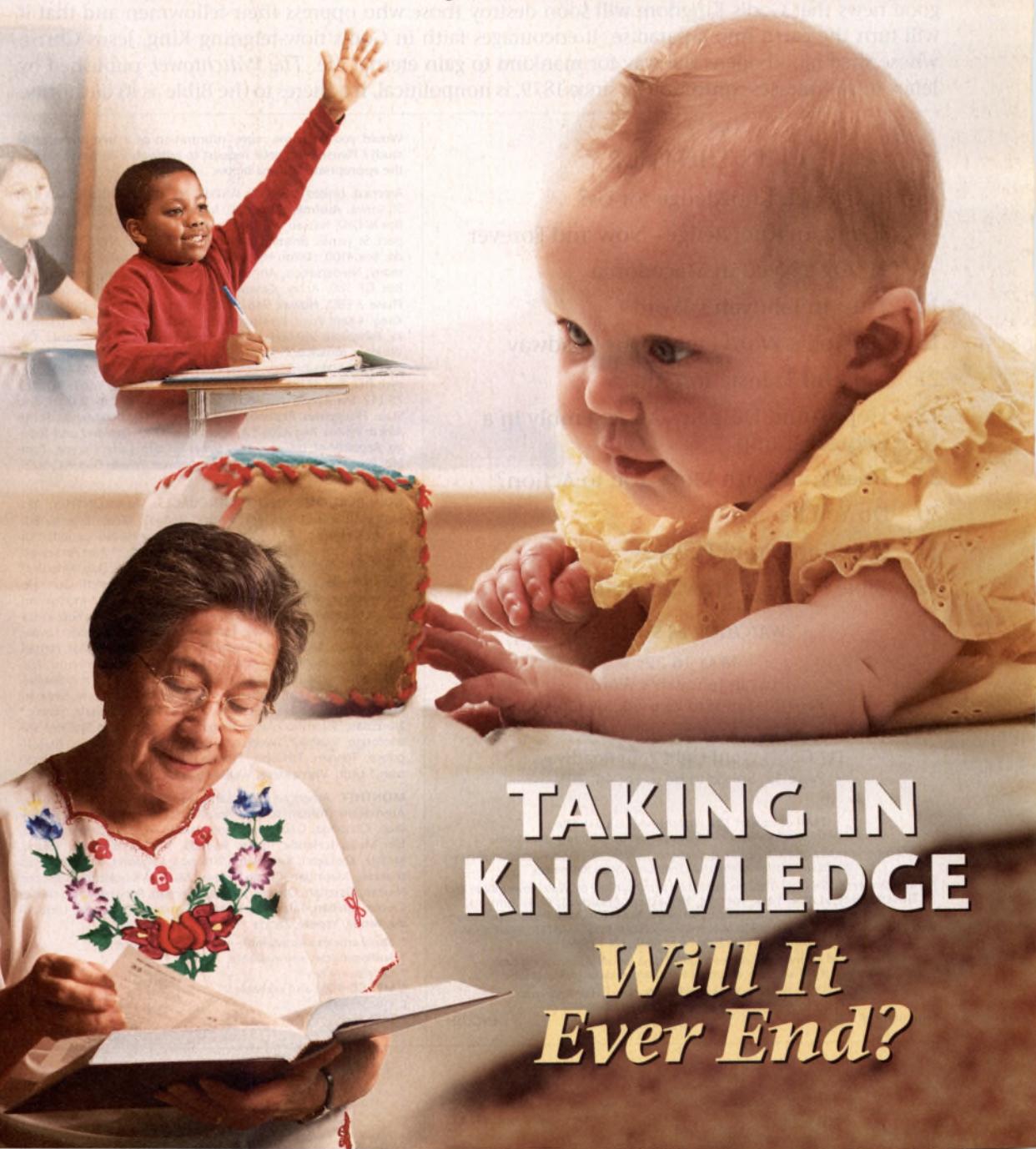


THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

APRIL 15, 2005



TAKING IN
KNOWLEDGE

*Will It
Ever End?*

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.

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ENGLISH

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Too Much Knowledge for Us?

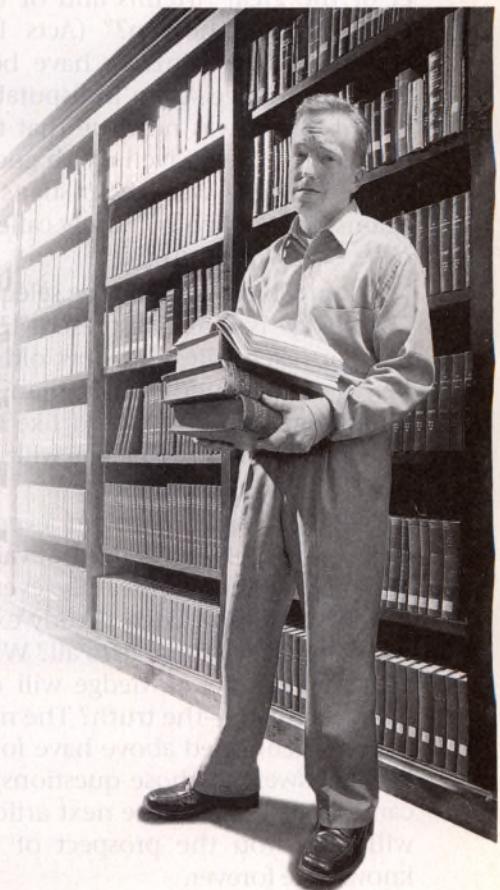
A missionary couple sitting on a beach in West Africa were watching the silvery moon above. "How much does man know about the moon, and how much is there to know?" reflected the husband.

His wife responded: "Imagine that we could observe the earth drifting by like this—how much knowledge is there already on earth, and how much more is there to learn? And just think! Not only is the earth rotating around the sun but our whole solar system is in motion. This means that we will probably never again be here at this exact point in the universe. In fact, we know our present location only in relation to familiar heavenly bodies. We possess so much knowledge about some things, but in a sense, we don't even know where we are!"

THOSE thoughts touch on some basic truths. There seems to be so much to learn. Of course, each of us learns new things every day. Regardless of how much we do learn, however, we do not seem to be able to keep up with what we would like to know.

Granted, in addition to the ability to take in new information, the capacity to store knowledge has increased greatly. The collective memory of mankind has taken on immense proportions by means of technology. Computer hard disks now have such large capacities that new mathematical terms had to be coined to describe them. A simple CD-ROM can store a wealth of information; its capacity is described as 680 megabytes or more. A standard DVD can hold almost seven times that much, and some with even greater capacity are becoming available.

Modern man's means to communicate information are almost beyond our comprehension. Rotary presses run at incredible speeds, turning out newspapers, magazines, and books. For someone using the Internet, endless amounts of information are just a click away. In these and many other ways, dissemination of information is increasing faster than anyone can assimilate it. This quantity of information has sometimes been likened to a sea, being of such proportions that we must learn to swim in it, as it were, but try not to drink it all in. The sheer quantity of it forces us to be selective.



Another reason to be selective is that much available information is not particularly useful. Indeed, some of it is even undesirable, not worth knowing. Remember that knowledge refers to information—whether good or bad, positive or negative. To make matters more confusing, some things considered by many to be facts are just not accurate. How often the statements of even esteemed authorities have later proved to be erroneous, or false! Think, for instance, of the city recorder of ancient Ephesus, certainly viewed there as a knowledgeable official. He claimed: "Who really is there of mankind that does not know that the city of the Ephesians is the temple keeper of the great Artemis and of the image that fell from heaven?" (Acts 19:35, 36) Although this seems to have been common knowledge—even indisputable, many would say—it was not true that the image had fallen from heaven. With good reason, the Holy Bible warns Christians to guard against that which is "falsely called 'knowledge.'"—1 Timothy 6:20.

A compelling reason to be selective about knowledge is that our present life span is so short. Regardless of how old you may be, there are undoubtedly many fields of knowledge that you would like to investigate, but you realize that you will simply not live long enough to do so.

Will this basic problem ever change? Could a field of knowledge be available that will prolong life significantly, even forever? Could such knowledge already exist? If so, will it be made available to all? Will the day come when all knowledge will consist of what we expect—the truth? The missionary couple mentioned above have found satisfying answers to those questions, and you can too. Please read the next article, which will offer you the prospect of taking in knowledge forever.

Taking in Knowledge NOW AND FOREVER

GERMAN physician Ulrich Strunz wrote a series of books entitled *Forever Young*. In these he argued that exercise, nutrition, and a wholesome life-style can promote better health and possibly lead to a longer life. Still, he does not promise his readers that they could literally live forever by following his counsel.

However, there is one kind of knowledge that does promise everlasting life. Conversely, if you did live forever, you could take in useful knowledge forever. Jesus said in prayer to God: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Let us first define the term "everlasting life" and then establish what the knowledge entails and how you can obtain it.

According to the Bible, the Creator will soon transform the earth into a literal paradise, which will favor long life. Bringing about that Paradise will involve drastic action, similar to that of the Flood of Noah's day. Matthew chapter 24, verses 37 to 39, shows that Jesus compared our time with "the days of Noah," in which people "took no note" of their critical situation. They also ignored the message that Noah preached. Then came "the day that Noah entered into the ark" and the Flood destroyed all who had rejected this knowledge. Noah and those with him in the ark remained alive.

Jesus indicated that a similar "day" is coming in our time. Those heeding the knowledge associated with this event will have the prospect of not only surviving but also living forever. In addition, the dead who are in God's memory will be raised to life with the prospect of never having to die again. (John 5:28, 29) Notice how Jesus expressed these two thoughts. When speaking to Martha about the resurrection of the dead, he said: "He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life; and everyone that is living and exercises faith in me will never die at all." All evidence shows that this "day" is very near, which means that you may "never die at all."—John 11:25-27.

Jesus then asked Martha:

"Do you believe this?" She answered: "Yes, Lord." If Jesus were to ask you the same question today, what would your answer be? Perhaps you would find it difficult to believe in the possibility of never dying. But even if that was your reaction, undoubtedly you would *like* to be able to believe it. Imagine how much you could learn if you would "never die at all"! Picture yourself enjoying all the things that you now wish you could learn and do but never have time for. And just think of being reunited with your loved ones who have been lost in death! What is the knowledge that might make such things possible, and how can you acquire it?

Acquiring Life-Giving Knowledge —Within Our Capacity

Is taking in knowledge of God and Christ beyond our capacity? No. It is true that knowledge of the Creator's works is endless. Yet, Jesus was not referring to astronomy or one of the other sciences when he linked "knowledge" and "everlasting life." Proverbs

chapter 2, verses 1 and 5, indicates that the "sayings" and "commandments" found in the Bible are fundamental to "the very knowledge of God." And concerning Jesus, John 20:30, 31 indicates that the things written down are sufficient that we "may have life."

Hence, the knowledge of Jehovah and Jesus Christ as found in the Bible is sufficient to show you how to gain everlasting life. The Bible is a unique book. The Creator kindly inspired it in such a way that even unlettered men with limited opportunities can take in enough knowledge to gain everlasting life. Likewise, someone with a quick mind and with much time and means at his disposal

**"This means everlasting life,
their taking in
knowledge . . ."**

will always be able to learn something new from the inspired Scriptures. The fact that you can read this article is proof that you have the capacity to learn, but how should you use that capacity?

Around the globe, experience has shown that the most efficient way to acquire this knowledge is by means of a personal Bible study guided by someone who has already grasped the material. Just as Noah endeavored to impart knowledge to his contemporaries, Jehovah's Witnesses are willing to come to your home to consider the Bible with you. They might use the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?* or the handbook appropriately entitled *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*.* Even if you find the

* Both published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

concept that in the earthly Paradise, faithful ones will "never die at all" difficult to believe, you can learn to put confidence in this promise by means of these Bible discussions. So if you would like to live forever or just want to see if it is reasonable to believe that you could, what should you do? Accept this opportunity to study the Bible.

How long will it take? The 32-page brochure just mentioned, available in hundreds of languages, contains just 16 short lessons. Or if you can reserve about an hour a week, you will need only a few months to study key Bible subjects, using the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. These publications have helped many to acquire much knowledge and to develop a deep love for God. The Creator will reward those who truly love him, enabling them to have everlasting life.

Life-giving knowledge is indeed within our reach, and it is readily available. The Bible has been translated, at least in part, into over 2,000 languages. Jehovah's Witnesses in 235 lands are pleased to render personal assistance and to provide Bible-based publications so that you can increase your knowledge further.

Personal Study

Your relationship with God is a personal matter between you and the Creator. Only you can maintain and strengthen it, and only he can grant you everlasting life. Therefore, you should continue a personal study of his written Word. By having someone come to your home on a regular basis, you may find it easier to reserve time for study.

Since the Bible and Bible study aids contain "the very knowledge of God," it is most appropriate to take good care of them. (Proverbs 2:5) You will thus have them for years. If you live in a developing country, you may not have used many textbooks at school,

having learned mainly by listening and observing. In Benin, for example, over 50 languages are spoken. It is not unusual for individuals to speak four or five languages fluently, although they have never had a textbook in these languages in their hands. Your ability to learn by listening, observing, and concentrating is a blessing. Still, you will find that books can greatly aid you in your study.

Even if your living quarters are cramped, try to have a suitable place for your Bible and related publications. Keep them where they are readily available and where they will not be damaged.

Family Study

If you are a parent, you should be interested in helping your children gain the same knowledge that you are acquiring. In developing countries, parents are often accustomed to teaching their children many of life's necessary skills. This may include cooking, gathering wood, fetching water, farming, fishing, and bartering at the market. This is truly education for life. However, many parents do not include in this education the knowledge that can lead to everlasting life.

Whatever your situation may be, you probably feel that you do not have much time to spare. The Creator realizes this too. Regarding how to teach children his ways, note what he said a long time ago: "You must inculcate them in your son [or daughter] and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:7) Based on these thoughts, why not try to develop your own teaching program, such as the following:

1. "When you sit in your house": Endeavor to have regular discussions, perhaps weekly, with your children at home, just as

someone may have had with you. Jehovah's Witnesses provide Bible-based publications suitable for teaching children of all ages.

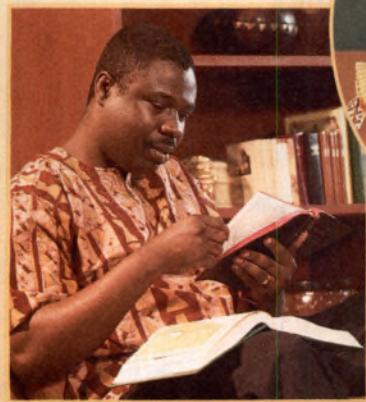
2. "When you walk on the road": Speak to your children informally about Jehovah, just as you teach them about life's necessities or give them guidelines in an informal manner.

3. "When you lie down": Pray with your children each evening.

4. "When you get up": Many families have experienced rewarding results from considering one Bible text every morning. Jehovah's Witnesses use the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily** as a basis for this.

In developing countries, many parents go to great

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



lengths to make sure that one of their children gets a good secular education. In that way the child will be able to care for the parents when they get older. However, if you study the Bible and help all your children to do likewise, you will gain the knowledge that will enable you and your whole family to live forever.

Will the day ever come when we know everything? No. As our earth continues on its journey through the endless universe, we will continue to take in knowledge. Indeed, Ecclesiastes 3:11 states: "Everything [God] has made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish." Taking in knowledge is a pleasure that will never end.

*Help your family
take in knowledge
now and forever*

FILLING A NEED IN MACEDONIA

STEP over into Macedonia and help us." (Acts 16:9) These words of a man who appeared in a vision to the apostle Paul revealed the need to declare the good news of God's Kingdom in a new territory, in cities that now are in Greece.

In the present nation of Macedonia, there is only 1 of Jehovah's Witnesses to every 1,840 inhabitants. Many people have never heard about Jehovah God. Yes, there is a dire need for people of this nation to hear the message of peace.
—Matthew 24:14.

God has opened the way to help satisfy that need. One day in November 2003, the Macedonia office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Skopje received an unexpected phone call. It was from the Macedonian Center for International Cooperation, inviting the Witnesses to set up a booth to explain their beliefs at a three-day fair that was to start on November 20. What a grand opportunity to reach thousands of people who had never heard the Kingdom good news!

Volunteers scrambled to prepare and set up a display of various publications of Jehovah's Witnesses in the Macedonian language. Samples of this literature were laid out so that visitors could take copies if they so desired. The display gave many the opportunity to get refreshing spiritual water free.—Revelation 22:17.

Visitors particularly sought publications that touched their lives, such as *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* and *The Secret of Family Happiness*.^{*} Ninety-eight people turned in their addresses, asking to have Jehovah's Witnesses call on them. Many made favorable comments on the fine work of Jehovah's Witnesses and the quality of the literature.

One man came to the booth holding his little boy's hand. The father asked whether there was literature for children. The Witnesses showed him the publication *My Book of Bi-*



ble Stories.* He leafed through it and excitedly asked how much it cost. When he heard that the educational work of Jehovah's Witnesses is fully supported by voluntary donations, he got even more excited. (Matthew 10:8) He showed the book to his son and said: "What a nice book! Daddy will read one story to you every day!"

A professor of philosophy approached the booth. He was very much interested in religion in general but particularly in the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. Looking through the book *Mankind's Search for God*,* the professor said: "Logically presented material indeed! Exactly the way I imagined matters should be presented." Later, some students from his school came to the booth and asked for their own copies of the book that the professor had obtained. They wanted to study the same book. They thought that he would use the material in his lessons.

The exhibit provided some people with their very first exposure to Scriptural truths. A group of deaf teenagers came to look around. One of the Witnesses gave them a short talk, with help from a girl who inter-

preted it into sign language. Using illustrations from the book *The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*,* he explained that Jesus healed the sick, including the deaf. They were pleased to "hear" the Bible's promise that Jesus would soon do the same for people living on earth in our day. A number of them happily accepted Bible-based literature, and arrangements were made for a Witness who knows sign language to visit them.

Besides Macedonian, literature was also available in Albanian, English, and Turkish. One man who did not speak Macedonian asked for some literature in English. After receiving issues of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines, he mentioned that he spoke Turkish. When he was shown literature in his own language, he could hardly believe his eyes! He saw that Jehovah's Witnesses want to help everyone.

What a fine witness was given on that occasion, and how encouraging it was to see so many people showing interest in Bible truth! Yes, Jehovah opened the way to spread the Kingdom good news further in Macedonia.

* All published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



A MILESTONE!

Efforts to spread the good news of God's Kingdom took a major step forward on May 17, 2003. An office of Jehovah's Witnesses was dedicated in Skopje. Construction work had proceeded for two years, expanding the former facilities fourfold.

There are three separate buildings that house administration and translation offices as well as living quarters, a kitchen, and a laundry. Guy Pierce, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, was present to give the dedication talk. Visitors from ten different countries attended the dedication program. All were thrilled to see the beautiful new buildings.



TRUST IN JEHOVAH'S WORD

"I have trusted in your word."

—PSALM 119:42.

judicial decisions, sayings, and statutes. In this article and the next, Psalm 119 will be discussed according to an accurate translation of the Hebrew Bible text. Reflecting on experiences involving Jehovah's servants past and present should enhance our appreciation for this divinely inspired song and increase our gratitude for God's written Word, the Bible.

Obey God's Word and Be Happy

³ True happiness depends on our walking in God's law. (Psalm 119:1-8) If we do this, Jehovah will consider us 'faultless in our way.' (Psalm 119:1) Being faultless does not mean that we are perfect, but it does indicate that we strive to do Jehovah God's will. Noah "proved himself faultless among his contemporaries" as a man who "walked with the true God." That faithful patriarch and his family survived the Flood because he pursued the life course outlined by Jehovah. (Genesis 6:9; 1 Peter 3:20) Similarly, our survival of this world's end depends on our 'carefully keeping God's orders,' thus doing his will.—Psalm 119:4.

⁴ Jehovah will never leave us if we 'laud him with uprightness of heart and continue to keep his regulations.' (Psalm 119:7, 8) God did not abandon the Israelite leader Joshua, who applied the counsel to 'read in the book of the law day and night so that he might do all that was written in it.' That made him suc-

-
3. Explain and illustrate what it means to be faultless.
 4. Our happiness and success depend on what?

JEHOVAH'S word was cherished by the composer of Psalm 119. He may have been Prince Hezekiah of Judah. Sentiments expressed in this inspired song fit the spirit of Hezekiah, who "kept sticking to Jehovah" while serving as king of Judah. (2 Kings 18:3-7) One thing is certain: The composer was conscious of his spiritual need.—Matthew 5:3.

A key point of Psalm 119 is the value of God's word, or message.* Likely as a memory aid, the writer made this an alphabetic song. Its 176 verses are based on successive letters of the Hebrew alphabet. In the original Hebrew, each of the psalm's 22 stanzas has 8 lines that begin with the same letter. This psalm refers to God's word, law, reminders, ways, orders, regulations, commandments,

* Reference is here made to Jehovah's message, not to the entire content of the Bible—God's Word.

-
1. What can you say about the identity and spirit of the writer of Psalm 119?
 2. What is the theme of Psalm 119, and how is this song designed?

cessful and enabled him to act wisely. (Joshua 1:8) Near the end of his life, Joshua was still lauding God and could remind the Israelites: "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." (Joshua 23:14) Like Joshua and the writer of Psalm 119, we can find happiness and success by praising Jehovah and trusting in his word.

Jehovah's Word Keeps Us Clean

⁵ We can be spiritually clean if we keep on guard according to God's word. (Psalm 119:9-16) This is so even if our parents have not set a good example. Although Hezekiah's father was an idolater, Hezekiah 'cleansed his path,' possibly of pagan influences. Suppose a young person serving God today sins seriously. Repentance, prayer, parental help, and the loving assistance of Christian elders can help him to be like Hezekiah and 'cleanse his path and keep on guard.'—James 5:13-15.

⁶ Although Rahab and Ruth lived long before Psalm 119 was composed, they 'cleansed their path.' Rahab was a Canaanite prostitute, but she became known for her faith as a worshiper of Jehovah. (Hebrews 11:30, 31) The Moabitess Ruth left her own gods, served Jehovah, and complied with his Law to Israel. (Ruth 1:14-17; 4:9-13) Both of these non-Israelite women 'kept on guard according to God's word' and had the wonderful privilege of becoming ancestresses of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:1, 4-6.

5. (a) Show how it is possible to keep spiritually clean. (b) What help is there for a young person who has sinned seriously?

6. What women 'cleansed their path and kept on guard according to God's word?'



*Ruth, Rahab,
and the Hebrew youths
exiled in Babylon 'kept
on guard according
to God's word'*

⁷ "The inclination of the heart of man is bad from his youth up," but young people can follow a clean path, even in this corrupt world under Satan's control. (Genesis 8:21; 1 John 5:19) As exiles in Babylon, Daniel and three other Hebrew youths 'kept on guard according to God's word.' For instance, they would not pollute themselves "with the delicacies of the king." (Daniel 1:6-10) The Babylonians ate unclean animals, forbidden by the Mosaic Law. (Leviticus 11:1-31; 20:24-26) They did not habitually bleed slaughtered animals, and their eating unbled meat violated God's law on blood. (Genesis 9:3, 4) No wonder the four Hebrews would not partake of the king's delicacies! Those godly youths maintained spiritual cleanliness and thus set a fine example.

7. How did Daniel and three other Hebrew youths set a fine example in maintaining spiritual cleanliness?



Paul courageously 'spoke about God's reminders in front of kings'

God's Word an Aid to Faithfulness

⁸ Fondness for God's word is an important factor in keeping us faithful to Jehovah. (Psalm 119:17-24) If we are like the inspired songwriter, we will yearn to understand "the wonderful things" of God's law. We will constantly 'long for Jehovah's judicial decisions' and show a 'fondness for his reminders.' (Psalm 119:18, 20, 24) If we have been dedicated to Jehovah for even a short time, have we 'formed a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word'? (1 Peter 2:1, 2) We need to understand elementary Bible teachings so that we can be in a better position to comprehend and apply God's law.

⁹ We may be fond of God's reminders, but what if "princes" speak against us for some reason? (Psalm 119:23, 24) Today, people in authority often try to force us to put human laws above the law of God. When there is a conflict between the demands of man and the will of God, what will we do? Our fondness for God's word will help us to remain faithful to Jehovah. Like Jesus Christ's perse-

8. What attitude and knowledge do we need if we are to comprehend and apply God's law?

9. How should we react when there is a conflict between God's law and human demands?

cuted apostles, we will say: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

¹⁰ We can remain faithful to Jehovah even under the most trialsome circumstances. (Psalm 119:25-32) If we are going to succeed in maintaining our integrity to God, we must be teachable and pray earnestly for his instruction. We must also choose "the way of faithfulness."—Psalm 119:26, 30.

¹¹ Hezekiah, who may have written Psalm 119, chose "the way of faithfulness." He did so even though he was surrounded by false worshipers and may have been ridiculed by members of the royal court. Very likely, 'his soul was sleepless from grief' because of such circumstances. (Psalm 119:28) But Hezekiah trusted in God, was a good king, and did "what was right in Jehovah's eyes." (2 Kings 18:1-5) With reliance on God, we too can endure trials as integrity keepers.—James 1:5-8.

Jehovah's Word Imparts Courage

¹² Following the guidance of God's word gives us the courage needed to cope with

10, 11. Illustrate how we can maintain integrity to Jehovah under the most trialsome circumstances.

12. How can we personally apply Psalm 119:36, 37?

life's trials. (Psalm 119:33-40) We humbly seek Jehovah's instruction so that we can keep his law "with the whole heart." (Psalm 119:33, 34) Like the psalmist, we ask of God: "Incline my heart to your reminders, and not to profits," or "unjust profit." (Psalm 119:36; footnote) Like the apostle Paul, we "conduct ourselves honestly in all things." (Hebrews 13:18) If an employer wants us to do something dishonest, we muster up courage to adhere to God's directions—and Jehovah always blesses such a course. In fact, he helps us to keep all bad inclinations under control. Let us therefore pray: "Make my eyes pass on from seeing what is worthless." (Psalm 119:37) Never would we want to view as desirable any worthless thing hated by God. (Psalm 97:10) Among other things, this moves us to avoid pornography and spiritistic practices.—1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; Revelation 21:8.

¹³ Accurate knowledge of God's word gives us confidence to witness courageously. (Psalm 119:41-48) And we do need courage to 'answer the one reproaching us.' (Psalm 119:42) At times, we may be like Jesus' persecuted disciples, who prayed: "Jehovah, . . . grant your slaves to keep speaking your word with all boldness." The result? "They were one and all filled with the holy spirit and were speaking the word of God with boldness." The same Sovereign Lord gives us the courage to speak his word with boldness.—Acts 4:24-31.

¹⁴ We will have the courage needed to give a witness without any fear of shame if we cherish "the word of truth" and 'keep God's law constantly.' (Psalm 119:43, 44) Diligent study of God's written Word equips us to 'speak about his reminders in front of kings.'

13. How did Jesus' persecuted disciples get the courage needed to witness boldly?

14. What helps us to witness courageously, as Paul did?

(Psalm 119:46) Prayer and Jehovah's spirit will also help us to say the right things in a proper way. (Matthew 10:16-20; Colossians 4:6) Paul courageously spoke about God's reminders to first-century rulers. For example, he witnessed to Roman Governor Felix, who "listened to him on the belief in Christ Jesus." (Acts 24:24, 25) Paul also gave a witness before Governor Festus and King Agrippa. (Acts 25:22-26:32) With Jehovah's backing, we too can be courageous witnesses, never "ashamed of the good news."—Romans 1:16.

God's Word Gives Us Comfort

¹⁵ Jehovah's Word provides unfailing comfort. (Psalm 119:49-56) There are times when we especially need to be comforted. Although we courageously speak out as Witnesses of Jehovah, "presumptuous ones"—those acting presumptuously toward God—sometimes 'deride us in the extreme.' (Psalm 119:51) While praying, however, we may recall positive things said in God's Word, and we thus 'find comfort for ourselves.' (Psalm 119:52) During our supplications, we may remember a Scriptural law or principle that gives us the comfort and courage needed in a stressful situation.

¹⁶ The presumptuous ones who derided the psalmist were Israelites—members of a nation dedicated to God. What a shame! Unlike them, however, let us be determined never to deviate from God's law. (Psalm 119:51) In the face of Nazi persecution and similar treatment through the years, thousands of God's servants have refused to deviate from the laws and principles found in God's Word. (John 15:18-21) And it is no burden to obey Jehovah, for his regulations are like

15. How can God's Word bring comfort when others deride us?

16. What have God's servants not done despite persecution?

comforting melodies to us.—Psalm 119:54; 1 John 5:3.

Be Grateful for Jehovah's Word

¹⁷ We prove our gratitude for God's word by observing it. (Psalm 119:57-64) The psalmist 'promised to keep Jehovah's words,' and even 'at midnight he got up to thank God for His righteous judicial decisions.' If we awaken at night, what a fine opportunity we have to express gratitude to God in prayer! (Psalm 119:57, 62) Our appreciation for God's word moves us to seek divine teaching and makes us the joyful 'partners of those fearing Jehovah'—individuals having reverential awe for God. (Psalm 119:63, 64) Who could find better company on earth?

¹⁸ When we pray with all our heart and humbly ask Jehovah to teach us, we are 'softening his face' with the thought of enjoying his favor. We especially need to pray when 'the very ropes of the wicked ones surround us.' (Psalm 119:58, 61) Jehovah can cut enemy ropes of restraint and free us for the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) This has been demonstrated repeatedly in lands where our work has been banned.

17. Appreciation for God's word moves us to do what?

18. How does Jehovah answer our prayers when 'the ropes of the wicked surround us'?

How Would You Answer?

- On what does true happiness depend?
- How does Jehovah's word keep us spiritually clean?
- In what ways does God's word impart courage and comfort?
- Why should we have faith in Jehovah and his word?

Have Faith in God's Word

¹⁹ Faith in God and his word helps us to endure affliction and to do his will. (Psalm 119:65-72) Although presumptuous ones had 'smeared him with falsehood,' the psalmist sang: "It is good for me that I have been afflicted." (Psalm 119:66, 69, 71) How could it be good for any of Jehovah's servants to suffer affliction?

²⁰ When we suffer affliction, we undoubtedly supplicate Jehovah earnestly, and that draws us closer to him. We may spend more time studying God's written Word and may make greater effort to apply it. This results in a happier life. But what if we react to affliction in a way that shows up undesirable traits, such as impatience and pride? With earnest prayer and the help of God's Word and spirit, we can overcome such flaws and more fully 'clothe ourselves with the new personality.' (Colossians 3:9-14) Moreover, our faith is strengthened when we endure adversity. (1 Peter 1:6, 7) Paul benefited from his tribulations because they made him more dependent on Jehovah. (2 Corinthians 1:8-10) Do we allow suffering to have a good effect on us?

Always Trust in Jehovah

²¹ God's word gives us a sound basis for trust in Jehovah. (Psalm 119:73-80) If we really trust in our Creator, we will have no reason for shame. Because of what others do, however, we need comfort and may feel like praying: "Let the presumptuous ones be ashamed." (Psalm 119:76-78) When Jehovah puts such ones to shame, this results in the exposure of their evil ways and in the sanctification of his holy name. We can be sure that persecutors of God's people really do not gain anything. For example, they never have—and never will—put an end to Jehovah's

19, 20. How can it be good to be afflicted?

21. What happens when God puts presumptuous ones to shame?

Witnesses, who trust in God with all their heart.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

²² God's word strengthens our trust in him when we are persecuted. (Psalm 119:81-88) Because presumptuous ones were persecuting him, the psalmist felt "like a skin bottle in the smoke." (Psalm 119:83, 86) In Bible times, bottles made of animal hide were used to hold water, wine, and other liquids. When not in use, these bottles might shrivel up if hung near a fire in a room lacking a chimney. Does hardship or persecution ever make you feel "like a skin bottle in the smoke"? If so, trust in Jehovah, and pray: "According to your loving-kindness preserve me alive, that I may

22. In what sense was the psalmist "like a skin bottle in the smoke"?



keep the reminder of your mouth."
—Psalm 119:88.

²³ What we have considered in the first half of Psalm 119 shows that Jehovah exercises loving-kindness toward his servants because they trust in his word and are fond of his statutes, reminders, commandments, and laws. (Psalm 119:16, 47, 64, 70, 77, 88) He is pleased that those devoted to him keep on guard according to his word. (Psalm 119:9, 17, 41,

42) As you look forward to a study of the rest of this beautiful psalm, you might well ask yourself, 'Do I really let Jehovah's word light my roadway?'

23. What have we considered in reviewing Psalm 119:1-88, and what might we ask ourselves as we look forward to studying Psalm 119:89-176?

LET GOD'S WORD LIGHT YOUR ROADWAY

"Your word is . . . a light to my roadway."—PSALM 119:105.

JEHOVAH'S word will light our roadway if we allow that to happen. To enjoy such spiritual light, we must be diligent students of God's written Word and apply its counsel. Only then can we share the psalmist's sentiments: "Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway."—Psalm 119:105.

² Let us now consider Psalm 119:89-176. What a wealth of information is contained in these verses, arranged in 11 stanzas! They

1, 2. Under what circumstances will Jehovah's word light our roadway?

can help us to stay on the road to everlasting life.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

Why Be Fond of God's Word?

³ Fondness for Jehovah's word results in spiritual stability. (Psalm 119:89-96) The psalmist sang: "To time indefinite, O Jehovah, your word is stationed in the heavens. . . . You have solidly fixed the earth, that it may keep standing." (Psalm 119:89, 90)

3. How does Psalm 119:89, 90 show that we can depend on God's word?

By God's word—his "statutes of the heavens"—the celestial bodies move flawlessly in their orbits and the earth is solidly fixed forever. (Job 38:31-33; Psalm 104:5) We can depend on every word going forth from Jehovah's mouth; what God says will have "certain success" in the fulfillment of his purpose.—Isaiah 55:8-11.

⁴ The psalmist would have 'perished in his affliction if he had not been fond of God's law.' (Psalm 119:92) He was not being afflicted by foreigners; it was Israelite lawbreakers who hated him. (Leviticus 19:17) But this did not overwhelm him, for he loved God's sustaining law. At Corinth, the apostle Paul was "in dangers among false brothers," perhaps including "superfine apostles" seeking an accusation against him. (2 Corinthians 11:5, 12-14, 26) Yet, Paul survived spiritually because he was fond of God's word. Since we are fond of Jehovah's written Word and apply what it says, we love our brothers.

4. What does fondness for God's word do for his servants who suffer affliction?

(1 John 3:15) Even the world's hatred does not make us forget any of God's instructions. We keep doing his will in loving unity with our brothers as we look forward to an eternity of joyous service to Jehovah.—Psalm 119:93.

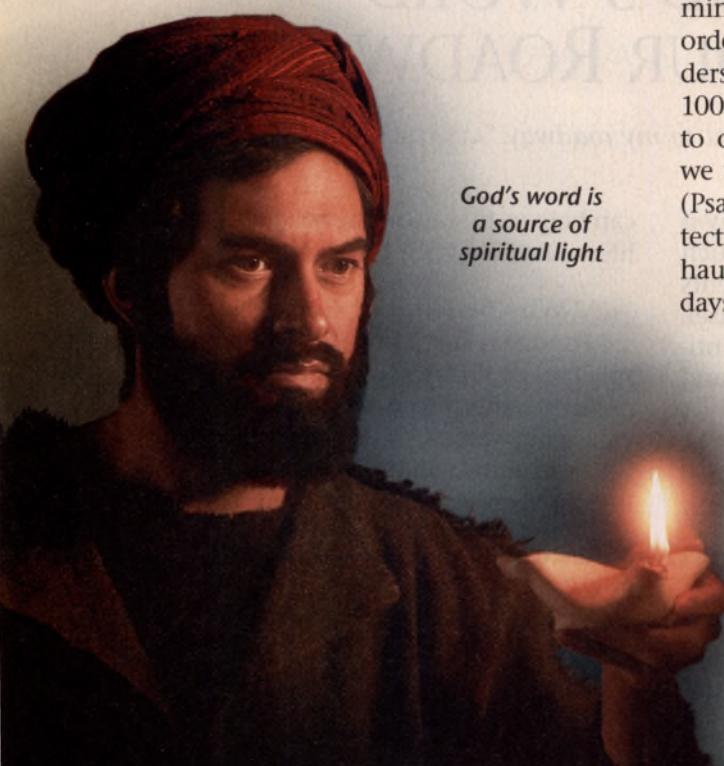
⁵ Expressing our devotion to Jehovah, we might pray: "I am yours. O save me, because I have searched for your own orders." (Psalm 119:94) King Asa searched for God and rooted out apostasy in Judah. At a great assembly in the 15th year of Asa's reign (963 B.C.E.), Judah's inhabitants "entered into a covenant to search for Jehovah." God "let himself be found by them" and "continued to give them rest all around." (2 Chronicles 15:10-15) This example should encourage a renewed search for God by any who have drifted away from the Christian congregation. He will bless and protect those who resume active association with his people.

⁶ Jehovah's word imparts wisdom that can protect us from spiritual harm. (Psalm 119:97-104) God's commandments make us wiser than our enemies. Heeding his reminders gives us insight, and 'observing his orders enables us to behave with more understanding than older men.' (Psalm 119:98-100) If Jehovah's sayings are 'smoother to our palate than honey to our mouth,' we will hate and avoid "every false path." (Psalm 119:103, 104) This will serve as a protection from spiritual harm as we encounter haughty, fierce, ungodly people in these last days.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

A Lamp to Our Foot

⁷ God's word is a source of unfailing spiritual light. (Psalm 119:105-112)

5. How did King Asa search for Jehovah?
6. What course will protect us from spiritual harm?
- 7, 8. In keeping with Psalm 119:105, what do we need to do?



*God's word is
a source of
spiritual light*

Whether we are anointed Christians or we are their companions of the “other sheep,” we declare: “Your word is a lamp to my foot, and a light to my roadway.” (John 10:16; Psalm 119:105) God’s word is like a lamp lighting our way, so that we do not stumble and fall spiritually. (Proverbs 6:23) Yet, we must personally let Jehovah’s word be a lamp to our foot.

⁸ We need to be as resolute as the composer of Psalm 119. He was determined not to wander from God’s orders. “I have made a sworn statement,” he said, “and I will carry it out, to keep your [Jehovah’s] righteous judicial decisions.” (Psalm 119:106) Let us never underestimate the value of regular Bible study and participation in Christian meetings.

⁹ The psalmist did not ‘wander from God’s orders,’ but that can happen to a person dedicated to Jehovah. (Psalm 119:110) King Solomon wandered, although he was a member of a nation dedicated to Jehovah and had originally acted in harmony with God-given wisdom. “Even him the foreign wives caused to sin” by inducing him to worship false gods.—Nehemiah 13:26; 1 Kings 11:1-6.

¹⁰ “The birdcatcher,” Satan, sets many traps. (Psalm 91:3) For instance, a former associate may try to induce us to wander off the pathway of spiritual light into the darkness of apostasy. Among Christians at Thyatira, there was “that woman Jezebel,” possibly a group of women teaching others to practice idolatry and commit fornication. Jesus did not tolerate such evils, and neither should we. (Revelation 2:18-22; Jude 3, 4) Let us therefore pray for Jehovah’s help so that we do not wander from his orders but remain in divine light.—Psalm 119:111, 112.

9, 10. How do we know that individuals dedicated to Jehovah can ‘wander from his orders,’ but how can this be avoided?

If we love Jehovah’s reminders, he will never regard us as “scummy dross”



Sustained by God’s Word

¹¹ If we never stray from his regulations, God will sustain us. (Psalm 119:113-120) We do not approve of “halfhearted ones,” even as Jesus disapproves of lukewarm professing Christians today. (Psalm 119:113; Revelation 3:16) Because we wholeheartedly serve Jehovah, he is ‘our place of concealment’ and will sustain us. He will ‘toss away all those straying from his regulations’ by resorting to trickiness and falsehood. (Psalm 119:114, 117, 118; Proverbs 3:32) He views such wicked ones as “scummy dross”—impurities removed from such valuable metals as silver and gold. (Psalm 119:119; Proverbs 17:3) May we always display love for God’s reminders, for we surely do not want to join the wicked on the slag heap of destruction!

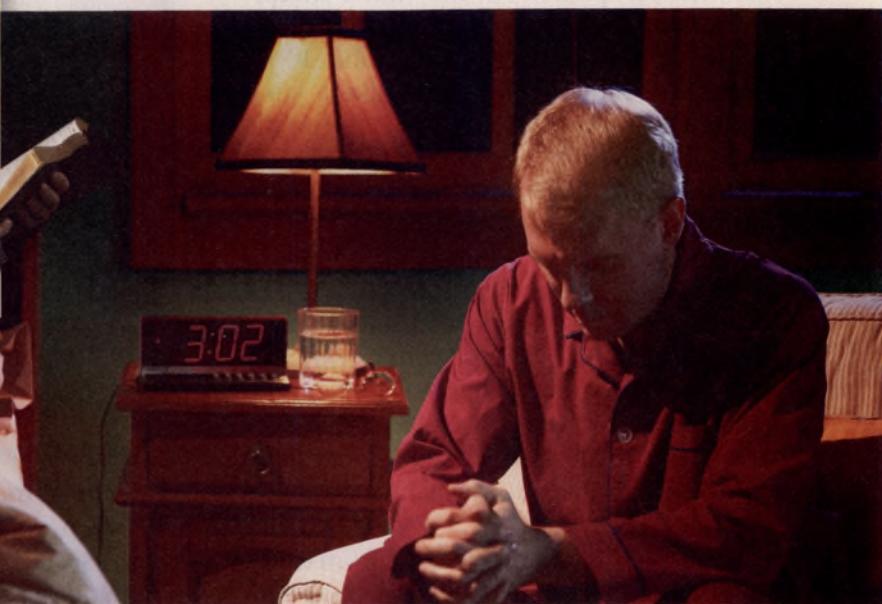
¹² “From the dread of you [Jehovah] my flesh has had a creepy feeling,” said the psalmist. (Psalm 119:120) Our having a wholesome dread of God, manifested by avoiding what he disapproves, is vital if he is to sustain us as his servants. Reverential fear

11. According to Psalm 119:119, how does God view the wicked?

12. Why is fear of Jehovah important?



If we read the Bible daily, helpful passages may readily come to mind when we pray



of Jehovah caused Job to live a righteous life. (Job 1:1; 23:15) Godly fear can enable us to persevere in a divinely favored course regardless of what we must endure. Endurance, though, calls for earnest prayers said in faith.—James 5:15.

Pray in Faith

¹³ We can pray in faith that God will act in our behalf. (Psalm 119:121-128) Like the psalmist, we are sure that our prayers will be answered. Why? Because we love divine commandments “more than gold, even refined gold.” Moreover, ‘we consider all of God’s orders regarding all things to be right.’—Psalm 119:127, 128.

¹⁴ Jehovah hears our petitions because we pray in faith and also carefully comply with

13-15. (a) Why can we have faith that our prayers will be answered? (b) What can happen if we do not know what to say in prayer? (c) Illustrate how Psalm 119:121-128 might tie in with our ‘unuttered groanings’ in prayer.

his orders. (Psalm 65:2) But what if we sometimes have such bewildering problems that we do not know what to say in prayer? Then “the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered.” (Romans 8:26, 27) At such times, God accepts expressions found in his Word as prayers covering our needs.

¹⁵ The Scriptures are full of prayers and thoughts that would tie in with our ‘unuttered groanings.’ For example, consider Psalm 119:121-128. The way things are expressed here may fit our circumstances. If we fear being defrauded, for instance, we might ask for God’s help in the way the psalmist did. (Verses 121-123) Suppose we need to make a very difficult decision. Then we might pray that Jehovah’s spirit help us to recall and apply his reminders. (Verses 124, 125) Although we ‘hate every false path,’ we may need to ask God to act in our behalf so that we do not succumb to some temptation to break his law. (Verses 126-

128) If we read the Bible daily, such helpful passages may come to mind when we supplicate Jehovah.

Helped by Jehovah's Reminders

¹⁶ To be heard in prayer and to enjoy divine favor, we must heed God's reminders. (Psalm 119:129-136) Since we are forgetful, we need Jehovah's wonderful reminders that bring his instruction and commandments back to our minds. Of course, we appreciate the spiritual light shed by every new disclosure of God's words. (Psalm 119:129, 130) We are also grateful that Jehovah has 'made his face shine upon us' in approval, although 'streams of water run from our eyes' because others violate his law.—Psalm 119:135, 136; Numbers 6:25.

¹⁷ We are sure to have God's continued favor if we comply with his righteous reminders. (Psalm 119:137-144) As Jehovah's servants, we acknowledge that it is right for him to bring his righteous reminders to our attention and place them upon us as commandments that we should obey. (Psalm 119:138) Since the psalmist obeyed God's commandments, why did he say: "I am insignificant and contemptible"? (Psalm 119:141) Apparently, he was alluding to the way his enemies viewed him. If we maintain an uncompromising stand for righteousness, others may look down on us. Yet, what really matters is that Jehovah looks on us with favor because we live in accord with his righteous reminders.

Secure and at Peace

¹⁸ Observing God's reminders keeps us close to him. (Psalm 119:145-152) Because

16, 17. (a) Why do we need God's reminders, and how should we view them? (b) How may others look upon us, but what really matters?

18, 19. What results from our observing God's reminders?

we pay attention to Jehovah's reminders, we feel free to call upon him with our whole heart, and we can expect to be heard. We may awaken "early in the morning twilight" and cry for help. What a fine time to pray! (Psalm 119:145-147) God is also near us because we avoid loose conduct and view his word as truth, even as Jesus did. (Psalm 119:150, 151; John 17:17) Our relationship with Jehovah sustains us in this troubled world and will carry us through his great war of Armageddon.—Revelation 7:9, 14; 16:13-16.

¹⁹ Because of our deep regard for God's word, we enjoy true security. (Psalm 119:153-160) Unlike the wicked, we 'have not deviated from Jehovah's reminders.' We love God's orders and therefore are secure in his loving-kindness. (Psalm 119:157-159) Jehovah's reminders stimulate our memory so that we remember what he requires of us in specific situations. God's orders, on the other hand, are directives, and we readily acknowledge our Creator's right to direct us. Aware that 'the substance of God's word is truth' and that we cannot direct our own steps independently, we gladly accept divine direction.—Psalm 119:160; Jeremiah 10:23.

²⁰ Our love for Jehovah's law brings us abundant peace. (Psalm 119:161-168) Persecution does not rob us of the incomparable "peace of God." (Philippians 4:6, 7) So much do we appreciate Jehovah's judicial decisions that we praise him for them often—"seven times in the day." (Psalm 119:161-164) "Abundant peace belongs to those loving your law," sang the psalmist, "and for them there is no stumbling block." (Psalm 119:165) If we as individuals love and keep Jehovah's law, we will not be stumbled spiritually by what someone else does or by any other matter.

20. Why do we have "abundant peace"?

²¹ Many individuals of Bible record did not let anything be a lasting stumbling block for them. For instance, the Christian man Gaius was not stumbled but ‘went on walking in the truth’ despite the ungodly conduct of Diotrephes. (3 John 1-3, 9, 10) Paul exhorted the Christian women Euodia and Syntyche “to be of the same mind in the Lord,” likely because difficulties had arisen between them. Apparently, they were helped to resolve their problem, and they continued to serve Jehovah faithfully. (Philippians 4:2, 3) So we need not stumble if difficulties of some sort arise in the congregation. Let us concentrate on keeping Jehovah’s orders, remembering that ‘all our ways are in front of him.’ (Psalm 119:168; Proverbs 15:3) Then nothing will permanently rob us of “abundant peace.”

²² If we always obey Jehovah, we will be privileged to keep on praising him. (Psalm 119:169-176) By living in harmony with God’s regulations, not only do we enjoy spiritual security but ‘our lips continue to bubble forth Jehovah’s praise.’ (Psalm 119:169-171, 174) This is the greatest privilege we could have in these last days. The psalmist wanted to keep living and praising Jehovah,

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21. What Scriptural examples show that we need not stumble if difficulties arise in the congregation?
 22. (a) If we obey God, what privilege can we enjoy? (b) How should we view some who have wandered away from the Christian congregation?

How Would You Answer?

- Why should we be fond of God’s word?
- How are we sustained by God’s word?
- In what ways are we helped by Jehovah’s reminders?
- Why are Jehovah’s people secure and at peace?

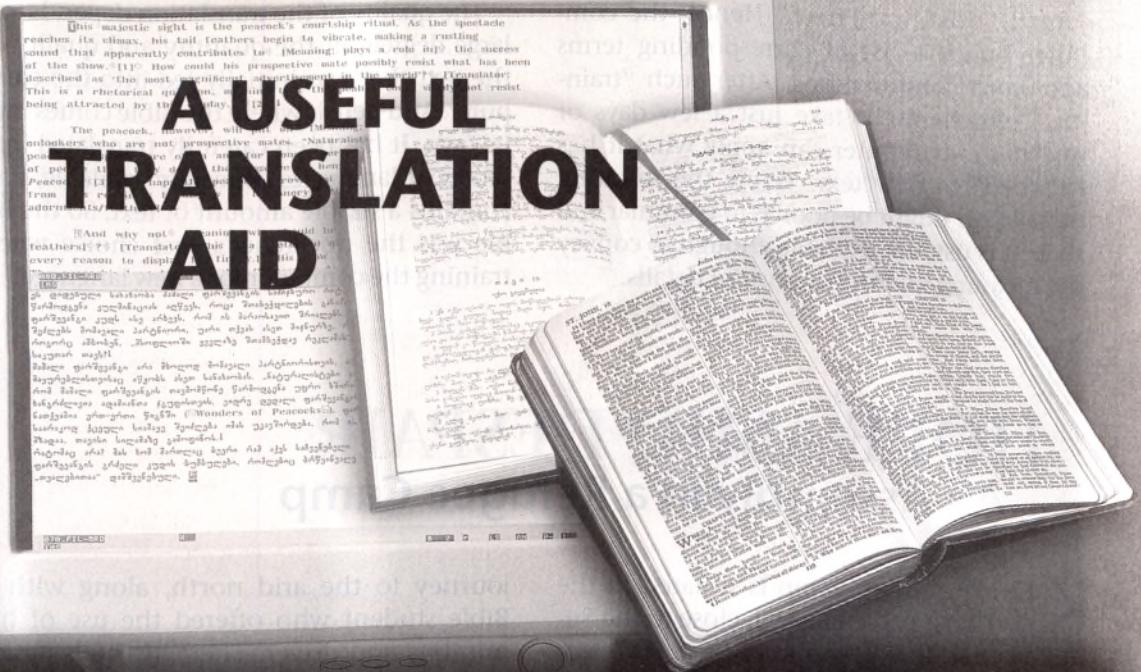
but in some undisclosed way, he had ‘wandered like a lost sheep.’ (Psalm 119:175, 176) Some who have wandered away from the Christian congregation may still love God and may want to praise him. Let us therefore do all we can to help them so that they may again find spiritual security and experience the joy of praising Jehovah with his people. —Hebrews 13:15; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.

Lasting Light for Our Roadway

²³ Psalm 119 can benefit us in various ways. For instance, it can make us more reliant on God, for it shows that true happiness results from “walking in the law of Jehovah.” (Psalm 119:1) The psalmist reminds us that ‘the substance of God’s word is truth.’ (Psalm 119:160) This surely ought to enhance our appreciation for the entire written Word of God. Meditating on Psalm 119 should move us to study the Scriptures diligently. The psalmist repeatedly petitioned God: “Teach me your regulations.” (Psalm 119:12, 68, 135) He also pleaded: “Teach me goodness, sensibleness and knowledge themselves, for in your commandments I have exercised faith.” (Psalm 119:66) We do well to pray in a similar way.

²⁴ Divine teaching makes possible a close relationship with Jehovah. The psalmist repeatedly calls himself God’s servant. In fact, he addresses Jehovah with the touching words: “I am yours.” (Psalm 119:17, 65, 94, 122, 125; Romans 14:8) What a privilege it is to serve and praise Jehovah as one of his Witnesses! (Psalm 119:7) Are you serving God joyfully as a Kingdom proclaimer? If so, be assured that Jehovah will continue to support and bless you in this privileged activity if you always trust in his word and let it light your roadway.

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- 23, 24. What benefits have you drawn from Psalm 119?



A USEFUL TRANSLATION AID

THE Author of the Bible, Jehovah God, desires that the good news of his Kingdom be declared "to every nation and tribe and tongue and people." (Revelation 14:6) He wants his written Word to be readily available to all mankind. To that end, the Bible has been translated into more languages than any other book in the world. Thousands of translators have spared no time or effort to render God's thoughts into another tongue.

But the Bible is not simply the object of translation. Time and again, it itself has been used as an aid in translating other texts. Many a translator has compared the renderings of Bible terms in different languages to come up with a good translation for certain words. The Bible's qualities as a translation aid have now been put to use in computer translation as well.

It is really difficult for a computer to translate. Some experts have even felt that translation is beyond what a computer can

do. Why? A language is not just a set of words. Each language has its own word combinations, rules, exceptions to these rules, idioms, and allusions. Efforts to teach a computer all of this have met with very little success. Most of the resulting computer translations have been barely understandable.

Now, however, computer scientists are exploring new ways. "Our approach uses statistical models to find the most likely translation," says Franz Josef Och, a leading specialist in computer translation. Let us say that you want to translate Hindi into English. First, take some existing text that is available in both languages. Then feed it into a computer. The computer compares the texts. When, for example, the computer finds the same Hindi word in several places and each time in the corresponding phrase it finds the English word "house," the computer concludes that the Hindi word must be the word for "house." And chances are that nearby words are adjectives, such as "big,"

"small," "old," or "new." Hence, the computer builds a list of corresponding terms and word combinations. After such "training," which might take just a few days or weeks, the computer can apply what it has "learned" to new text. While the resulting translation might be poor as to grammar and style, it is usually readable enough to convey the meaning and the important details.

The quality of the translation depends to a large degree on the quantity and quality of the text that was initially fed into the computer. And here is where the Bible comes into its own. It has been carefully translated into scores of languages, is readily available, and contains a sizable amount of text. So the Bible was the researcher's first choice when training the computer for a new language.

HOPE AMID DESPAIR

An Assembly in a Refugee Camp

KAKUMA refugee camp is situated in the northern part of Kenya, close to the Sudan border. It is home to over 86,000 people. The area is arid, with daytime temperatures reaching 120° F. Violence between the displaced communities is common. For many, the camp is a place of despair. Others, however, have hope.

Among the refugees are a number of Jehovah's Witnesses, who are zealously declaring the Kingdom good news. They are part of a small congregation in Lodwar, 75 miles to the south. The next congregation is an eight-hour drive away.

Since the refugees cannot freely travel out of the camp, many are not able to attend the assemblies and conventions held by Jehovah's Witnesses. For this reason, arrangements were made to hold a special assembly day inside the camp.

Traveling North

To support the assembly, 15 Witnesses in the town of Eldoret, 300 miles south of the camp, volunteered to make the arduous

journey to the arid north, along with a Bible student who offered the use of his minibus and driver. Their heartfelt desire was to encourage and strengthen their brothers.

The journey started on a cold early morning in the Kenyan western highlands. The bumpy road climbed through farmland and forests before descending into the heat of desert scrub. Flocks of goats and camels grazed on the inhospitable land. Tribesmen walked along in traditional clothes, many carrying clubs, bows, and arrows. After traveling for 11 hours, the Witnesses reached Lodwar, a hot and dusty community of nearly 20,000 people. Warmly greeted by their Witness hosts, the travelers went to get some rest so that they would be ready for a full weekend of activity.

The next morning, the visitors went to see some of the area's sights. Lake Turkana, Kenya's largest, was a must. Surrounded by miles and miles of desert bush, it is home to the world's largest crocodile population. The alkaline waters help support the few



people who live along its shore. The evening was enjoyably spent attending the Theocratic Ministry School and Service Meeting with the local congregation. They have a beautiful Kingdom Hall, built in 2003 through the Witnesses' building program for countries with limited resources.

The Special Assembly Day

Sunday was set aside for the special assembly day. The Lodwar Congregation and the visiting brothers had been granted permission to enter the camp by 8:00 a.m., so the Witnesses were eager to get an early start. The road wound its way through the barren landscape toward the Sudan border.

Jagged mountains towered above the road. The vista opened up at Kakuma village. It had been raining, and the dirt road into the camp was flooded in places. Most homes were mud brick with roofs made of tin or tarpaulin. Groups of Ethiopians, Somalis, Sudanese, and others each live in their own areas. The travelers were enthusiastically greeted by the refugees.

The assembly was held in a training center. Drawings on the walls spoke of the horrors of refugee life, but the spirit in the hall that day was one of hope. Every talk was given in English and Swahili. Some speakers

Kakuma camp

Lake Turkana

Lodwar

Eldoret

Living conditions in the camp are challenging

Water is rationed in Kakuma camp

KENYA

Kenyan Witnesses make the arduous trip north to encourage their brothers

Nairobi





A missionary interpreting a talk given by a local special pioneer

fluent in both languages even interpreted for themselves. A refugee brother from Sudan gave the opening talk, "Examining Our Figurative Heart." Other parts were handled by visiting elders.

A special highlight of every assembly is the baptism. At the conclusion of the baptism discourse, all eyes were on the one candidate as he rose. Gilbert had fled with his father from their native land during the genocide of 1994. At first, they had hoped to find safety in Burundi, but they soon realized that they were still in danger. Gilbert fled to Zaire, then to Tanzania—at times hiding in the forest—and finally to Kenya. Many eyes were filled with tears as the speaker welcomed him as a brother in the congregation. Standing before the small assembly of 95 people, Gilbert answered with a clear, confident "Ndiyo!"—Swahili for "Yes!"—to the two questions put to him by the speaker. He and some other brothers had excavated a small pool by hand and had lined it with the tarpaulin that once covered his own shelter in the camp. Demonstrating his eagerness to be baptized, that very morning he had filled the pool with water, bucket by bucket, all by himself!



Baptism pool

One of the highlights of the afternoon session was the relating of experiences about the unique situation of the refugee Witnesses. One brother explained how he approached a man resting under a tree.

"Tell me, is it safe *all* the time to sit under a tree?"

"Yes," the man replied. Then he added, "But no, not at night."

The brother read to him Micah 4:3, 4: "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble." "You see," he explained, "in God's new world, it will be safe *all* the time." The man accepted a Bible study aid.

One sister who traveled to Kakuma had recently been bereaved of three close family members. Commenting on the brothers in the camp, she said: "This is a place with so much difficulty; yet, they have kept their faith strong. They live in an unhappy place, but they are happily serving Jehovah. They are at peace with God. I was encouraged to keep peace and serve Jehovah. I have nothing to complain about!"

All too soon the assembly day came to an end. In the concluding talk, the speaker pointed out that representatives from eight different countries were present. One of the Witness refugees observed that this assembly was proof of the unity and love among Jehovah's Witnesses in a divided world. Theirs is a true Christian brotherhood.—John 13:35.

THE LOST BOYS OF SUDAN

Since the beginning of the civil war in Sudan in 1983, five million people have been driven from their homes. Among them were some 26,000 children, separated from their families. Thousands of them fled to refugee camps in



Ethiopia, where they remained for about three years. Forced to move again, they trekked for a year back through Sudan to northern Kenya, ravaged by soldiers, bandits, diseases, and wild animals. Only half the children survived these arduous journeys, eventually becoming the nucleus of the Kakuma camp. To relief agencies, they have come to be known as the lost boys of Sudan.

Courtesy Refugees International

The Kakuma refugee camp is now a multi-national home for refugees from Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, and other countries. On arrival at the camp, a refugee is given some basic material for building a home and a tarpaulin for roofing. Twice a month, each refugee is given about 13 pounds of flour, 2 pounds of beans, and some oil and salt. Many refugees trade some of their allotment to obtain other provisions.

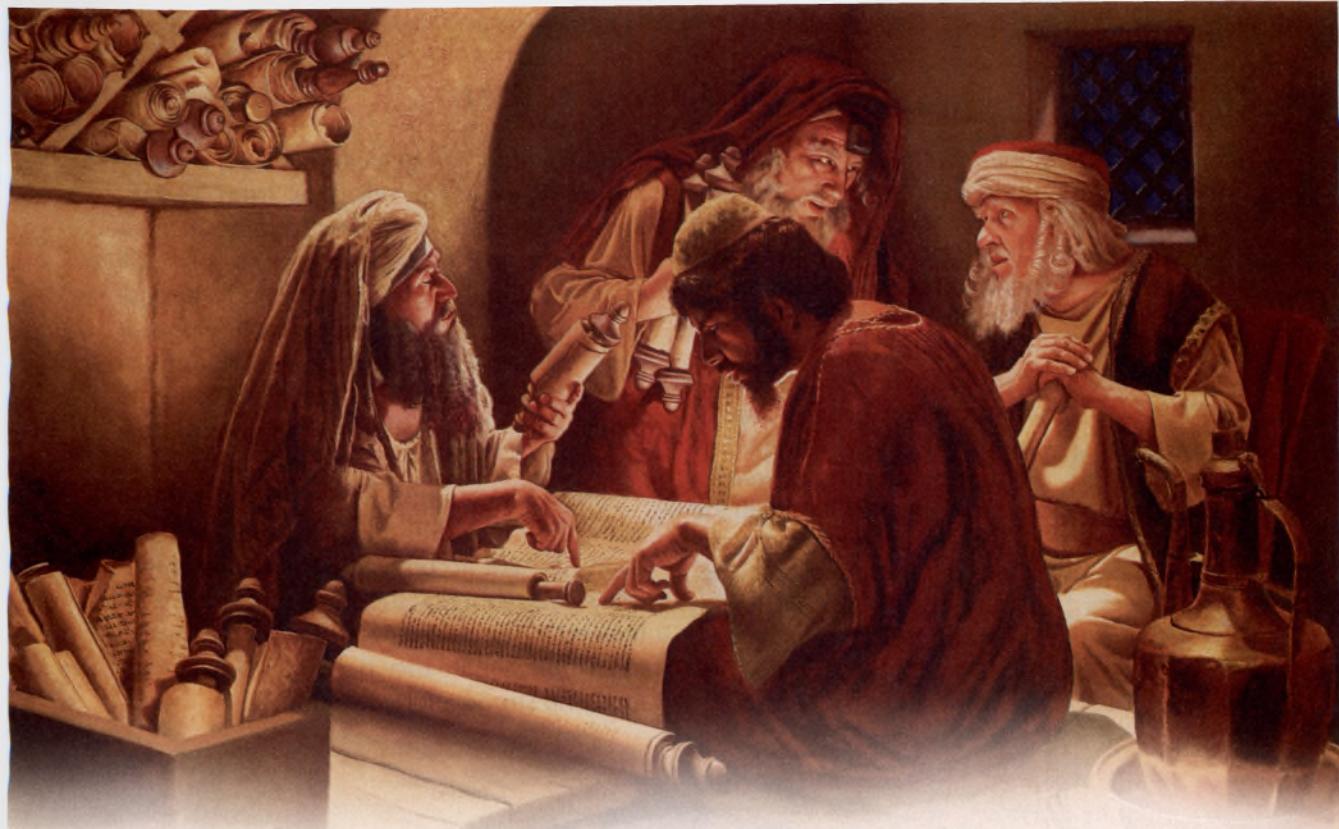
Some of these lost boys have been reunited with their families or resettled in other countries. But according to the Office of Refugee Resettlement, "thousands more have remained in the dusty, fly-ridden refugee camp at Kakuma, where they have had to scrape for food and struggle for education."

Does Your Faith Move You to Action?

THE army officer was convinced that Jesus could cure the paralysis of the officer's slave. But the army officer did not invite Jesus into his home, perhaps because he felt unworthy or because he was a Gentile. Instead, the officer had some older men of the Jews approach Jesus and say: "Sir, I am not a fit man for you to enter under my roof, but just say the word and my manservant will be healed." Noting that the army officer believed that Jesus could heal even from a distance, Jesus told the crowd following him: "I tell you the truth, With no one in Israel have I found so great a faith."—Matthew 8:5-10; Luke 7:1-10.

This experience can help us focus on an essential element of faith. True faith is not passive belief; it is backed up by action. The Bible writer James explained: "Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself." (James 2:17) This fact becomes even clearer when we consider a real example of what can happen when faith becomes inactive.

In 1513 B.C.E., the nation of Israel was joined to Jehovah God by means of the Law covenant. As mediator of that covenant, Moses conveyed God's word to the sons of Israel: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become . . . a holy



Was studying the Law enough?

nation." (Exodus 19:3-6) Yes, Israel's holiness was dependent on obedience.

Many centuries later, the Jews began to attach more importance to a study of the Law than to the application of its principles. In his book *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Alfred Edersheim wrote: "The [rabbis]—the 'great ones of the world' had long settled it, that study was before works."

Granted, the ancient Israelites were commanded to study God's requirements diligently. God himself said: "These words that I am commanding you today must prove to be on your heart; and you must inculcate them in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) But did Jehovah ever mean for a study of the Law to

take precedence over actions in harmony with it or indicated by it? Let us see.

Scholarly Works

Placing extreme emphasis on a study of the Law might have made sense to the Israelites, since a certain Jewish tradition held that God himself spent three hours every day studying the Law. You can see why some Jews might reason, 'If God regularly studies the Law, should not his earthly creatures be consumed with doing the same?'

By the first century C.E., the rabbis' obsession with dissecting and interpreting the Law had completely distorted their thinking. "The scribes and the Pharisees . . . say but do not perform," said Jesus. "They bind up heavy loads and put them upon the shoulders of men, but they themselves are not willing to budge them with their finger." (Matthew 23:2-4) Those religious leaders weighed the common people

down with innumerable rules and regulations, but they themselves hypocritically created loopholes that would exclude them from observing those same laws. Moreover, those men who concentrated on scholarly efforts "disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness."—Matthew 23:16-24.

How ironic that in seeking to establish their own righteousness, the scribes and the Pharisees ended up violating the very Law that they claimed to uphold! All the centuries of debates over words and other minutiae of the Law did not bring them closer to God. The effect was similar to the deviation caused by what the apostle Paul called "empty speeches," "contradictions," and false "knowledge." (1 Timothy 6:20, 21) Another serious problem, though, was the impact that endless research had on them. They did not come to have the sort of faith that moved them to right action.

Intelligent Minds, Faithless Hearts

How different the thinking of the Jewish religious leaders was from that of God! Shortly before the Israelites entered the Promised Land, Moses told them: "Apply your hearts to all the words that I am speaking in warning to you today, that you may command your sons to take care to do all the words of this law." (Deuteronomy 32:46) Clearly, God's people were to be not just scholars of the Law but doers of the Law.

Time and again, however, the nation of Israel proved unfaithful to Jehovah. Instead of doing the right sort of works, the sons of Israel "did not exercise faith toward him and did not listen to his voice." (Deuteronomy 9:23; Judges 2:15, 16; 2 Chronicles 24:18, 19; Jeremiah 25:4-7) Finally, the Jews committed their ultimate act of unfaithfulness when they rejected Jesus as the Messia-

ah. (John 19:14-16) Accordingly, Jehovah God rejected Israel and turned his attention to the nations.—Acts 13:46.

We certainly need to be careful not to fall into the same trap—thinking that we can worship God with intelligent minds but faithless hearts. To put it another way, our study of the Bible needs to be more than an academic exercise. Accurate knowledge must reach our hearts to affect our lives for the good. Would it make sense to study vegetable gardening but never plant any seeds? Granted, we might gain a certain amount of knowledge about how to cultivate a garden, but we would never harvest anything! Similarly, people who learn God's requirements through a study of the Bible must allow seeds of truth to reach the heart in order for those seeds to sprout and move them to action.—Matthew 13:3-9, 19-23.

"Become Doers of the Word"

The apostle Paul said that "faith follows the thing heard." (Romans 10:17) This natural progression from hearing the Word of God to exercising faith in his Son, Jesus Christ, puts us in line for everlasting life. Yes, something more is required than simply saying, 'I believe in God and Christ.'

Jesus urged his followers to have the kind of faith that would move them to action: "My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples." (John 15:8) Later, Jesus' half brother James wrote: "Become doers of the word, and not hearers only." (James 1:22) How, though, can we know what to do? By word and example, Jesus indicated what we need to do to please God.

While on earth, Jesus worked hard to promote Kingdom interests and to glorify his Father's name. (John 17:4-8) In what way? Many people may call to mind Jesus'

miracles of healing the sick and the crippled. But Matthew's Gospel makes clear the principal way: "Jesus set out on a tour of all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the good news of the kingdom." Notably, Jesus did not limit his ministry to speaking casually to a few friends and acquaintances or to those he came in contact with locally. He exerted himself vigorously, using whatever means were available to him to visit people "throughout the whole of Galilee."—Matthew 4:23, 24; 9:35.

Jesus directed his followers to share in the disciple-making work as well. Indeed, he provided a perfect example for them to imitate. (1 Peter 2:21) Jesus told his faithful disciples: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

Admittedly, sharing in the preaching activity presents a real challenge. Jesus himself said: "Look! I am sending you forth as lambs in among wolves." (Luke 10:3) When we are faced with opposition, a natural tendency is to shrink back in order to spare ourselves unnecessary grief or anxiety. That is what happened on the evening of Jesus' arrest. The apostles fled after being overcome by fear. Later that evening, Peter three times denied knowing Jesus.—Matthew 26: 56, 69-75.

Furthermore, you may be surprised to learn that even the apostle Paul said that he struggled to preach the good news. He wrote to the congregation in Thessalonica: "We mustered up boldness by means of our God to speak to you the good news of God with a great deal of struggling."—1 Thessalonians 2:1, 2.

Paul and his fellow apostles were able to overcome any fear of speaking to others about God's Kingdom, and so can you. How? The most important step is to lean on Jehovah. If we put full faith in Jehovah, that faith will move us to action, and we will be able to do his will.—Acts 4:17-20; 5:18, 27-29.

There Exists a Reward for Your Activity

Jehovah is well-aware of the effort we put forth to serve him. He knows, for example, when we are sick or weary. He is aware of our insecurities and self-doubts. When financial burdens weigh us down or when our health or our emotions seem to betray us, Jehovah is ever mindful of our situation. —2 Chronicles 16:9; 1 Peter 3:12.

How delighted Jehovah must be when despite our imperfections and difficulties, our faith moves us to action! The tender regard that Jehovah has for his faithful servants is not just a vague feeling—it is backed up with a promise. Under divine inspiration, the apostle Paul wrote: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the holy ones and continue ministering."—Hebrews 6:10.

You can trust the Bible's description of Jehovah as "a God of faithfulness, with whom there is no injustice," and as "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Deuteronomy 32:4; Hebrews 11:6) For example, a woman in California, U.S.A., recalls: "My father served as a full-time minister for ten years before he began raising a family. He delighted me with stories of how Jehovah sustained him in the ministry. Many a time he spent his last dollar for gas in order to go out in the ministry. When he got home from the ministry, there would



Our faith needs to be backed up by works

often be unexpected provisions waiting for him at the door."

In addition to material support, "the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort" gives us emotional and spiritual support. (2 Corinthians 1:3) "Relying on Jehovah is a comfortable feeling," says one Witness who has endured many trials over the years. "It gives you the opportunity to trust in Jehovah and see him in action as he helps you." You can humbly approach the "Hearer of prayer," assured that he will give attention to your personal concerns.

—Psalm 65:2.

The blessings and rewards that spiritual harvest workers receive are many. (Matthew 9:37, 38) Sharing in the public ministry has brought health benefits to many, and it may do so for you. More important, though, witnessing to others helps us to strengthen a good relationship with God.

—James 2:23.



Keep Doing Good

It would be a mistake for one of God's servants to conclude that Jehovah is disappointed if infirmities or old age somehow prevents him from doing all that he would like to do in the ministry. The same holds true regarding those who are limited by poor health, family responsibilities, or other circumstances.

Recall that when the apostle Paul felt hampered by an infirmity or obstacle, he "three times entreated the Lord that it might depart" from him. Rather than cure Paul so that he might accomplish more in Jehovah's service, God said: "My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:7-10) Therefore, rest assured that despite any difficult circumstances you may be enduring, your heavenly Father appreciates whatever you may be able to do to advance his interests.

—Hebrews 13:15, 16.

Our loving Creator does not require more of us than we can give. He simply asks that we have the kind of faith that moves us to action.

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- What was behind the choice of December 25 as a date for celebrating Jesus' birth?

God's Word provides no date for Jesus' birth. The *Enclopedia Hispánica* notes: "The date of December 25 for the celebration of Christmas is not the result of a strict chronological anniversary but, rather, of the Christianization of the festivals of the winter solstice." The ancient Romans celebrated the rise of the sun in the winter sky by feasting, revelry, and the exchanging of presents.—12/15, pages 4-5.

- Does Acts 7:59 mean that Stephen prayed to Jesus?

No. The Bible shows that prayer is to be directed only to Jehovah God. Seeing Jesus in vision, Stephen apparently felt free to appeal to him directly, saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Stephen knew that Jesus had been given authority to raise the dead. (John 5:27-29) So Stephen asked, or appealed to, Jesus to safeguard his life force until the resurrection.—1/1, page 31.

- How do we know that a person's destiny is not predetermined?

God has given man freedom of choice, which precludes predestination. It would have been unloving and unjust for Jehovah to have predetermined the course we would take and then hold us responsible for our actions. (Deuteronomy 32:4; 1 John 4:8)—1/15, pages 4-5.

- Why would it be immodest to say that miracles are impossible?

Recognizing that they have only partial knowledge of the scientific wonders behind God's creations, some scientists admit that

they can no longer state with certainty that something is impossible. At most, they are willing to say that it is improbable.—2/15, pages 5-6.

- Why did Judge Samson tell his parents that he wanted a daughter of the Philistines as a wife? (Judges 14:2)

It was against God's law to marry a false worshiper. (Exodus 34:11-16) Yet, the Philistine woman was "just right" in Samson's eyes. Samson "was looking for an opportunity against the Philistines," and the woman was just right for that purpose. God backed Samson by means of His spirit. (Judges 13:25; 14:3, 4, 6)—3/15, page 26.

- Should a Christian give a government employee a tip or some type of gift for his services?

It is wrong to bribe an official, to give him something valuable so that he will do something illegal, pervert justice, or give preferential treatment. But it is not bribery to give a tip or a gift to a public servant when he performs his duty or to obtain a legitimate service or to avoid unfair treatment.—4/1, page 29.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

The Resurrection—A Glorious Prospect

Who Will Be Resurrected?

The Resurrection Hope—What Does It Mean for You?

Questions From Readers

Did not the apostle Paul compromise his Christian faith when he said before the Sanhedrin: "I am a Pharisee"?

To understand Paul's statement, found at Acts 23:6, we need to consider its context.

After being mobbed by Jews in Jerusalem, Paul addressed the crowd. He mentioned that he was "educated in [Jerusalem] at the feet of Gamaliel, instructed according to the strictness of the ancestral Law." Although the crowd listened to his defense for a while, when they eventually grew wrathful, the escorting military commander took Paul to the soldiers' quarters. When he was about to be whipped, Paul said: "Is it lawful for you men to scourge a man that is a Roman and uncondemned?"—Acts 21:27–22:29.

The following day, the commander took Paul before the Jewish high court, the Sanhedrin. Paul looked intently at them and saw that the Sanhedrin was made up of Sadducees and Pharisees. He then said: "Men, brothers, I am a Pharisee, a son of Pharisees. Over the hope of resurrection of the dead I am being judged." As a result, a dissension arose between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, "for Sadducees say there is neither resurrection nor angel nor spirit, but the Pharisees publicly declare them all." Some who belonged to the party of the Pharisees contended fiercely: "We find nothing wrong in this man."—Acts 23:6-10.

Being known as a very zealous Christian, Paul could not have convinced the Sanhedrin that he was a practicing Pharisee. The Pharisees present would have accepted no compromise or misrepresentation. So Paul's statement about being a Pharisee must have had limitations,

and the Pharisees present must have understood Paul's words in that context.

In saying that he was being judged over the hope of the resurrection of the dead, Paul clearly meant that *in this respect* he was like the Pharisees. In any controversy on this topic, Paul was to be identified with the Pharisees rather than the Sadducees, who did not believe in the resurrection.

What Paul believed as a Christian was not in conflict with the beliefs of the Pharisees on such matters as the resurrection, angels, and some points of the Law. (Philippians 3:5) So within these limits, Paul could link himself with the Pharisees, and it was within this restricted meaning that those present of the Sanhedrin understood his words. He was thus using his background to deal with the biased Jewish supreme court.

However, the greatest evidence that Paul did not compromise his faith is seen in his continuing to have Jehovah's approval. The night after Paul made the statement in question, Jesus said: "Be of good courage! For as you have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome." Since Paul had God's approval, we must conclude that Paul did not compromise his Christian faith.—Acts 23:11.





BIBLE HISTORY How Accurate?

IN THEIR book *Battles of the Bible*, Chaim Herzog, former president of the State of Israel, and Mordechai Gichon, emeritus professor of archaeology at Tel Aviv University, make this point:

"The tactical description of the battles of the Bible . . . cannot be explained by mere inventiveness. It suffices, for example, to compare the campaign of Gideon against the Midianites and their allies, as related in Judges, 6-8, with the battles of the Trojan War, described by Homer in his *Iliad*. For the latter, any accessible sea shore and a not-far-away fortified town will do nicely as geographic setting . . . Not so the biblical account of Gideon's campaign. The detailed tactical movements and encounters based on the interaction between specific topographical features and the actions of both friend or foe—over a theatre of war covering some forty miles in length—simply cannot be reproduced anywhere . . . We are thus virtually forced to accept the veracity of the tactical narrative of the battles as described in the Bible."

You might study Gideon's campaign by using the map on pages 18 and 19 of the atlaslike brochure "See the Good Land."*

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



The story began when "all Midian and Amalek and the Easterners gathered together as one and proceeded to cross over and camp in the low plain of Jezreel." Gideon called nearby tribes to help. Events moved from the well of Harod to the hill of Moreh, then down the Jordan Valley. After pursuing the enemies across the Jordan River, Gideon subdued them.—Judges 6:33–8:12.

That map in "See the Good Land" shows the major places mentioned and the land features involved. Another map (page 15) identifies the territories of Israel's tribes. The two maps can help you to appreciate the accuracy of the Bible account.

This illustrates an observation made by the late Professor Yohanan Aharoni: "In the land of the Bible, geography and history are so deeply interwoven that neither can be really understood without the help of the other."

