich themselves**

God himself. It was he who presented this prospect to the first human couple. (Genesis 1:28; 2:15-17) He also made possible the restoration of this prospect when Adam and Eve lost it for their descendants. God thus promises in his Word that “the creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” (Romans 8:21) It is therefore entirely proper for Christians today, like Moses of old, to look “intently toward the payment of the reward.” (Hebrews 11:26) God does not offer this reward as a bribe. He offers it out of genuine love for those who serve him. (2 Thessalonians 2:16, 17) In response, “we love, because he first loved us.” —1 John 4:19.

## **Proper Motive for Serving God**

Nevertheless, Christians today must constantly scrutinize their own motives for serv-

ing God. At John 6:10-13, we read that Jesus miraculously fed a crowd of over five thousand. Subsequently, some began to attach themselves to Jesus for purely selfish reasons. Jesus told them: “You are looking for me . . . because you ate from the loaves and were satisfied.” (John 6:26) Decades later some dedicated Christians similarly rendered service to God but “not with a pure motive.” (Philippians 1:17) Some who ‘did not assent to the healthful words of Jesus Christ’ even sought ways to make personal gain out of their association with Christians.—1 Timothy 6:3-5.

Today, a Christian who serves only because he wants to live forever in Paradise could also be serving with a selfish motive. In the long run, this could result in a spiritual fall. Because Satan’s system of things seems to have lasted longer than expected, he might “tire out,” feeling that the end has been delayed. (Galatians 6:9) He might even become bitter over material sacrifices he has made. Jesus reminds us: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.” (Matthew 22:37) Yes, a person whose primary reason for serving God is love puts no time limit on his service. He is determined to serve Jehovah forever! (Micah 4:5) He does not regret any sacrifices he has made in connection with his service to God. (Hebrews 13:15, 16) Love for God impels him to put God’s interests first in his life.—Matthew 6:33.

Today, over six million true worshipers “offer themselves willingly” in Jehovah’s service. (Psalm 110:3) Are you one of them? If not, then meditate on what God offers: pure knowledge of truth; (John 17:3) freedom from bondage to false religious teachings; (John 8:32) the hope of living forever. (Revelation 21:3, 4) Jehovah’s Witnesses can help you learn how you can receive all of this from God—free of charge.



## HAPPY IS THE ONE WHOSE GOD IS JEHOVAH

AS TOLD BY  
**TOM DIDUR**

The community hall was already rented. About 300 were expected for the assembly in Porcupine Plain, Saskatchewan, Canada. On Wednesday it started to snow, and by Friday there was a prairie blizzard with zero visibility. The temperature dropped to minus 40 degrees Fahrenheit. Twenty-eight were in attendance, including a few children. This was my first assembly as a new circuit overseer, and I was an anxious 25-year-old. Before I tell you what happened, let me relate how I came to enjoy this special privilege of service.

I AM the seventh of eight siblings, all boys. The eldest was Bill, followed by Metro, John, Fred, Mike, and Alex. I was born in 1925, and Wally is the youngest. We lived near the town of Ukraina, Manitoba, where my parents, Michael and Anna Didur, had a small farm. Dad worked on the railway as a section man. Since a bunkhouse along some isolated railway was a poor place to raise a large fami-

ly, we stayed on the farm. Dad was away from home much of the time, so Mother had the job of raising us. Periodically, she left to be with Dad for a week or more, but she made sure that we learned to cook, bake, and do household chores. And since we were members of the Greek Catholic Church, part of our early training from Mother included memorizing prayers and sharing in other rituals.

## Contact With Bible Truth

My yearning to understand the Bible was kindled in my youth. A neighbor, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, regularly visited our family to read portions of the Bible pertaining to God's Kingdom, Armageddon, and the blessings of the new world. Mother was not at all interested in what he had to say, but the message appealed to Mike and Alex. In fact, what they learned moved them to refuse military service as conscientious objectors during the second world war. Mike was subsequently sentenced to a short term in jail, while Alex was sent to a labor camp in Ontario. In time, Fred and Wally also accepted the truth. However, my three eldest brothers did not. For a number of years, Mother even opposed the truth but later surprised us all by taking her stand for Jehovah. She was baptized at the age of 83. Mother was 96 when she died. Dad was also favorable toward the truth before he died.

At the age of 17, I traveled to Winnipeg to search for work and to associate with those who could help me study the Bible. Jehovah's Witnesses were under ban at the time, but meetings were held regularly. The first meeting I attended was in a private home. Since I was brought up according to the Greek Catholic faith, what I initially heard sounded strange. Little by little, though, I understood why the clergy-laity arrangement was unscriptural and why God did not approve when the clergy blessed the war effort. (Isaiah 2:4; Matthew 23:8-10; Romans 12:17, 18) Living in Paradise on earth seemed much more practical and reasonable than going to a far-away place for eternity.

Convinced that this was the truth, I made my dedication to Jehovah and was baptized in 1942 in Winnipeg. By 1943 the ban on Jehovah's Witnesses in Canada was lifted, and the preaching work gained momentum. Bible

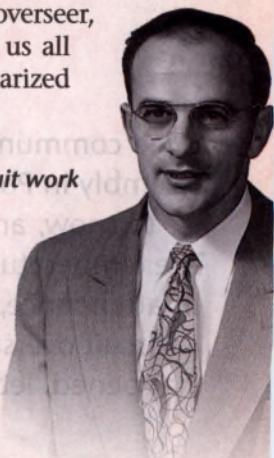
truth was also making a deeper impression on my heart. I was privileged to serve as a servant in the congregation as well as to participate in public meeting campaigns and to work unassigned territory. Attending large conventions in the United States contributed immeasurably to my spiritual advancement.

## Expanding My Service to Jehovah

In 1950, I enrolled as a pioneer minister, and in December of that year, I was invited to serve as a circuit overseer. I was privileged to receive my formal training near Toronto from Charlie Hepworth, an experienced and loyal brother. I also had the joy of spending the final week of my training with my brother Alex, who was already in the circuit work in Winnipeg.

My first circuit assembly, as described at the outset, is etched on my memory. I was naturally anxious about the outcome. Well, our district overseer, Brother Jack Nathan, kept us all busy and happy. We summarized

*In circuit work*



the assembly program with the participants on hand. We took turns relating experiences, practicing house-to-house presentations, making return visits, and demonstrating how to conduct home Bible studies. We sang Kingdom songs. There was plenty of food. We had coffee and pie almost every two hours. Some slept on benches and on the platform, while others slept on the floor. By Sunday the storm eased a bit so that we had 96 present for the public talk. The experience taught me to cope with difficult situations.

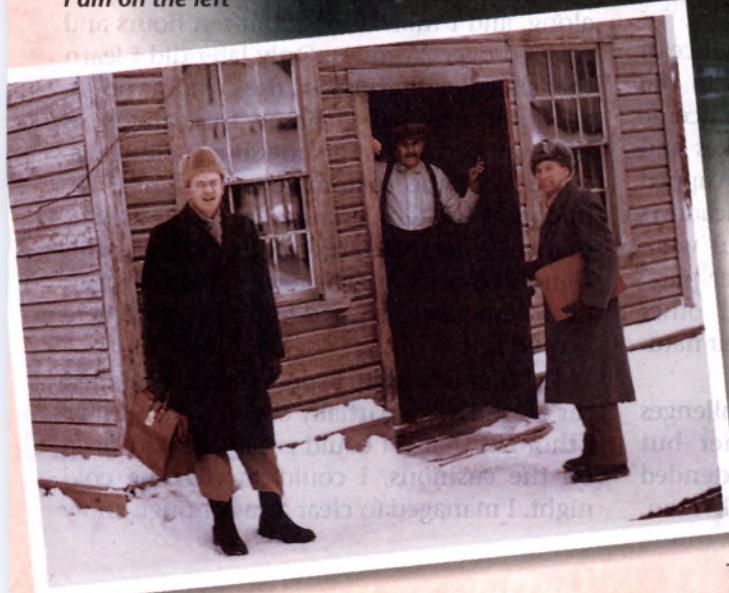
My next circuit assignment took me to northern Alberta, British Columbia, and the Yukon Territory, the land of the midnight sun. Traveling the rugged Alaska Highway from Dawson Creek, British Columbia, to Whitehorse, Yukon (a distance of 918 miles), and witnessing along the way required endurance and caution. The snowslides, slippery mountain slopes, and poor visibility resulting from the blowing snow were a real challenge.

I was amazed to see how the truth penetrated into the Far North. On one occasion, Walter Lewkowicz and I called at a humble little cabin close to Lower Post, British Columbia, along the Alaska Highway near the border of Yukon Territory. We knew that someone lived in the cabin because we could detect a little flicker of light through a small window. It was about nine in the evening, and we knocked

on the door. A man's voice shouted for us to come in, so we entered. What a surprise to see an old man stretched out on his bunk bed reading the *Watchtower* magazine! In fact, he had an issue more current than the one we were offering. He explained that he received his mail by air. Since we had been away from the congregation for over eight days by this time, we did not yet have the latest magazines. The man introduced himself as Fred Berg, and even though he had been a subscriber for several years, this was his first visit from Jehovah's Witnesses. Fred made us stay the night. We were able to share many Scriptural truths with him and to arrange for other Witnesses who regularly passed through the area to visit him.

For several years I served three small circuits. They extended from Grande Prairie,

Visiting Henry Lepine in Dawson City.  
I am on the left



Alberta, in the east to Kodiak, Alaska, in the west, a distance of over 2,200 miles.

In a beautiful way, I learned that in remote places, as much as anywhere else, Jehovah's undeserved kindness is for all people and that God's spirit motivates the minds and hearts of those rightly disposed for everlasting life. One

such individual was Henry Lepine from Dawson City, Yukon, now called Dawson. Henry lived in an isolated area. In fact, he had not been out of the gold-mining area for over 60 years. However, Jehovah's spirit impelled this 84-year-old man to travel more than 1,000 miles one way to Anchorage for a circuit assembly, even though he had never attended a congregation meeting. He was thrilled with the program and overjoyed with the association. Upon returning to Dawson City, Henry remained faithful until he died. Many who knew Henry wondered what motivated this elderly man to take such a long journey. This curiosity led to a few more old-timers accepting the truth. So in an indirect way, Henry was able to give a fine witness.

#### **Recipient of Jehovah's Undeserved Kindness**

In 1955, I was delighted to receive an invitation to attend the 26th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. This training strengthened my faith and helped me draw closer to Jehovah. Upon graduating, I was assigned to continue in the circuit work in Canada.

For about a year, I served in the province of Ontario. Then I was again assigned to the majestic North. I can still visualize scenic highways skirting clear, sparkling lakes and scaling mountain ranges with snowcapped peaks. In the summer, valleys and meadows are a breathtaking carpet of colorful wildflowers. The air is fresh and the water pure. Bears, wolves, moose, caribou, and other wild animals roam undisturbed in their natural habitat.

Alaska, however, does present challenges—not only the changeable weather but also the vast distances. My circuit extended 2,000 miles from east to west. Back then,



*First Kingdom Hall in Anchorage*



*Reta and me, 1998*

there was no provision for the circuit overseer to have a car. The local brothers volunteered to drive me from one congregation to the next. At times, though, I had to hitch a ride with truckers or tourists.

One such episode was along a stretch of the Alaska Highway between Tok Junction, Alaska, and Mile 1202, or the Scotty Creek area. The customs offices at these two points were about 100 miles apart. I passed the United States customs office at Tok and got a ride for about 30 miles. Thereafter no car came along, and I walked for about ten hours and covered over 25 miles. Only later did I learn that shortly after I passed the customs point, all traffic was halted along this stretch of highway because of a snowslide a short distance from the customs crossing point. By midnight the temperature dropped to about minus 10 degrees Fahrenheit, and I was still some 50 miles from the nearest place of shelter. I desperately needed to find cover where I could rest.

As I limped along, I spotted an abandoned car off the road, partially covered with snow. I thought that if I could get inside and sleep on the cushions, I could survive the cold night. I managed to clear away enough snow

to open the door, only to find the interior stripped to the bare metal. Happily, not too far down the road, I found an empty cabin. After some difficulty gaining access and lighting a fire, I was able to rest for a few hours. In the morning, I managed to get a ride to the next lodge, where I got some much needed food and attended to my lacerated fingers.

### Jehovah Makes It Grow in the North

My first visit to Fairbanks was most encouraging. We enjoyed good success in the ministry, and about 50 attended the public talk that Sunday. We met in the small missionary home where Vernor and Lorraine Davis lived. People were poking their heads out from the kitchen, bedroom, and hallway to hear the talk. We knew from this positive response that a Kingdom Hall would give the preaching work stability in Fairbanks. So with Jehovah's help, we purchased a good-sized building, a former dance hall, and moved it to a suitable piece of land. A well was drilled, and bathrooms and a heating unit were installed. Within a year, there was a functional Kingdom Hall in Fairbanks. After a kitchen was added, the hall was used for a district convention in 1958, with 330 in attendance.

In the summer of 1960, I made a long trip by car to the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York to attend a refresher course for all traveling overseers in the United States and Canada. While I was there, Brother Nathan Knorr and other responsible brothers interviewed me regarding the possibility of opening a branch office in Alaska. A few months later, we were pleased to hear that as of September 1, 1961, Alaska would have its own branch office. Brother Andrew K. Wagner was assigned to look after branch duties. He and his wife, Vera, had served at Brooklyn for 20 years and had experience in the traveling work as well. Establishment of the Alaska

branch office was a welcome provision, for it reduced the amount of travel by the circuit overseer and enabled him to focus more on the specific needs of the congregations and isolated territories.

The summer of 1962 was a happy time in the North. The Alaska branch was dedicated, and there was a district convention in Juneau, Alaska. New Kingdom Halls were built in Juneau and Whitehorse, Yukon, and several new isolated groups were also formed.

### Back to Canada

For a number of years, I had been corresponding with Margareta Petras from Canada. Reta, as she has always been called, started in the pioneer service in 1947, graduated from Gilead in 1955, and was pioneering in eastern Canada. I proposed to her, and she accepted. We were married in Whitehorse in February 1963. By the autumn of that year, I was assigned to circuit work in western Canada, and we had the joy of serving there for the next 25 years.

For health reasons, in 1988 we were assigned to special pioneer work in Winnipeg, Manitoba. This included looking after an Assembly Hall for about five years. To the extent possible, we still take part in the joyful work of making disciples. In the circuit work, we started many Bible studies for others to conduct. Now, by Jehovah's undeserved kindness, we start them and have the added happiness of seeing the students progress to dedication and baptism.

I am convinced that serving Jehovah is the best way of life. It is meaningful and satisfying, and it deepens our love for Jehovah each day. This is what brings genuine happiness. Whatever theocratic assignment we have, or wherever we are located geographically, we agree with the psalmist who said: "Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!"—Psalm 144:15.

## Questions From Readers

**Jehovah allowed polygamy among his ancient servants, the Israelites, but he does not allow it now. Is his standard changeable?**

Jehovah has not changed his view of polygamy. (Psalm 19:7; Malachi 3:6) It was not part of his arrangement for humans from the beginning, and it is not now. When he created Eve as a wife for Adam, Jehovah stated that the divine standard was one wife for one husband. "That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh."—Genesis 2:24.

When Jesus Christ was on the earth, he restated this position in answer to those who asked about divorce and remarriage. He said: "Did you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh." Jesus added: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery." (Matthew 19:4-6, 9) From this it is ob-

vious that taking one or more additional wives is also adultery.

Then why was polygamy allowed in ancient times? Keep in mind that Jehovah did not originate the practice. The first one mentioned in the Bible as having more than one wife was Lamech, a descendant of Cain. (Genesis 4:19-24) When Jehovah brought the Flood of Noah's day, Noah and his three sons each had only one wife. All polygamists were destroyed in the Flood.

Centuries later when Jehovah chose the Israelites as his people, polygamy already existed among them, although it apparently was far more common to have just one wife. God did not require families to break up where there was more than one wife. Instead, he strictly regulated the practice.—Exodus 21:10, 11; Deuteronomy 21:15-17.

That this toleration of polygamy was only temporary can be seen not only by what Jesus stated regarding Jehovah's original standard for marriage but also by what the apostle Paul wrote under the inspiration of God's holy spirit. He said: "Let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband." (1 Corinthians 7:2) Paul also was inspired to write that any man appointed as an overseer or a ministerial servant in the Christian congregation must be "a husband of one wife."—1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6.

Thus, Jehovah's toleration of polygamy came to an end with the formation of the Christian congregation some 2,000 years ago. At that time, the standard for marriage returned to what it was at the beginning of God's creation of man and woman: one husband, one wife. It is the standard today among God's people throughout the entire world.—Mark 10:11, 12; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

### IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How Would You Like to  
Be Remembered?

What Does Jehovah Expect of Us?

Are You Earnestly Seeking Jehovah?

# *Learning the Art of Being*

## T A C T F U L



**P**EGGY noticed her son speaking cruelly to his younger brother. "Do you think that was the best way to talk to your brother?" she asked. "Look how upset he is!" Why did she say that? She was trying to teach her son the art of acting tactfully and showing consideration for the feelings of others.

The apostle Paul encouraged his younger companion Timothy to be "tactful toward all." In so doing, Timothy would not trample on the feelings of others. (2 Timothy 2:24, footnote.) What is tact? How can you improve in this area? And how can you help others to develop the art?

### **What Is Tact?**

A dictionary defines tact as "the ability to appreciate the delicacy of a situation and to do or say the kindest or most fitting thing." The word originally referred to touch. Just as sensitive fingers can perceive if something is sticky, soft, polished, hot, or hairy, so a tactful person can sense the feelings of other people and can discern how his words or actions affect them. But doing this is not just a skill; it involves a genuine desire to avoid hurting others.

In the Bible account of Elisha's servant Gehazi, we find an example of one who is tactless. A Shunammite woman whose son had just died in her arms came to see Elisha, seeking consolation. When asked if everything was all right, she replied: "It is all right." But when she approached the prophet, "Gehazi

came near to push her away." Elisha, on the other hand, said: "Let her alone, for her soul is bitter within her."—2 Kings 4:17-20, 25-27.

How could Gehazi act so rashly and tactlessly? It is true that the woman did not express her feeling when asked. But then, most people do not reveal their feelings to just anyone. Nevertheless, her emotion should have been visible in some way. Elisha apparently recognized it, but Gehazi did not, or he chose to ignore it. This well illustrates a common cause of tactless conduct. When a person is overly concerned with the importance of his job, he can easily fail to recognize or care about the needs of those he deals with. He is much like the proverbial bus driver who was so concerned with arriving on time that he did not stop to pick up passengers.

To avoid being tactless like Gehazi, we should strive to be kind to people, for we do not know how they really feel. We should always be alert to signs that reveal a person's feelings and respond with a kind word or act. How can you improve your skills in this regard?

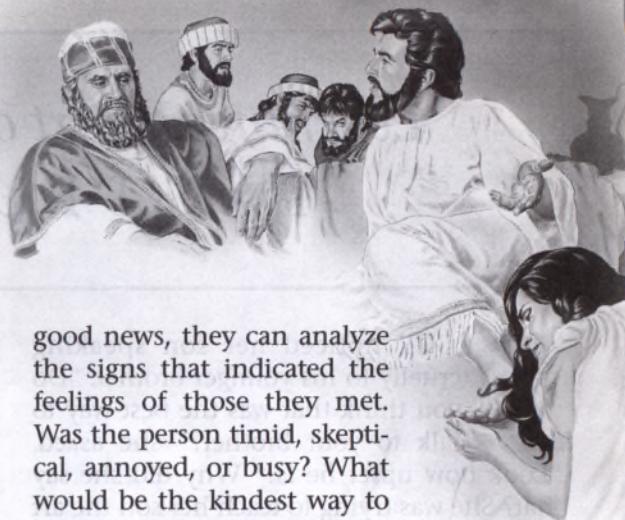
### **Understanding the Feelings of Others**

Jesus was outstanding in perceiving people's feelings and at discerning how best to treat them kindly. Once he was dining in the house of Simon, a Pharisee, when a woman "known in the city to be a sinner" approached him. Again, no words were spoken, but there was plenty to observe. "She brought an alabaster case of perfumed oil,

and, taking a position behind at [Jesus'] feet, she wept and started to wet his feet with her tears and she would wipe them off with the hair of her head. Also, she tenderly kissed his feet and greased them with the perfumed oil." Jesus recognized what all of this meant. And even though Simon did not say anything, Jesus was able to discern that he was saying within himself: "This man, if he were a prophet, would know who and what kind of woman it is that is touching him, that she is a sinner."—Luke 7:37-39.

Can you imagine the harm that would have been caused if Jesus had pushed the woman away, or if he had said to Simon: "You ignorant man! Can't you see that she is repentant?" Instead, Jesus tactfully presented Simon with an illustration about a man who forgave one person a large debt and another person a much smaller debt. "Which of them will love him the more?" Jesus asked. Thus, rather than appearing to condemn Simon, Jesus was able to commend him for the correct reply that Simon gave. Then he kindly helped Simon to recognize the many signs of the woman's true feelings and her expressions of repentance. Jesus turned to the woman and kindly indicated to her that he understood her feelings. He told her that her sins were forgiven and thereafter said: "Your faith has saved you; go your way in peace." How those tactful words must have strengthened her resolve to do what was right! (Luke 7:40-50) Jesus succeeded in being tactful because he observed how people felt and responded compassionately.

Just as Jesus helped Simon, so we can learn and then help others to understand the unspoken language of emotion. Experienced ministers can sometimes teach this art to newer ones in the Christian ministry. After a visit they make when sharing the



good news, they can analyze the signs that indicated the feelings of those they met. Was the person timid, skeptical, annoyed, or busy? What would be the kindest way to help him? Elders can also assist brothers and sisters who may tactlessly have offended one another. Help each one to understand the feelings of the other. Does he feel insulted, ignored, or misunderstood? How could kindness make him feel better?

Parents do well to help their children to cultivate compassion, since this is what will move them to act tactfully. Peggy's son, mentioned at the outset, noticed his younger brother's flushed face, pouting lips, and tearful eyes, and he recognized the pain his brother was experiencing. Just as his mother had hoped, he felt regret and resolved to change. Both of Peggy's boys made good use of those skills learned in childhood and years later became productive disciple-makers and shepherds in the Christian congregation.

### Show That You Understand

Tact is especially important when you have a complaint against someone. You can so easily hurt his dignity. Specific commendation is always appropriate first. Rather than criticize him, concentrate on the problem. Explain how his action affects you and exactly what you would like to see changed. Then be prepared to listen. Perhaps you have misunderstood him.

People like to feel that you understand their viewpoint even if you do not agree with it. Jesus spoke with tact, showing that he understood Martha's distress. He said: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and disturbed about many things." (Luke 10:41) In like manner, when a person speaks of some problem, rather than offering a solution before hearing the matter out, a tactful way of showing that you understand is to repeat the problem or complaint in your own words. This is a kind way of showing that you understand.

### Recognize What Not to Say

When Queen Esther wanted to ask her husband to undo Haman's plot



*Experienced Christian ministers can teach newer ones to be tactful*

to destroy the Jews, she tactfully arranged matters so that her husband would be in a good mood. Only then did she broach this delicate topic. But it is also instructive to no-

tice what she did not say. She tactfully omitted reference to her husband's share in the responsibility in the evil scheme.—Esther 5:1-8; 7:1, 2; 8:5.

Similarly, when visiting a Christian sister's unbelieving husband, rather than immediately showing him the Bible, why not begin by tactfully inquiring about his interests? When a stranger comes to the Kingdom Hall informally dressed or someone returns after a long absence, give him a warm welcome rather than comment on his dress or absence. And when you notice that a newly interested one has a wrong viewpoint, it may be best not to correct him right away. (John 16:12) Tact includes kindly recognizing what not to say.



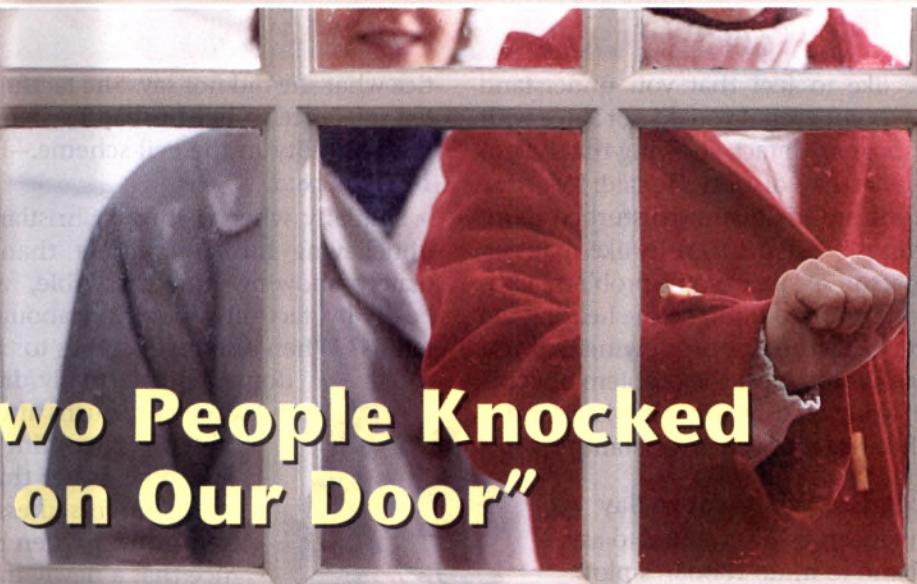
*Parents can teach their children to have feelings for others*

### Speech That Heals

Learning the art of tactful speech will help you to enjoy happy relations with others, even when some-

one has misunderstood your motives and is bitter and resentful. For example, when the men of Ephraim "vehemently tried to pick a quarrel" with Gideon, his tactful reply included a clear explanation of what had really happened and an honest appraisal of what the men of Ephraim had achieved. This was tactful because he recognized why they were upset, and his modesty made them feel better.—Judges 8:1-3; Proverbs 16:24.

Try always to consider how your words will affect other people. Making the effort to be tactful will help you to experience the joy described at Proverbs 15:23: "A man has rejoicing in the answer of his mouth, and a word at its right time is O how good!"



## "Two People Knocked on Our Door"

"IT HAS been two years since we had the immense sorrow of losing our little girl." So begins an open letter in the newspaper *Le Progrès*, published in Saint-Étienne, France.

Mélissa was three months old and suffered from the terrible disorder trisomy 18. You never totally recover from such a tragedy that seems so unfair. Though we were brought up in the Catholic faith, we were obsessed with the thought 'God, if you exist, why do you let such things happen?'" Clearly, the mother who wrote that letter felt distressed and helpless. Her letter continues:

"Shortly after these events, two people knocked on our door. I immediately recognized them as Jehovah's Witnesses. I

was ready to dismiss them politely, but then I noticed a brochure they were offering. It was about why God permits suffering. So I decided to let them in with the intention of demolishing their arguments. I figured that when it comes to suffering, my family really had had its fair share and that we had heard enough platitudes like 'God gave her to us, and God took her away.' The Witnesses stayed a little over an hour. They listened to me with great compassion, and when they were leaving, I felt so much better that I agreed to another visit. That was two years ago. I have not become one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but I started studying the Bible with them, and I attend their meetings as often as I can."