

JANUARY 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 27–APRIL 2, 2017



COVER IMAGE:

CHILE

Publishers in the south of Chile follow a river that winds through lush forests and snowcapped peaks of the Andes Mountains. They participate in a preaching campaign to reach as many remote homes as possible while the weather is favorable.

PUBLISHERS

76,296

BIBLE STUDIES

64,178

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)

174,761

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THEY OFFERED THEMSELVES WILLINGLY



 AMONG the zealous Witnesses serving in lands where there is a greater need for more Kingdom preachers are numerous single sisters. Some of them have been serving abroad for decades. What helped them years ago to make the move to a foreign country? What have they learned from serving abroad? How have their lives turned out? We interviewed several of these experienced sisters. If you are a single sister with a heartfelt desire to share in a ministry that is deeply satisfying, we are sure you will benefit from their comments. Really, all of God's people can benefit from considering their example.



Anita

OVERCOMING DOUBTS

Do you wonder if you really have what it takes to succeed as a single pioneer in a foreign country? **Anita**, now in her mid-70's, had serious doubts about her abilities. She grew up in England, where she began pioneering when she was 18 years old. "I liked teaching people about

Jehovah," she says, "but I never imagined that I could serve abroad. I never studied a foreign language and was convinced that I could not master one. So when I received an invitation to attend Gilead School, I was shocked. I was amazed

that someone as insignificant as I am would receive such an invitation. But I thought, 'If Jehovah thinks I can do it, I will try.' That was over 50 years ago. Ever since, I have been serving as a missionary in **Japan.**" Anita adds: "At times, with a twinkle in my eyes, I tell younger sisters, 'Put on your backpack and join me in the greatest adventure of all time!' I'm happy to say, many have."

MUSTERING UP COURAGE

Many sisters who have served abroad were initially hesitant about moving to a foreign land. How did they muster up the needed courage?

"Growing up, I longed for a purposeful life, one that would help others," relates **Maureen**, now in her mid-60's. When she turned 20 years of age, she moved to Quebec, Canada, where there was a great need for more pioneers. "Later, I received an invitation to attend Gilead School, but I feared going into the unknown without my friends." She adds: "I also worried about leaving my mother who had to care for my ailing father. I spent many nights tearfully entreating Jehovah about these matters. When I spoke with my parents about my

Maureen





- 1 Wendy
- 2 Kumiko (center)
- 3 Diane



had served as a missionary in Japan for over 30 years to go on a witnessing trip to Japan for three months. Working alongside her fueled my desire to move abroad.” In the mid-1980’s, Wendy moved to **Vanuatu**, an island nation about 1,100 miles (1,770 km) east of Australia.

Wendy is still in Vanuatu, now serving in a remote translation office. “Seeing how groups and congregations are being formed in remote regions is my greatest joy,” she says. “To have had a small part in Jehovah’s work on these islands is a privilege beyond words.”

Kumiko, now in her mid-60’s, was serving as a regular pioneer in Japan when her pioneer partner suggested that they move to **Nepal**. “She kept asking me over and over again, but I kept saying no,” says Kumiko. “I worried about having to learn a new language and having to adjust to a new environment. There was also the problem of getting the funds needed to move to a foreign land. While I was wrestling with these concerns, I had a motorcycle accident and ended up in the hospital. There, I thought: ‘Who knows what might happen to me next? I might come down with a serious illness and miss my chance to pioneer overseas. Can I not serve abroad for at least one year?’ I fervently prayed to Jehovah to help me to act.” After being released from the hospital, Kumiko visited Nepal, and later she and her pioneer partner moved there.

concerns, they urged me to accept the invitation. I also saw the loving support the local congregation gave to my parents. Observing Jehovah’s caring hand helped me to trust that he would also look after me. At that point, I was ready to go!” Starting in 1979, Maureen served for over 30 years as a missionary in **West Africa**. Today, while caring for her mother in Canada, Maureen still serves as a special pioneer. Looking back on her years of serving abroad, she states: “Jehovah always provided what I needed and when I needed it.”

Wendy, now in her mid-60’s, began pioneering in Australia as a teenager. She recalls: “I was very timid and found it difficult to talk to strangers. But pioneering taught me to converse with all sorts of people, so my confidence grew. Later, I realized that confidence was no longer an issue. Pioneering was teaching me to lean on Jehovah, and I began to feel more comfortable with the idea of serving overseas. Also, I was invited by a single sister who

Looking back on her nearly ten years of service in Nepal, Kumiko says: “The problems I had worried about parted before me like the Red Sea. I’m so glad I took up serving where the need is greater. Often, when I share the Bible’s message in the home of a family, five or six neighbors come over to listen. Even small children respectfully ask me to give them a tract about the Bible. It is such a joy to preach in this responsive territory.”

COPING WITH CHALLENGES

Not surprisingly, the courageous single sisters we interviewed faced challenges. How did they handle them?

“At first, I found it difficult to be so far away from my family,” says **Diane**, from Canada. Now in her early 60’s, she served as a missionary in **Ivory Coast** (now **Côte d’Ivoire**) for 20 years. “I asked Jehovah to help me love the people in my assignment. One of my instructors at Gilead, Brother Jack Redford, explained to us that at first we might be disturbed, even shocked, by the conditions in our assignment, especially when coming face-to-face with severe poverty. But he said: ‘Don’t look at the poverty. Look at the people, at their faces and their eyes. Watch their reaction when they hear Bible truths.’ That’s what I did, and what a blessing it was! When sharing the comforting Kingdom message, I would see the people’s eyes light up!” What further helped Diane to adjust to serving abroad? “I drew close to my Bible students and felt the deep joy of seeing them become faithful servants of Jehovah. My assignment became my home. I gained spiritual mothers and fathers, brothers and sisters, just as Jesus promised.”—Mark 10:29, 30.

Anne, now in her mid-40’s, serves in **Asia** in a land where our work is restricted. She relates: “Over the years while serving in different locations abroad, I lived with sisters who had backgrounds and personalities that were very different from mine. At times, that contributed to misunder-

standings and hurt feelings. When that happened, I tried to get closer to my housemates, to understand their culture better. I also worked harder on being more loving and reasonable toward them. I am glad those efforts bore fruit and have resulted in many deep and lasting friendships that help me to endure in my assignment.”

How to Prepare for Serving Abroad



Margaret, circa 1968

“Visit a country where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater to get a taste of what life there is like. If that is not possible right now, then begin associating in your own country with publishers from another ethnic group. Learn their language, explore their culture. Above all, rely on Jehovah. There were many things I thought I could never do, but with Jehovah’s help I did them successfully.”—**Karen**

“Talk with experienced missionaries and pioneers. Count the cost. Pray for guidance. And recognize that the same fundamental principles of preaching apply all over the world. You can be sure that serving abroad leads to a happy life.”—**Margaret**

In 1993, **Ute**, from Germany, now in her early 50's, was assigned to serve as a missionary in **Madagascar**. She relates: "At first, I struggled to learn the local language, to adjust to the humid climate, and to cope with malaria, amoebas, and parasitic worms. But I received a lot of help. The local sisters, their children, and my Bible students patiently helped me to master the language. My missionary partner lovingly cared for me when I was sick. But most of all, Jehovah helped me. I regularly poured out my anxieties to him in prayer. Then I patiently waited—sometimes for days, sometimes for months—for my prayers to be answered. Jehovah solved every problem." Ute has now been serving in Madagascar for 23 years.

LIVES RICHLY BLESSED

Like other need-greaters, single sisters living in foreign lands often express that serving abroad enriched their lives. What are some of the blessings they received?

Heidi, from Germany, now in her early 70's, has been serving as a missionary in **Ivory Coast** (now **Côte d'Ivoire**) since 1968. "The greatest joy I have received," she states, "is to see my spiritual children 'go on walking in the truth.' Some of my

former Bible students are now pioneers and congregation elders. Many of them call me Mama or Grandma. One of these elders and his wife and children view me as family. So Jehovah has given me a son, a daughter-in-law, and three grandchildren."—3 John 4.

Karen from Canada, now in her early 70's, served over 20 years in **West Africa**. She says: "Missionary life taught me to be more self-sacrificing, loving, and patient. Also, having fellow workers of many nationalities broadened my viewpoint. I learned that there are different ways of doing things. And what a blessing it is now to have dear friends all over the world! Though our lives and assignments have changed, our friendships remain."

Margaret, from England, now in her late 70's, served as a missionary in **Laos**. She relates: "Serving abroad allowed me to see firsthand how Jehovah draws people from all races and backgrounds into his organization. That experience greatly strengthened my faith. It gives me complete confidence that Jehovah is directing his organization and that his purposes will be accomplished."

Indeed, single sisters serving abroad have established an outstanding record of Christian service. They deserve to be warmly commended. (Judg. 11:40) What is more, their numbers are growing. (Ps. 68:11) Are you able to adjust your circumstances and follow in the footsteps of the zealous sisters interviewed for this article? If you are, you will no doubt "taste and see that Jehovah is good."—Ps. 34:8.



- 1 Ute
- 2 Karen (center)
- 3 Heidi



Our yeartext for 2017: “Trust in Jehovah and Do What Is Good”

“Trust in Jehovah and do what is good . . . and act with faithfulness.”—PS. 37:3.

JEHOVAH created humans with remarkable abilities. He gave us thinking ability to solve problems and plan for the future. (Prov. 2:11) He gave us power to carry out our plans, enabling us to work toward proper goals. (Phil. 2:13) He also created us with a conscience—an inborn sense of right and wrong—that can help us avoid wrongdoing and correct our mistakes when we fall short.—Rom. 2:15.

² Jehovah expects us to put our abilities to good use. Why? Because he loves us, and he knows that it brings us satisfaction when we employ these gifts. Through his Word, Jehovah repeatedly admonishes us to use our abilities for good. For example, in the Hebrew Scriptures, we read: “The plans of the diligent surely lead to success”; and “whatever your hand finds to do, do with all your might.” (Prov. 21:5; Eccl. 9:10)

1. Jehovah created humans with what remarkable abilities?
2. How does Jehovah expect us to use our abilities?

SONGS: 150, 124

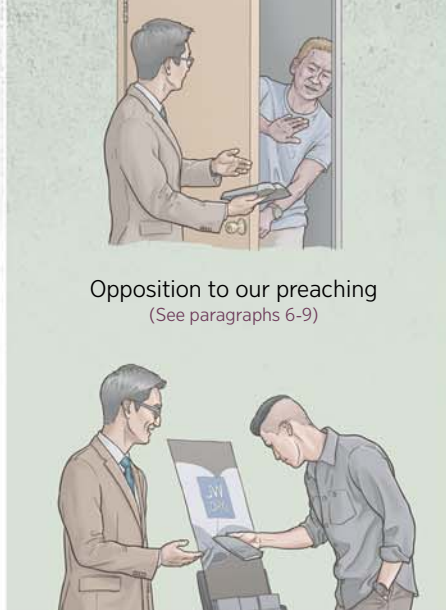
WHAT CAN WE LEARN ABOUT TRUSTING IN JEHOVAH FROM . . .

Noah?

David?

other faithful servants
of Jehovah?

When dealing
with problems,
“trust in Jehovah
and do what is good”



Opposition to our preaching
(See paragraphs 6-9)



Past sins
(See paragraphs 11-14)

In the Christian Greek Scriptures, we are told: “As long as we have the opportunity, let us work what is good toward all”; and “to the extent that each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another.” (Gal. 6:10; 1 Pet. 4:10) Clearly, Jehovah wants us to do what we can to benefit ourselves and others.

³ At the same time, Jehovah knows that humans have limitations. On our own, we can never eliminate imperfection, sin, and death; neither can we control other people, for all have free will. (1 Ki. 8:46) And no matter how much knowledge or experience we gain, we will always be like children in comparison with Jehovah.—Isa. 55:9.

⁴ In all circumstances, we need to lean on Jehovah for guidance, trusting in him to support us and do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. At the same time, we should do what we can, taking appropriate action to solve problems and help others. **(Read Psalm 37:3.)** In

short, we need both ‘to trust in Jehovah and to do what is good’; we need ‘to act with faithfulness.’ In this regard, let us consider what we can learn from the examples of Noah, David, and other faithful servants of God who relied on Jehovah and took appropriate action. As we will see, this involved distinguishing between what they *could not* do and what they *could* do and then acting accordingly.

WHEN SURROUNDED BY WICKEDNESS

⁵ Noah lived in a world that was “filled with violence” and immorality. (Gen. 6:4, 9-13) He knew that Jehovah would eventually bring an end to that wicked world. Even so, Noah must have been distressed by such ungodly conditions. In that situation, Noah recognized that there were some things he could not do but other things he *could* do.

⁶ **What Noah could not do:** Although Noah faithfully preached Jehovah’s

3. What limitations do humans have?
4. What will we consider in this article?

5. Describe the situation that Noah faced.
- 6, 7. (a) What could Noah not do? (b) How are we in a situation similar to Noah’s?



Health problems
(See paragraph 15)



Wayward children
(See paragraph 16)



Low finances
(See paragraph 17)



warning message, he could not force wicked people around him to accept that message, nor could he make the Flood come any sooner. Noah had to trust that Jehovah would keep His promise to end wickedness, believing that God would do so at just the right time.—Gen. 6:17.

⁷ We too live in a world filled with wickedness, which we know Jehovah has promised to destroy. (1 John 2:17) In the meantime, we cannot force people to accept the “good news of the Kingdom.” And we cannot do anything to speed up the start of the “great tribulation.” (Matt. 24:14, 21) Like Noah, we need strong faith, trusting that God will soon intervene. (Ps. 37:10, 11) We are convinced that Jehovah will not allow this wicked world to continue for even one day longer than his purpose requires.—Hab. 2:3.

⁸ **What Noah could do:** Instead of giving up because of what he could not

8. How did Noah focus on what he could do? (See opening picture.)

do, Noah focused on what he *could* do. As “a preacher of righteousness,” Noah faithfully proclaimed the warning message he had been given. (2 Pet. 2:5) No doubt, doing so helped Noah keep his faith strong. In addition to preaching, he also used his physical and mental abilities to accomplish the God-assigned work of building an ark.—**Read Hebrews 11:7.**

⁹ Like Noah, we strive to have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58) Such work may include the construction and maintenance of facilities for worship, volunteering to assist at assemblies and conventions, or caring for assignments at a branch office or a remote translation office. Above all, we stay busy in the preaching work, knowing that this work strengthens our hope for the future. One faithful sister put it this way: “When you talk to others about the blessings of God’s Kingdom, you realize that your listeners have absolutely no hope and that they see their

9. How can we imitate Noah’s example?

problems as permanent.” Indeed, sharing in the preaching work fortifies our positive view of the future and our resolve not to give up in the race for life.—1 Cor. 9:24.

WHEN WE FALL SHORT

¹⁰ Jehovah described King David as “a man agreeable to [his] heart.” (Acts 13:22) Overall, David’s life course was one of faithfulness. Even so, on occasion he fell into serious sin. He committed adultery with Bath-sheba. To make matters worse, he tried to hide the sin by arranging for her husband, Uriah, to be killed in battle. David even sent what amounted to Uriah’s death sentence by means of the man’s own hand! (2 Sam. 11:1-21) Inevitably, David’s sins came to light. (Mark 4:22) When that happened, how did David react?

¹¹ *What David could not do:* David could not undo what he had done. And he could not escape the consequences of his mistakes. In fact, some of those consequences would stay with David for the rest of his life. (2 Sam. 12:10-12, 14) Thus, he needed faith. He had to trust that when he truly repented, Jehovah would forgive him and help him endure the consequences of his actions.

¹² Being imperfect, all of us sin. Some mistakes are more serious than others. In some cases, we may not be able to undo our mistakes. We may simply have to live with the consequences. (Gal. 6:7) But we take God at his word, trusting that if we are repentant, Jehovah will

support us through difficult times—even when those difficulties are of our own making.—**Read Isaiah 1:18, 19; Acts 3:19.**

¹³ *What David could do:* David allowed Jehovah to help him recover spiritually. One way he did that was by accepting correction from Jehovah’s representative, the prophet Nathan. (2 Sam. 12:13) David also prayed to Jehovah, confessing his sins and expressing a sincere desire to be restored to Jehovah’s favor. (Ps. 51:1-17) Instead of being paralyzed by guilt, David learned from his mistakes. Indeed, he never repeated those serious sins. Years later, he died faithful, his record of integrity firmly sealed in Jehovah’s memory.—Heb. 11:32-34.

¹⁴ What can we learn from David’s example? If we fall into serious sin, we need to repent sincerely and seek Jehovah’s forgiveness. We must confess our sins to him. (1 John 1:9) We also need to approach the elders, who can offer us spiritual help. (**Read James 5:14-16.**) By availing ourselves of Jehovah’s arrangements, we show that we trust in his promise to heal and forgive us. Thereafter, we do well to learn from our mistakes, move forward in our service to Jehovah, and look to the future with confidence.—Heb. 12:12, 13.

IN OTHER SITUATIONS

¹⁵ Likely, you can think of other faithful servants of old who trusted in Jehovah while taking appropriate action. For example, *Hannah* could not overcome the problem of barrenness on her own.

10. Describe the situation that David faced.

11, 12. (a) After he sinned, what could David not do? (b) If we repent after making serious mistakes, we can trust that Jehovah will do what for us?

13. How did David recover spiritually?

14. What can we learn from David’s example?

15. What do we learn from Hannah’s example?

But she trusted that Jehovah would comfort her, so she continued to worship at the tabernacle and pour out her heart in prayer. (1 Sam. 1:9-11) Is that not a good example for us? When we deal with health problems or other challenges beyond our control, we throw our anxiety on Jehovah, trusting that he cares for us. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) And we do what is within our power to benefit from Christian meetings and other spiritual provisions.—Heb. 10:24, 25.

¹⁶ What about faithful parents whose children have gone astray? Elderly *Samuel* could not force his adult sons to remain loyal to the righteous standards he taught them. (1 Sam. 8:1-3) He had to leave the matter in Jehovah's hands. Even so, Samuel could maintain his own integrity and please his heavenly Father, Jehovah. (Prov. 27:11) Today, a number of Christian parents find themselves in a similar situation. They trust that like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, Jehovah is ever on the lookout to welcome back sinners who repent. (Luke 15:20) At the same time, such parents work hard to remain loyal to Jehovah, hoping that their example will move their children to return to the fold.

¹⁷ Think, too, of *the needy widow* in Jesus' day. (**Read Luke 21:1-4.**) She could hardly do anything about the corrupt practices being carried on at the temple. (Matt. 21:12, 13) And there was likely little she could do to improve her financial situation. Yet, she voluntarily contributed those "two small coins," which were "all the means of living she had." That

faithful woman demonstrated wholehearted trust in Jehovah, knowing that if she put spiritual things first, he would provide for her physical needs. The widow's trust moved her to support the existing arrangement for true worship. Likewise, we trust that if we seek first the Kingdom, Jehovah will make sure that we have what we need.—Matt. 6:33.

¹⁸ Many of our modern-day fellow believers have similarly demonstrated trust in Jehovah and have taken appropriate action. Consider a brother named *Malcolm*, who remained faithful until his death in 2015. Over the decades that he and his wife served Jehovah, they experienced ups and downs. "Life is unpredictable at times, uncertain, and even hard to deal with," he said. "But Jehovah blesses those who lean on him." Malcolm's advice? "Pray to be as productive and as active in Jehovah's service as you can be. Focus on what you can do, not on what you cannot do."^{*}

¹⁹ As this system of things goes "from bad to worse," we can expect to face increasingly greater difficulties. (2 Tim. 3:1, 13) So it is more important than ever that we do not allow ourselves to be paralyzed by such challenges. Rather, we need to cultivate strong trust in Jehovah while taking whatever appropriate action we can. How fitting, then, is our yeartext for 2017: "Trust in Jehovah and do what is good"!—Ps. 37:3.

^{*} See *The Watchtower*, October 15, 2013, pp. 17-20.

16. What can parents learn from elderly Samuel?

17. Why is the example of the needy widow encouraging?

18. Give an example of a modern-day servant who had the right outlook.

19. (a) Why is our yeartext for 2017 fitting?
(b) How will you apply the 2017 yeartext in your life?



Treasure Your Gift of Free Will

“Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom.”—2 COR. 3:17.

SONGS: 40, 54

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is free will?

How can the way we use our freedom of choice reveal the depth of our love for Jehovah?

How can we show respect for the decisions of others?

WHEN faced with making a personal choice, one woman told a friend: “Do not make me think; just tell me what to do. That is easier.” The woman preferred being told what to do instead of using a precious gift from her Creator, the gift of free will. What about you? Do you like making your own decisions, or do you prefer that others decide for you? How do you view the matter of free will?

² People have debated this subject for centuries. Some claim that there is no such thing as free will—that all our actions are predetermined by God. Others argue that true free will is only possible if we have absolute freedom. However, to understand this matter properly, we must turn to God’s Word, the Bible. Why? It reveals that Jehovah created us with free will; that is, the capacity and freedom to make our own intelligent choices. **(Read Joshua 24:15.)** The Bible also answers such questions as: How should our freedom to make decisions be exercised? Does it have limitations? How does the way we use our freedom of choice reveal the depth of our love for Jehovah? How can we show respect for the decisions of others?

1, 2. (a) What different views do people have regarding the matter of free will? (b) What does the Bible teach us about our freedom of choice, and what questions will we consider?

WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM JEHOVAH AND JESUS?

³ Jehovah alone has absolute freedom, but the way he uses it sets a pattern for us. For example, he chose to select the nation of Israel as his name people, “his special property.” (Deut. 7:6-8) This was not an arbitrary choice. Jehovah was being true to a promise that he had made centuries earlier to his friend Abraham. (Gen. 22:15-18) Furthermore, Jehovah always exercises his freedom in harmony with his attributes of love and justice. This is evident in the way he disciplined the Israelites, who repeatedly abandoned true worship. When they expressed heartfelt repentance, Jehovah willingly extended love and mercy, saying: “I will heal their unfaithfulness. I will love them of my own free will.” (Hos. 14:4) What a fine example of using his freedom for the benefit of others!

⁴ When Jehovah began his creative works, he lovingly chose to bestow free will on his intelligent creatures. The first one to receive this gift was his firstborn Son, “the image of the invisible God.” (Col. 1:15) Even before coming to earth, Jesus chose to remain loyal to his Father and not join Satan in his rebellion. Later, when Jesus was on earth, he exercised his free will to reject the temptations of the great Adversary. (Matt. 4:10) In earnest prayer the night before his death, Jesus reaffirmed his determination to do the will of God. He said: “Father, if you want to, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, let, not my will,

but yours take place.” (Luke 22:42) May we imitate Jesus and use our free will to honor Jehovah and to do his will! Is that really possible?

⁵ Yes, we can imitate the example of Jesus, for we too are made in God’s image and likeness. (Gen. 1:26) However, we have limitations. We do not have the absolute freedom that Jehovah has. God’s Word explains that our freedom has boundaries and that we must observe the limits Jehovah appropriately places on us. What is more, wives are to be in subjection to their husbands and children to their parents. (Eph. 5:22; 6:1) How do these limitations affect the way we use our free will? The answer to that question can determine our everlasting future.

THE USE AND ABUSE OF FREE WILL

⁶ Is having free will with limits *real* freedom? Yes, it is! Why can we say that? Limitations put on people’s freedom can protect them. For example, we may exercise our freedom of choice to drive to a distant city. However, would we feel safe traveling on highways where there were no traffic laws, where everyone was free to decide how fast or on which side of the road to drive? Obviously not. Limits are necessary in order for all to enjoy the blessings of true freedom. To illustrate further the wisdom of using our free will within the boundaries set by Jehovah, let us consider some Bible examples.

⁷ When creating the first human, Adam, God gave him the same gift

3. What example does Jehovah set in the use of his freedom?

4, 5. (a) Who was the first to receive God’s gift of free will, and how did he use it? (b) What question must each of us ask?

6. Illustrate why it is proper for our freedom to have limitations.

7. (a) How did the gift of free will distinguish Adam from other forms of life in Eden? (b) Describe one way that Adam exercised his free will.

he had given his intelligent creatures in heaven, the gift of free will. This set Adam apart from the animals, since they live according to instinct. Consider an example of how Adam used his free will in an appropriate way. Animals were created before man. However, Jehovah reserved the joy of naming those creatures for his first human son. God “began bringing them to the man to see what he would call each one.” After Adam observed each animal and assigned it a suitable name, Jehovah did not step in and override Adam’s choices. Rather, “whatever the man would call each living creature, that became its name.”—Gen. 2:19.

⁸ Regrettably, Adam was not content with his God-given assignment as cultivator and caretaker of the earthly paradise. He was not satisfied with his extensive freedom to carry out his God-given mandate: “Be fruitful and become many, fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish . . . , the flying creatures . . . , and every living creature that is moving on the earth.” (Gen. 1:28) Instead, he chose to overstep his God-ordained boundaries by eating the forbidden fruit. This gross misuse of free will resulted in millenniums of suffering and pain for Adam’s descendants. (Rom. 5:12) Knowing the consequences of Adam’s decision should move us to use our freedom responsibly and within the limits set by Jehovah.

⁹ The descendants of Adam and Eve inherited imperfection and death from their disobedient parents. However,

they retained the right to exercise the gift of free will. This is evident in the way God dealt with the nation of Israel. Through his servant Moses, Jehovah gave the people the choice to accept or reject the privilege of becoming His special property. (Ex. 19:3-6) What was their response? They freely chose to carry out the conditions of becoming God’s name people and unanimously declared: “All that Jehovah has spoken, we are willing to do.” (Ex. 19:8) Sadly, in time the nation misused its freedom of choice and broke that promise. Let us heed this warning example and always treasure our gift of free will by continuing to stick close to Jehovah and obeying his righteous requirements.—1 Cor. 10:11.

¹⁰ In Hebrews chapter 11, we find the names of 16 servants of God who chose to use their free will within the limits set by Jehovah. As a result, they reaped rich blessings and a sure hope for the future. For example, *Noah* showed great faith and chose to obey God’s instructions to build an ark for the preservation of his own family and future generations of humankind. (Heb. 11:7) *Abraham* and *Sarah* willingly followed God’s leadings to a land of promise. Even after they embarked on this long journey, they had the “opportunity to return” to the prosperous city of Ur. However, they kept their eyes of faith focused on the future “fulfillment of [God’s] promises”; they were “reaching out for a better place.” (Heb. 11:8, 13, 15, 16) *Moses* turned his back on the treasures of Egypt, “choosing to be mistreated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoy-

8. How did Adam misuse his free will, and with what result?

9. What choice did Jehovah give his people, Israel, and how did the nation respond?

10. What examples prove that it is possible for imperfect humans to use their free will in a way that honors God? (See opening picture.)

ment of sin.” (Heb. 11:24-26) May we imitate the faith of such ancient ones by treasuring our gift of free will and using it to do God’s will.

¹¹ While it might seem easier to have someone else make decisions for us, doing so would rob us of one of the great blessings of free will. That blessing is revealed at **Deuteronomy 30: 19, 20. (Read.)** Verse 19 describes the choice that God gave to the Israelites. In verse 20 we learn that Jehovah gave them the precious opportunity to show him what was in their hearts. We too can *choose* to worship Jehovah. We could have no greater motive than to use God’s gift of free will to express our love for him and to bring him honor and glory!

AVOID MISUSING YOUR GIFT OF FREE WILL

¹² Imagine that you gave a valuable gift to a friend. How disappointed you would

11. (a) What is one of the great blessings of free will? (b) What motivates you to use your free will properly?

12. What must we never do with our gift of free will?

be if you learned that he had thrown your gift in the trash or, worse yet, that he had used it to injure someone! Now think of how Jehovah must feel as he watches so many people misuse their freedom to make choices in life even to the harm of others. Indeed, just as the Bible foretold, during “the last days” men would be “unthankful.” (2 Tim. 3: 1, 2) May we never misuse this precious gift from Jehovah or take it for granted. How, though, can we avoid misusing our gift of free will?

¹³ All of us have freedom of choice regarding associations, styles of dress and grooming, and entertainment. However, our freedom could become “a cover for doing wrong” if we chose to become slaves of our own fleshly desires or if we adopted the disgraceful fads and trends of the world. **(Read 1 Peter 2:16.)** Instead of using our freedom “as an opportunity to pursue fleshly desires,” we want to be determined to make choices that help us to heed the admonition: “Do

13. What is one way we can avoid misusing our Christian freedom?

We can make personal decisions without imposing our conscience on others
(See paragraph 15)



all things for God's glory."—Gal. 5:13; 1 Cor. 10:31.

¹⁴ Another way to guard our gift of free will is to put our trust in Jehovah and let him guide us within the protective boundaries that he has set for us. He alone is 'the One teaching us to benefit ourselves, the One guiding us in the way we should walk.' (Isa. 48:17) We must humbly acknowledge the truthfulness of the inspired words: "Man's way does not belong to him. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jer. 10:23) May we never fall into the trap of choosing to rely on our own understanding, as did Adam and the rebellious Israelites. Instead, may we "trust in Jehovah with all [our] heart." —Prov. 3:5.

RESPECTING OTHERS' GIFT OF FREE WILL

¹⁵ One of the limitations on our freedom is that we must respect the right that others have to make their own decisions in life. Why? Since we all have the gift of free will, no two Christians will always make exactly the same decision. This is true even in matters that involve our conduct and worship. Remember the principle found at **Galatians 6:5**. (**Read.**) When we recognize that each Christian must "carry his own load," we will respect the right that others have to use their own gift of free will.

¹⁶ Consider a Bible example that illus-

14. What does trusting in Jehovah have to do with our use of free will?

15. What do we learn from the principle found at Galatians 6:5?

16, 17. (a) How did freedom of choice become an issue in Corinth? (b) How did Paul resolve matters, and what does this teach us about the rights of others?

trates why we must respect our brothers' freedom to make their own decisions in matters of conscience. Christians in Corinth became divided over the matter of eating meat that may have been offered to idols but was thereafter sold in a meat market. Some reasoned: 'Since an idol is nothing, the meat can be eaten in good conscience.' However, others who formerly worshipped those idols felt that eating the meat would be an act of worship. (1 Cor. 8:4, 7) This was a sensitive issue, one that threatened to cause divisions in the congregation. How did Paul help the Christians in Corinth to gain God's view of the matter?

¹⁷ First, Paul reminded both sides that food would not bring them nearer to God. (1 Cor. 8:8) Next, he warned them not to allow their "right to choose" to become "a stumbling block to those who [were] weak." (1 Cor. 8:9) Later, he instructed those with a more sensitive conscience not to judge those who chose to eat such meat. (1 Cor. 10:25, 29, 30) Hence, in this important matter related to worship, each Christian needed to make a conscientious decision. Therefore, should we not also respect our brother's right to make personal decisions in matters of lesser importance? —1 Cor. 10:32, 33.

¹⁸ Jehovah has given us the gift of free will and with it true freedom. (2 Cor. 3:17) We treasure this gift because it allows us to make decisions that reveal to Jehovah how much we love him. May we continue to show our appreciation for this precious gift by using it in a way that honors God and by respecting the way that others choose to use their gift.

18. How will you show that you treasure your gift of free will?



Why Modesty Still Matters

“Wisdom is with the modest ones.”—PROV. 11:2.

KING SAUL of ancient Israel began his reign as a modest and respected man. (1 Sam. 9:1, 2, 21; 10:20-24) But soon after he became king, he carried out a series of presumptuous acts. When God’s prophet Samuel did not show up in Gilgal at the appointed time, Saul became impatient. The Philistines were preparing for battle, and the Israelites were deserting Saul. He must have thought, ‘I have to do something—and quickly.’ So he offered up a sacrifice to God, which he was not authorized to do. Jehovah was not pleased.—1 Sam. 13:5-9.

² When Samuel arrived in Gilgal, he rebuked Saul. Instead of accepting the correction, Saul made excuses, tried to shift the blame, and minimized what he had done. (1 Sam. 13:10-14) That started a terrible chain of events that eventually cost Saul his kingship and, more important, Jehovah’s approval. (1 Sam. 15:22, 23) Despite a promising beginning, Saul’s life ended in complete disaster.—1 Sam. 31:1-6.

1, 2. Why was a once modest man rejected by God? (See opening picture.)

SONGS: 33, 88

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

Why is modesty important?

How is modesty related to humility?

How can we flourish in our assigned place?

³ In today's competitive world, many feel that they have to stand out from the crowd in order to get ahead. In doing so, they may sacrifice all modesty. For example, a well-known movie star, turned politician, once said: "Modesty is not a word that applies to me in any way—I hope it never will." Why, though, does modesty still matter? What is modesty, and what is it not? And how can we remain modest despite challenging situations or pressure from others? In this article, we will answer the first two questions. The third question will be addressed in the following article.

WHY IS MODESTY IMPORTANT?

⁴ The Bible contrasts modesty with presumptuousness. (**Read Proverbs 11:2.**) Wisely, David asked Jehovah to "hold [him] back from presumptuous acts." (Ps. 19:13) What are "presumptuous acts"? By definition, when someone rashly or impertinently does something that he is not authorized to do, he is acting presumptuously. Because of inherited sin, we all act presumptuously at times. But as King Saul's example illustrates, if we develop a pattern of pushing ahead, sooner or later we will find ourselves in serious trouble with God. Psalm 119:21 says of Jehovah: "You rebuke the presumptuous." Why is that?

⁵ Presumptuous acts are more serious than innocent mistakes. First, when we

act immodestly, we fail to honor Jehovah as our rightful Sovereign. Second, if we act beyond the scope of our authority, we are likely to get into conflict with others. (Prov. 13:10) And third, when it becomes clear that we have acted presumptuously, we may be embarrassed or even humiliated. (Luke 14: 8, 9) Presumptuous acts do not turn out well. As the Scriptures show, modesty is always the right course.

WHAT DOES MODESTY INVOLVE?

⁶ Modesty and humility are closely linked traits. In the Bible, humility refers to being free from pride or arrogance. It is described as "lowliness of mind." (Phil. 2:3, ftn.) A humble person is generally also a modest person, able to estimate accurately his own abilities and achievements, to acknowledge his mistakes, and to accept suggestions and new ideas. Humility greatly pleases Jehovah.

⁷ In the Bible, modesty similarly refers to having a proper estimate of ourselves and an awareness of our limitations. In the original language of the text, the emphasis seems to be on how that awareness should affect our behavior toward others.

⁸ When might we start to think or act immodestly? Consider a few of the warning signs. We might be taking ourselves or our privileges too seriously. (Rom. 12:16) We might be drawing attention to ourselves in inappropriate

3. (a) What do many people think about modesty? (b) What questions need to be answered?

4. How would you define a presumptuous act?

5. Why are presumptuous acts serious?

6, 7. What is humility, and how is modesty related to it?

8. What are some warning signs of immodest thinking or behavior?

ways. (1 Tim. 2:9, 10) Or we might be advocating strong opinions solely on the basis of our position, connections, or personal thinking. (1 Cor. 4:6) Often, when we act like this, we may not even be aware that we have crossed the line from modesty to presumptuousness.

⁹ Anyone can act immodestly if he allows himself temporarily to be overcome by fleshly desires. Selfish ambition, envy, and uncontrolled anger have led many to presumptuous acts. Bible characters like Absalom, Uzziah, and Nebuchadnezzar succumbed to such works of the flesh and were humbled by Jehovah for their presumptuousness.—2 Sam. 15:1-6; 18:9-17; 2 Chron. 26:16-21; Dan. 5:18-21.

¹⁰ There are other reasons, though, why someone may act immodestly. Consider, for example, the following Bible accounts: Genesis 20:2-7 and Matthew 26:31-35. Were the seemingly presumptuous actions of Abimelech and Peter motivated by sinful desires? Or were these individuals simply unaware of all the facts, or were they caught off guard? Since we cannot read hearts, it is both wise and loving to avoid jumping to conclusions about other people's motives.

—**Read James 4:12.**

ACKNOWLEDGING OUR PLACE

¹¹ Modesty really starts with acknowledging our place in God's arrangement.

9. What has led some to become presumptuous? Give a Bible example.

10. Why should we avoid judging other people's motives? Give a Bible example.

11. How is modesty related to acknowledging our place in God's arrangement?

As a God of order, Jehovah gives each one of us a place or sphere of operation in his household. Everyone's role in the congregation is unique, but all of us are needed. In his undeserved kindness, Jehovah has given each of us certain gifts, assets, abilities, or talents. We can use them to glorify him and to benefit others. (Rom. 12:4-8) Jehovah has entrusted us with a stewardship that comes with honor, trust, and responsibility.

—**Read 1 Peter 4:10.**

¹² Our place in God's arrangement is not fixed, however. It can change over time. Consider Jesus' example. Initially, he was alone with Jehovah. (Prov. 8:22) Then he helped make other spirit creatures, the material universe, and finally, humans. (Col. 1:16) Still later, Jesus took on a new role on earth, first as a helpless baby and then as an adult. (Phil. 2:7) After his sacrificial death, Jesus returned to heavenly spirit life to become the King of God's Kingdom in 1914. (Heb. 2:9) And that will not be his last change of assignment. After his Thousand Year Reign, Jesus will hand over his Kingdom to Jehovah so that "God may be all things to everyone." —1 Cor. 15:28.

¹³ We can likewise expect our assignments to change from time to time, often because of decisions we make. For example, were you single, but then you got married? Have you begun raising children? In your later years, have you simplified your life to take up the full-time ministry? Each of those decisions came with certain privileges and

12, 13. Why should we not be surprised if our place in God's arrangement changes from time to time?



What can we learn from Jesus' example when we receive a change of assignment?
(See paragraphs 12-14)

responsibilities. Our changing circumstances can expand or limit our sphere of operation. Are you young or up in years? Is your health good or fragile? Jehovah always considers how each of us might best be used in his service. He only expects from us what is reasonable, and he greatly appreciates whatever we do.—Heb. 6:10.

¹⁴ Jesus found joy in every one of his assignments, and we can find joy in ours. (Prov. 8:30, 31) A modest person does not feel cramped by his current assignments or responsibilities in the congregation. He does not worry about gaining future privileges or about what others are achieving. Instead, he focuses his energies on finding purpose and enjoyment in his present role because he views it as coming from Jehovah. At the same time, he sincerely respects the role or place that Jehovah has given to others. Modesty helps us to enjoy giving others due honor and support.—Rom. 12:10.

WHAT MODESTY IS NOT

¹⁵ Gideon is an excellent example of modesty in action. When Jehovah's angel first appeared to him, Gideon readily acknowledged his modest background and credentials. (Judg. 6:15) After he accepted Jehovah's assignment, Gideon made sure that he thor-

14. How can a modest outlook help us to find fulfillment and keep our joy in any situation?

15. What can we learn from Gideon's modesty?

oughly understood what was required, and he looked to Jehovah for guidance. (Judg. 6:36-40) Gideon was bold and courageous. Yet, he acted with caution and shrewdness. (Judg. 6:11, 27) He did not seize upon his assignment to gain prominence. Rather, as soon as he could, he gladly returned to his former place.—Judg. 8:22, 23, 29.

¹⁶ Being modest does not mean that we should never reach out for or accept additional privileges of service. The Scriptures encourage all of us to make advancement. (1 Tim. 4:13-15) Does this always require a change of assignment though? Not necessarily. With Jehovah's blessing, we can make spiritual progress in whatever role we are currently serving. We can continue to cultivate our God-given abilities and expand in doing good works.

¹⁷ Before accepting a new assignment, a modest person will first find out what will be required of him. He can then make an honest evaluation of his circumstances. For example, will he be able to take on more work or responsibility without neglecting other important things? Can some of his current work be delegated to make room for the new responsibility? If the answer to one or both of these questions is no, perhaps there is someone else who might be in a better position to care for the assignment right now. A prayerful and realistic analysis will help us to avoid overreaching our current abilities and limitations. Modesty may lead us to say no.

16, 17. What does a modest person take into consideration when thinking about making spiritual progress?

¹⁸ When we do accept a new assignment, Gideon's example reminds us that we cannot succeed without Jehovah's direction and blessing. After all, we have been invited "to walk in modesty with [our] God." (Mic. 6:8) So any time we take on new responsibilities, we need to reflect prayerfully on whatever Jehovah tells us through his Word and his organization. We have to learn to adjust our unsteady steps to match Jehovah's steady lead. Let us remember that it is Jehovah's humility and not our own ability that 'makes us great.' (Ps. 18:35) Choosing to walk modestly with God will therefore help us to think neither too much nor too little of ourselves.

—**Read Romans 12:3.**

¹⁹ A modest person gives Jehovah the honor he deserves, since Jehovah is our Creator and Universal Sovereign. (Rev. 4:11) Modesty helps us to be satisfied with and productive in our assigned place in God's arrangement. Modesty restrains us from acting dishonorably, and it promotes unity among Jehovah's people. Modesty motivates us to consider others ahead of ourselves, and it encourages us to be cautious, thus avoiding serious mistakes. For these reasons, modesty still matters to all of God's people, and Jehovah treasures those who cultivate it. But what about when we are under pressure? The next article will show us how to remain modest in stressful situations.

18. (a) What will modesty move us to do in a new role or assignment? (b) How does Romans 12:3 apply to a modest person?

19. For what reasons should we cultivate modesty?



You Can Remain Modest Under Test

“Walk in modesty with your God!”—MIC. 6:8.

SONGS: 48, 80

HOW CAN MODESTY HELP US TO . . .

succeed in our assignments?

cope with criticism or praise?

make decisions in the face
of uncertainty?

SOMETIME during King Jeroboam’s reign, Jehovah sent a certain prophet from Judah to deliver a scathing judgment message to that apostate king of Israel. The humble prophet faithfully delivered God’s message, and Jehovah protected his servant from Jeroboam’s violent wrath.—1 Ki. 13:1-10.

² On his way home, the prophet unexpectedly met up with an old man from nearby Bethel. The man claimed to be a prophet of Jehovah. He deceived the younger man into disobeying Jehovah’s strict instructions ‘not to eat bread or drink water in Israel’ and ‘not to return by the way that he came.’ Jehovah was not pleased. Later, on his way home, a lion came across Jehovah’s prophet on the road and killed him.—1 Ki. 13:11-24.

³ Why did the once modest prophet presumptuously go along with that deceitful older man? The Bible does not say. But it could be that he completely forgot that he was supposed to be ‘walking modestly with God.’ **(Read Micah 6:8.)** In the Bible, walking with Jehovah conveys the idea of

1-3. What did the unnamed prophet from Judah fail to do, and what was the result? (See opening picture.)

trusting in him, supporting his sovereignty, and following his lead. A modest person is keenly aware that he can and must be in constant communication with his loving and almighty Father. The prophet could have asked Jehovah to clarify His instructions, but the Scriptures do not say that he did so. At times, we too have to make difficult decisions, and the right course to take may not be clear. Modestly seeking Jehovah's guidance helps us to avoid making grave mistakes.

⁴ In the preceding article, we learned why modesty is still important for Christians and what displaying it involves. What situations, though, might put our modesty to the test? And how can we cultivate this desirable quality, so that we remain modest even under pressure? To answer these questions, we will consider three common situations that can put modesty to the test, and we will see how we can act wisely in each case.—Prov. 11:2.

WHEN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES CHANGE

⁵ Changes in personal circumstances or of assignments can test our modesty. When David asked 80-year-old Barzillai to accept an invitation to live in the royal court, Barzillai must have been greatly honored. Accepting David's invitation would have allowed him to continue to enjoy the king's association. Yet, Barzillai declined. Why? Because of his advanced age, he told David that he did not want to become a burden to the king. So Barzillai recommended that Chimham, presumably one of his sons, take his place.—2 Sam. 19:31-37.

⁶ Modesty helped Barzillai to make a reasonable decision. He did not turn down David's invitation because he felt inadequate to shoulder responsibility or because he wanted to enjoy a quiet life in retirement. He simply recognized and accepted his changing circumstances and his limitations. He did not want to take on more than he reasonably could. **(Read Galatians 6:4, 5.)** If we focus on position, prominence, or recognition, it only provides a breeding ground for egotism, competition, and eventual disappointment. (Gal. 5:26) Modesty, however, helps all to focus their collective abilities and efforts on bringing glory to God and doing what is best to help others.—1 Cor. 10:31.

⁷ Greater responsibility often comes with greater authority, and that can test our modesty. When Nehemiah heard about the plight of the people in Jerusalem, he fervently prayed to Jehovah. (Neh. 1:4, 11) Jehovah's blessing came when King Artaxerxes appointed Nehemiah governor of the region. Yet, despite his prominent position, personal wealth, and considerable authority, Nehemiah never relied on his own experience or abilities. He kept walking with God. He continually sought Jehovah's direction by consulting God's Law. (Neh. 8:1, 8, 9) Nehemiah did not dominate over others; rather, he served them at his own expense.—Neh. 5:14-19.

⁸ Nehemiah's example demonstrates how modesty can help us to keep from becoming self-reliant when we receive a change of assignment or additional responsibility. Relying just on his own

4. What will we learn in this article?

5, 6. How did Barzillai manifest modesty?

7, 8. How can modesty help us to avoid becoming self-reliant?



Does our dress and grooming show respect
for Jehovah and others, or does it show a lack of modesty?
(See paragraph 12)

experience, an elder could begin to care for congregation matters without first approaching Jehovah in prayer. Others might make a decision first and then pray for Jehovah to bless their decision. Is that being modest, however? A modest person will always remember his place before God and his role in God's arrangement. Our abilities are not the important thing. Especially when we are faced with a familiar situation or problem, we have to be careful not to rely on ourselves. **(Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.)** As members of God's household, we learn to think in terms of fulfilling roles in a family or as part of a congregation rather than achieving a rank or climbing a corporate ladder.—1 Tim. 3:15.

RECEIVING CRITICISM OR PRAISE

⁹ It can be hard to control our feelings when we have to put up with un-

9, 10. How can modesty help us to cope with unfair criticism?

fair criticism. Hannah often cried because Peninnah, her rival, relentlessly taunted her. Hannah's husband loved her, but she was barren. Later, when she was praying at the tabernacle, High Priest Eli mistakenly accused her of being drunk. Imagine that! Yet, despite all of this, modest Hannah kept herself restrained and was respectful in her response to Eli. Her touching prayer is preserved in the Bible. It is full of expressions of faith, praise, and appreciation.—1 Sam. 1:5-7, 12-16; 2:1-10.

¹⁰ Modesty can also help us to “keep conquering the evil with the good.” (Rom. 12:21) Life in Satan's system is often unfair, and we need to fight against becoming incensed by the conduct of evildoers. (Ps. 37:1) When problems arise between spiritual brothers or sisters, the pain can be much deeper. A modest person will imitate Jesus. “When he was being insulted,” the Bible says, “he did not insult in return . . . ,

but he entrusted himself to the One who judges righteously.” (1 Pet. 2:23) Jesus knew that vengeance belongs to Jehovah. (Rom. 12:19) Christians are likewise admonished to be humble and not to “pay back injury for injury.”—1 Pet. 3:8, 9.

¹¹ Excessive flattery or praise can test our modesty as well. Consider Esther’s excellent response to a surprising turn of events. She was strikingly beautiful and was pampered with luxurious treatments for a year. She was in daily association with many young women from all over the Persian Empire who were competing for the attention of the king. Yet, she remained respectful and composed. She did not become vain or immodest even after the king selected her to be his queen.—Esther 2:9, 12, 15, 17.

¹² Modesty helps us always to dress, groom, and comport ourselves in a decent and respectable manner. We realize that we win people’s hearts, not by boasting or drawing undue attention to ourselves, but by displaying a “quiet and mild spirit.” (**Read 1 Peter 3:3, 4;** Jer. 9:23, 24) Vain sentiments in our hearts will eventually show up in our actions. We might drop hints, for example, implying that we enjoy special privileges, possess inside information, or have special relationships with responsible brothers. Or we might explain things in such a way that only we get the credit for ideas or accomplishments that others also contributed to. Again,

11, 12. (a) How can modesty help us to deal with flattery or excessive praise? (b) How should modesty govern our choice of dress and grooming as well as our behavior?

Jesus set a wonderful example. A good portion of what he said was either a quotation from or an allusion to the Hebrew Scriptures. He modestly spoke that way so that his hearers would know that what he said was coming from Jehovah and was not the product of his own intellect or wisdom.—John 8:28.

COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

¹³ Another test of our modesty might come when decisions are made. While the apostle Paul was staying in Caesarea, the prophet Agabus told him that if he continued on to Jerusalem, he would end up being arrested. He might even be killed. Fearing the worst, the brothers begged Paul not to go. However, Paul would not be dissuaded. He was neither overconfident nor paralyzed with fear. He trusted in Jehovah completely and was prepared to see his assignment through, wherever Jehovah would allow it to take him. On hearing this, the brothers modestly stopped objecting to Paul’s decision to go on to Jerusalem.—Acts 21:10-14.

¹⁴ Modesty can also help us to make good decisions even when we cannot fully know or control how things will turn out. As an example, if we enter some feature of the full-time service, what will happen to us if we get sick? What if our aging parents need our help? How will we look after ourselves in our old age? No amount of prayer or research will reveal a complete answer to questions like these. (Eccl. 8:16, 17) Our confidence in Jehovah will help us not only to acknowledge but also to

13, 14. How can modesty help us to make better decisions?

accept our limitations. After doing research, consulting others, and praying for guidance, we need to take steps in the direction that God's spirit is leading us. **(Read Ecclesiastes 11:4-6.)** That gives Jehovah something to bless, or he can gently redirect our goals.—Prov. 16: 3, 9.

CULTIVATING MODESTY

¹⁵ Since modesty has so many advantages, how can we cultivate it to an even greater degree? Let us consider four ways. First, we will develop greater modesty and reverence for Jehovah by appreciatively reflecting on his vastly superior qualities and position. (Isa. 8: 13) Remember, we are walking with Almighty God, not an angel or a man. That realization will move us 'to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.'—1 Pet. 5:6.

¹⁶ Second, meditating on Jehovah's love will help us to cultivate modesty. The apostle Paul wrote that Jehovah surrounded the less honorable parts of the human body "with greater honor." (1 Cor. 12:23, 24) Similarly, Jehovah cares for each one of us despite our limitations. He does not compare us with others or withhold his love when we make mistakes. Because of Jehovah's love, we can feel secure wherever we serve in his household.

¹⁷ Third, appreciation for our role in Jehovah's service will grow as we, in imitation of our God, look for the good in

others. Instead of seeking the spotlight or always stepping in to take over, we will more often find ourselves modestly seeking the advice of others and yielding to their suggestions. (Prov. 13:10) We will rejoice with them when they receive privileges. And we will praise Jehovah as we see how he blesses "the entire association of [our] brothers in the world."—1 Pet. 5:9.

¹⁸ Fourth, our personal sense of decency and respectability will be refined when we train our conscience according to Bible principles. We will develop good judgment by modestly learning to see things from Jehovah's viewpoint. Through regular study, prayer, and application of what we learn, we can gradually strengthen our conscience. (1 Tim. 1:5) We learn to put others first. If we do our part, Jehovah promises that he will 'finish our training,' helping us to develop modesty and other godly qualities.—1 Pet. 5:10.

¹⁹ A single presumptuous act cost the unnamed prophet from Judah his life and his good standing with God. It is possible, though, to remain modest under test. Faithful ones before us and modest ones today have proved that it can be done. The longer we walk with Jehovah, the deeper our modesty should become. (Prov. 8:13) Whatever our place right now, walking with Jehovah is in itself a wonderful and matchless privilege. Cherish that honor, and continue to do your best to walk modestly with Jehovah forever.

15. How does reflecting on Jehovah help to keep us humble?

16. How will meditating on God's love motivate us to be modest?

17. What effect will learning to look for the good in others have on us?

18. How can we train our conscience to have a godly sense of decency?

19. What will help us to remain modest forever?



“These Things Entrust to Faithful Men”

“These things entrust to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others.”—2 TIM. 2:2.

PEOPLE often define themselves by the work they do. To many, a job or position determines a person’s self-worth. In some cultures, when getting to know another person, one of the first questions asked is, “What kind of work do you do?”

² The Bible sometimes describes people by the work they did. It speaks of “Matthew the tax collector”; “Simon, a tanner”; and “Luke, the beloved physician.” (Matt. 10:3; Acts 10:6; Col. 4:14) Spiritual assignments or privileges also identify people. We read of *King David*, the *prophet Elijah*, and the *apostle Paul*. These men valued their God-given assignments. If we have privileges of service, we likewise should value them.

³ Many of us love the work we do and would like to continue doing it indefinitely. Sadly, though, from the days of Adam, each generation grows old and is replaced by another. (Eccl. 1:4) In recent times, this transition has presented

- 1, 2. How do many people view their work?
3. Why is there a need for older ones to train younger ones? (See opening picture.)

SONGS: 103, 101

DO YOU RECALL?

How did King David respond when told that his son would build God’s temple?

Why should older ones help younger ones to take on increased responsibility?

How can younger men demonstrate a proper attitude as they take on the work of older brothers?

unique challenges for true Christians. The work of Jehovah’s people has grown in scope and complexity. As we tackle new projects, new ways of doing things are adopted—often ways that involve the use of rapidly changing technology. Some older ones may find it hard to keep pace with these advances. (Luke 5:39) Even when that is not the case, younger ones may have greater strength and energy than older ones have. (Prov. 20:29) Thus, it is both loving and practical for older ones to prepare younger ones to take on greater responsibility.—**Read Psalm 71:18.**

⁴ Those in positions of authority may not find it easy to delegate to younger ones. Some fear losing a position they cherish. Others worry about losing control, convinced that younger ones cannot do things as well. Some may reason that they do not have time to train

4. Why is it difficult for some to delegate authority? (See the box “Why Some People Do Not Delegate.”)

someone else. On the other hand, those who are younger must guard against becoming impatient when they are not given more to do.

⁵ Let us discuss this matter of delegating from two angles. First, how can older ones help younger ones take on increased responsibility, and why is this important? (2 Tim. 2:2) Second, why is it important that younger ones keep the right attitude as they assist brothers who are more experienced and learn from them? To begin, let us see how King David equipped his son to take on an important responsibility.

DAVID PREPARED
AND SUPPORTED SOLOMON

⁶ After residing for years as a fugitive, David became king and lived in a comfortable house. Dismayed that there was no “house,” or temple, dedicated to Je-

5. What questions will this article discuss?
6. What did King David want to do, and how did Jehovah respond?

WHY SOME PEOPLE DO NOT DELEGATE			
1	They fear that they will not get credit for what is done.	→	However, all credit belongs to Jehovah.—Ps. 115:1.
2	They do not want to give up work that they enjoy.	→	However, there is joy in training others.—Acts 20:35.
3	They fear that the work will not be done properly.	→	However, God can help others to do the work.—Ps. 37:5.
4	They do not want to lose control of an assignment.	→	However, it is best to acknowledge that Jehovah is in control.—Isa. 45:6, 7.
5	They think that they do not have time to train others.	→	However, training others saves time in the long run.—Eph. 5:15, 16.

hovah, he wanted to build one. So he said to Nathan the prophet: “Here I am living in a house of cedars while the ark of the covenant of Jehovah is under tent cloths.” Nathan replied: “Do whatever is in your heart, for the true God is with you.” However, Jehovah directed otherwise. He told Nathan to tell David: “You are not the one who will build the house for me to dwell in.” Although Jehovah lovingly assured David that He would continue to bless him, God directed that David’s son Solomon build the temple. How did David react? —1 Chron. 17:1-4, 8, 11, 12; 29:1.

⁷ David did not withhold his support, brooding over the prospect that the credit for temple construction would not be his. The building did, in fact, become known as Solomon’s temple, not David’s. While David may have been disappointed that he could not fulfill his heart’s desire, he fully supported the project. He eagerly organized work groups and gathered iron, copper, silver, and gold, as well as cedar timbers. Further, he encouraged Solomon, saying: “Now, my son, may Jehovah be with you, and may you be successful and build the house of Jehovah your God, just as he has spoken concerning you.” —1 Chron. 22:11, 14-16.

⁸ **Read 1 Chronicles 22:5.** David might have concluded that Solomon was not qualified to oversee such an important project. After all, the temple was to be “exceedingly magnificent,” and Solomon was at the time “young and inexperienced.” Yet, David knew that Jehovah would equip Solomon to handle the

7. How did David react to Jehovah’s direction?
8. Why might David have concluded that Solomon was unqualified, but what did he do?



It is satisfying to see younger men taking on greater responsibility
(See paragraph 9)

work given to him. So David focused on what he could do to assist, preparing materials in great quantity.

EXPERIENCE THE JOY OF TRAINING OTHERS

⁹ Older brothers should not be disheartened when it becomes necessary to hand their assignments over to younger men. Rather, it is in the best interests of the work when younger ones are trained to handle responsibilities. Appointed men should have great satisfaction when the younger ones whom they have trained become qualified to take on the work. To illustrate, think of a father who teaches his son to drive a car. When he is a child, the son simply observes his father. When the boy is older, the father explains what he is doing. Then, when the boy is of legal age, he begins to drive the car as his father gives him further instruction. Sometimes they may take turns driving,

9. How can older ones find satisfaction in handing over responsibilities? Illustrate.

but eventually the son may do most, if not all, of the driving for his aging father. The wise father is pleased to have his son take over and does not feel that he has to be in control. Similarly, older men feel proud when they have trained younger ones to take on theocratic responsibilities.

¹⁰ As older ones, we must guard against jealousy. Notice how Moses reacted when certain ones in the camp of Israel began behaving as prophets. **(Read Numbers 11:24-29.)** Joshua, Moses' assistant, wanted to restrain them. He evidently thought that they were detracting from Moses' prominence and authority. But Moses replied: "Are you jealous for me? No, I wish that all of Jehovah's people were prophets and that Jehovah would put his spirit on them!" Moses saw Jehovah's hand in the matter. Disclaiming honor for himself, Moses expressed his desire that the same spiritual gifts be shared by all of Jehovah's servants. Like Moses, are we not pleased when others receive privileges that might otherwise have come to us?

¹¹ Today, there are many examples of brothers who have worked energetically for decades and who have prepared others to take on increased responsibility. For example, a brother named Peter served for more than 74 years in the full-time service, 35 of these at a branch office in Europe. Until recently, he was the overseer of the Service Department. Now Paul, a younger man who had worked alongside Peter for sev-

eral years, cares for that responsibility. When Peter was asked how he felt about his change of assignment, he replied, "I am so pleased that there are brothers who have been trained to accept greater responsibility and who are doing so well in caring for the work."

VALUE THE OLDER ONES AMONG US

¹² After Solomon died, his son Rehoboam became king. When Rehoboam needed advice on how to handle his responsibilities, he first asked the older men. But he rejected their advice! Instead, he took the advice of the younger men with whom he had grown up and who were now his attendants. The results were disastrous. (2 Chron. 10:6-11, 19) The lesson? It is wise to seek and consider carefully the advice of older, experienced ones. Though younger ones should not feel shackled to past ways of doing things, they should not be quick to dismiss the counsel of older ones.

¹³ Some younger ones may now be coordinating activities that include older brothers. Though such younger ones have a changed role, they would do well to benefit from the wisdom and experience of older ones before making decisions. Paul, mentioned earlier, who replaced Peter as the overseer of a Bethel department, said, "I took time to seek out the advice of Peter, and I encouraged others in the department to do the same."

¹⁴ Timothy, a younger man, worked alongside the apostle Paul for many

10. How did Moses feel about glory and authority?

11. What did one brother say about handing over his responsibility?

12. What lesson should we learn from the Bible account of Rehoboam?

13. How should younger ones cooperate with older ones?

14. What do we learn from the cooperation between Timothy and the apostle Paul?

years. **(Read Philippians 2:20-22.)** Paul had written to the Corinthians: “I am sending Timothy to you, because he is my beloved and faithful child in the Lord. He will remind you of my methods in connection with Christ Jesus, just as I am teaching everywhere in every congregation.” (1 Cor. 4:17) This brief statement points to the close cooperation between Paul and Timothy. Paul had taken time to teach Timothy his “methods in connection with Christ.” Timothy learned well and had won Paul’s affection, and Paul was confident that Timothy could care for the spiritual needs of those in Corinth. What a fine example for elders to imitate today as they train other men to take the lead in the congregation!

ALL OF US HAVE A PART TO PLAY

¹⁵ We live in exciting times. The earthly part of Jehovah’s organization is growing in many ways, but growth necessitates change. As changes affect us personally, may we be humble, keeping an eye on Jehovah’s interests and not on our own. Doing so promotes unity. To Christians in Rome, Paul wrote: “I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think, but to think so as to have a sound mind, each one as God has given to him a measure of faith. For just as we have in one body many members, but the members do not all have the same function, so we, although many, are one body in union with Christ.”—Rom. 12:3-5.

¹⁶ Whatever our circumstances, then,

15. How should Paul’s counsel to Christians in Rome help us when we are affected by change?

16. What might older ones and younger ones, as well as their wives, do to help maintain the peace and unity of Jehovah’s organization?

let all of us work to further the interests of Jehovah’s magnificent Kingdom. You older ones, equip younger ones to do what you do. You younger brothers, accept responsibility, be modest, and maintain a respectful attitude toward the older ones. And you wives, imitate Aquila’s wife, Priscilla, who accompanied and supported Aquila faithfully as their circumstances changed.—Acts 18:2.

¹⁷ In the matter of training others to take on increased responsibility, there is no better example than that of Jesus. He knew that his earthly ministry would come to an end and that others would carry on his work. Though his disciples were imperfect, he had confidence in them and told them that they would do works greater than he did. (John 14:12) He trained them thoroughly, and they spread the good news throughout the then-known world.—Col. 1:23.

¹⁸ After his sacrificial death, Jesus was resurrected to heaven where he was given more work to do with authority “far above every government and authority and power and lordship.” (Eph. 1:19-21) If we die faithful before Armageddon, we will be resurrected into a righteous new world, where there will be plenty of satisfying work for us to do. Now, though, there is vitally important work that all of us can participate in—preaching the good news and making disciples. May all of us, young or old, keep on “having plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Cor. 15:58.

17. What confidence did Jesus have in his disciples, and for what did he train them?

18. What prospects lie ahead, and what can we do now?

How was fire transported in ancient times?

THE Biblical account found at Genesis 22:6 states that, in order to prepare to offer a sacrifice at a distant location, Abraham “took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. Then he took in his hands the fire and the knife, and the two of them walked on together.”

No mention is made in the Scriptures of the method used to light fires in ancient times. Regarding the account in question, at least one commentator believes that a flame could “scarcely have been kept going throughout the long journey” that Abraham and Isaac made. Thus, it may be that what is referred to is the equipment needed for producing fire.

Others point out, however, that it was not a simple thing to kindle a fire in ancient times. People would have found it easier, where possible, to get a hot ember from their neighbors rather than try to start a fire on their own. A number of scholars thus believe that what Abraham carried was a vessel—perhaps a pot suspended from a chain—that contained live coals or charcoal embers raked from the preceding night’s fire. (Isa. 30:14) Glowing embers transported in such a way could readily be used with tinder wood to rekindle a fire at any point along a journey.

