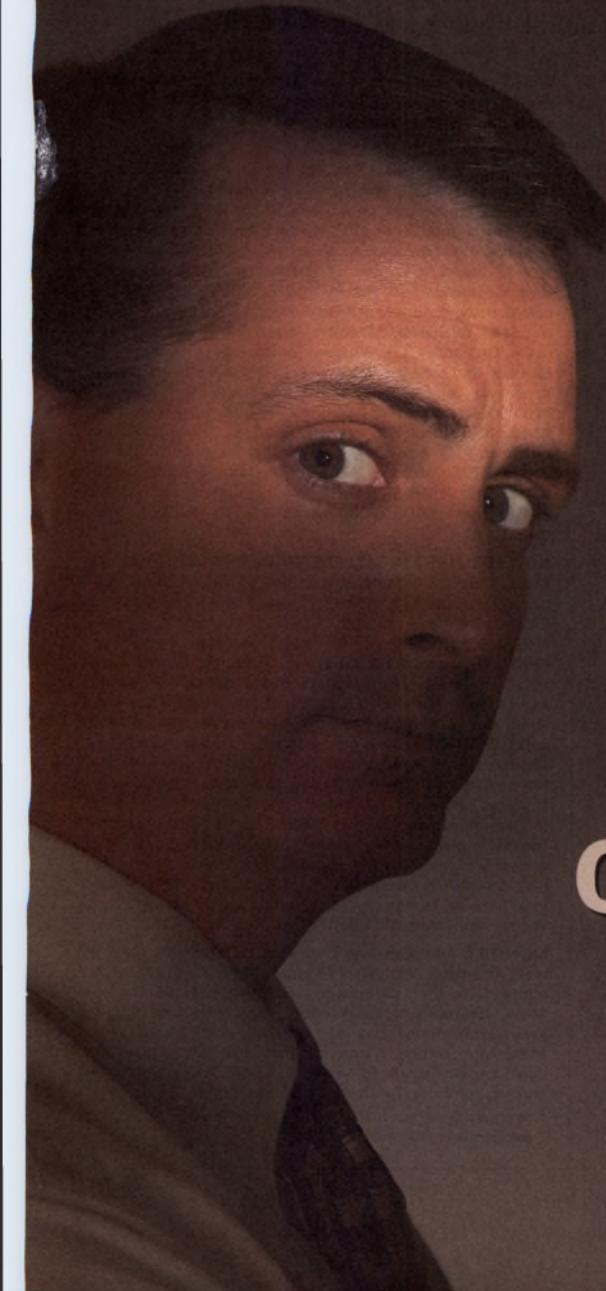




NOVEMBER 1, 2003

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**Who
Can Really Be
Trusted?**

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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Is Anyone to Be Trusted?

FOLLOWING the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, a number of well-kept secrets were revealed. For instance, Lydia* discovered that during the Socialist regime in East Germany, the *Stasi*, or State Security Service, had compiled a file on her private activities. If Lydia was surprised to hear of the file, she was aghast to learn who had supplied the *Stasi* with information—her husband. She had been betrayed by someone she should have been able to trust completely.

Robert was an elderly gentleman who regarded his local doctor with “the greatest respect, admiration and trust,” reports *The Times* of London. The doctor was said to have a “kind and sympathetic manner.” Then Robert died unexpectedly. Was it a heart attack or a stroke? No. The authorities concluded that the doctor had visited Robert in his home and, unbeknownst to Robert and his family, had given him a lethal injection. Robert was apparently murdered by a person he trusted completely.

Lydia and Robert each suffered an alarming breach of trust, with grave consequences. In other cases the results are not so serious. Nevertheless, being disappointed by a person we trust is not an unusual experience. A report published by a leading German polling institute, *Allensbacher Jahrbuch der Demoskopie 1998-2002*, revealed in one survey that 86 percent of the respondents had been let

down by someone in whom they had placed their trust. Perhaps you have had a similar experience. Therefore, we need hardly be surprised that the Swiss newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* reported in 2002 that “in Western industrial countries, relationships of mutual trust have been on the wane for decades.”

Developed Slowly, Destroyed Quickly

What is trust? According to one dictionary, to trust others means to “believe that they are honest and sincere and that they will not

**One survey revealed that
86 percent of the respondents
had been let down
by someone in whom they
had placed their trust**

deliberately do anything that will hurt you.” Trust is developed slowly but can be destroyed in an instant. With so many sensing that their trust has been abused, is it any wonder that people are reluctant to have confidence in others? According to a survey published in Germany in 2002, “fewer than 1 in 3 youths have a basic trust in other people.”

We might ask ourselves: ‘Can we really trust anyone? Is it worth placing our trust in someone at the risk of being let down?’

* Names have been changed.

Trust Is Vital for a Happy Life

FOOD poisoning is very unpleasant. A person who repeatedly experiences it needs to be more careful in his eating habits. But to give up food entirely so as to avoid the risk of food poisoning is not a realistic option. Doing so would cause more problems than it would solve. Without food no one can survive long.

In a similar way, to have one's trust betrayed is painful. Repeated betrayal of trust might make us think carefully about our choice of associations. Yet, to withdraw from people entirely so as to avoid the risk of being let down is not the solution. Why not? Because being mistrustful of others robs us of our own happiness. To lead a contented life, we need relationships based on mutual trust.

"Trust constitutes one of the basics for uncomplicated everyday interaction with others," comments the book *Jugend 2002*. "Everyone yearns for trust," reports the newspaper *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*. "Trust improves the quality of life" to such a degree that it "is vital for survival." Indeed, the newspaper continues, without trust, "a person can't cope with life."

Since we have a basic need to put our trust in someone, whom can we trust without running the risk of being let down?

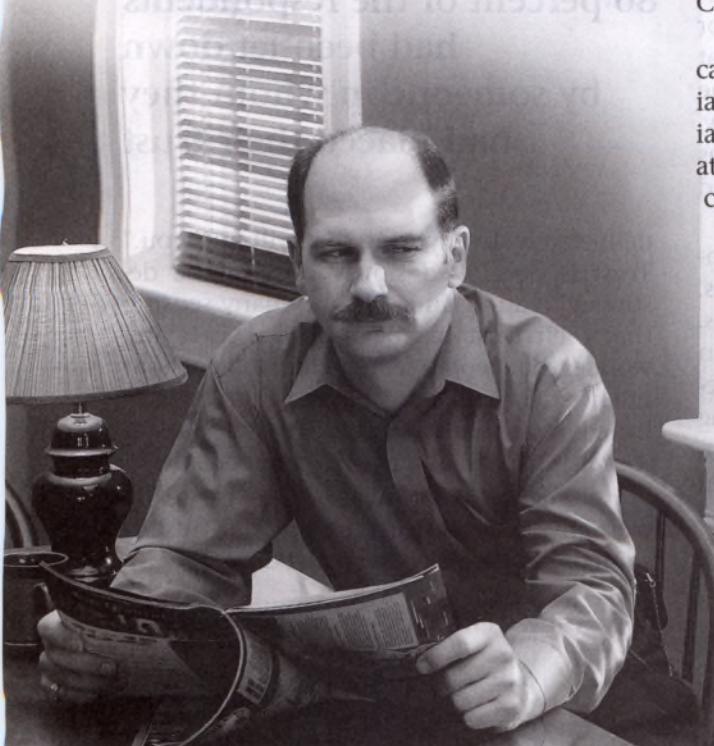
Trust in Jehovah With All Your Heart

"Trust in Jehovah with all your heart," the Bible tells us. (Proverbs 3:5) Indeed, God's Word repeatedly encourages us to trust in our Creator, Jehovah God.

Why can we put our trust in God? First, because Jehovah God is holy. The prophet Isaiah wrote: "Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah." (Isaiah 6:3) Does the idea of holiness fail to attract you? Actually, it should attract you because Jehovah's holiness means that he is pure, removed from all wrongdoing, and absolutely reliable. He can never become corrupt or abusive, and it is impossible for him to breach our trust.

Moreover, we can put our trust in God because of his ability and desire

*Being mistrustful
robs us of happiness*



to support those who serve him. His supreme *power*, for example, enables him to act. His perfect *justice* and *wisdom* guide the way he acts. And his unequalled *love* motivates him to act. "God is love," wrote the apostle John. (1 John 4:8) God's love influences everything he does. Jehovah's holiness and his other outstanding qualities make him an ideal Father, someone in whom we can place implicit trust. Nothing and no one can ever be more trustworthy than Jehovah.

Trust in Jehovah and Be Happy

Another sound reason for trusting Jehovah is that he understands us better than anyone else does. He knows that each human has a basic need for a secure, lasting, and trusting relationship with the Creator. Those who have such a relationship feel more secure. "Happy is the able-bodied man that has put Jehovah as his trust," concluded King David. (Psalm 40:4) Millions today wholeheartedly echo David's thoughts.

Consider some examples. Doris has lived in the Dominican Republic, Germany, Greece, and the United States. She says: "I am very happy to put my trust in Jehovah. He knows how to take care of me physically, spiritually, and emotionally. He is the best friend a person could ever have." Wolfgang, a legal adviser, explains: "It's wonderful to be able to lean on someone who has your best interests at heart, someone who can—and actually will—do what's best for you!" Ham, who was born in Asia but who now lives in Europe, comments: "I am confident that Jehovah has all matters in hand, and he does not make mistakes, so I am happy to lean on him."

**Jehovah is most
worthy of our trust**

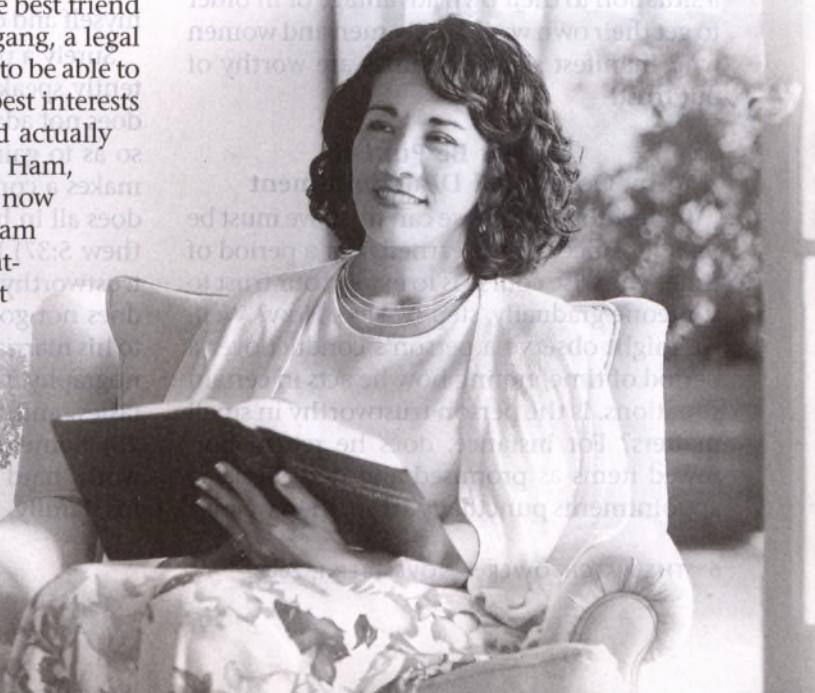
Of course, each of us needs to trust not only in our Creator but also in people. Hence, Jehovah, as a wise and experienced friend, gives us advice as to the kind of individuals we should trust. By reading the Bible carefully, we can take note of his counsel on this matter.

People Whom We Can Trust

"Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs," wrote the psalmist. (Psalm 146:3) This inspired statement helps us to acknowledge that many humans do not deserve our confidence. Even those who are held in high esteem as the "nobles" of this world, such as experts in specialized fields of knowledge or activity, do not automatically deserve our trust. Their guidance is often fallible, and trust placed in such "nobles" can quickly turn into disappointment.

Of course, this should not make us distrust *everyone*. However, we clearly need to be selective when choosing those in whom we place our trust. What criteria should we use?

An example from the ancient nation of Israel



may help us. When it became necessary to appoint individuals who were to carry heavy responsibility in Israel, Moses was advised to "select out of all the people capable men, fearing God, trustworthy men, hating unjust profit." (Exodus 18:21) What can we learn from this?

These were men who showed certain godly qualities before being appointed to positions of trust. They had already given evidence that they feared God; they had a healthy reverence for the Creator and feared to displease him. It was clear to everyone that these men did their very best to uphold God's standards. They hated unjust profit, which indicated moral strength that would prevent them from being corrupted by power. They would not abuse trust so as to further their own personal interests or those of relatives or friends.

Would it not be wise for us to use similar criteria today when choosing those in whom we place our trust? Do we know individuals whose behavior shows that they fear God? Are they determined to keep to his standards of conduct? Do they have the integrity to refrain from doing things that are not right? Do they have the honesty not to manipulate a situation to their own advantage or in order to get their own way? Surely men and women who manifest such attributes are worthy of our trust.

Do Not Be Put Off by Occasional Disappointment

In deciding whom we can trust, we must be patient, since trust is earned over a period of time. The wise course is to extend our trust to someone gradually, step-by-step. How? Well, we might observe a person's conduct over a period of time, noting how he acts in certain situations. Is the person trustworthy in small matters? For instance, does he return borrowed items as promised and does he keep appointments punctually? If so, then we may

feel that we can safely extend our trust to him in more serious matters. This is in accord with the principle: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much." (Luke 16:10) Being selective and patient may help us to avoid big disappointments.

What, though, if someone lets us down? Students of the Bible will recall that on the night of his arrest, Jesus Christ was badly let down by his apostles. Judas Iscariot betrayed him, and the others fled in fear. Peter even denied Jesus three times. But Jesus discerned that only Judas acted willfully. Being let down at such a crucial time did not prevent Jesus from reaffirming his trust in the remaining 11 apostles just a few weeks later. (Matthew 26:45-47, 56, 69-75; 28:16-20) Similarly, if we feel betrayed by someone we trust, we do well to consider whether the perceived betrayal is evidence of an untrustworthy spirit or of a momentary weakness of the flesh.

Am I Trustworthy?

Someone who decides to be selective about whom he trusts must be fair and ask himself: 'Am I trustworthy? What reasonable standards of trustworthiness should I expect of myself and others?'

Surely a person who is trustworthy consistently speaks the truth. (Ephesians 4:25) He does not adapt his words to suit his audience so as to gain personal advantage. And if he makes a commitment, the trustworthy man does all in his power to keep his word. (Matthew 5:37) If someone confides in him, the trustworthy person keeps the confidence and does not gossip. A reliable person is faithful to his marriage mate. He does not look at pornography, he does not dwell on sensual fantasies, and he does not flirt. (Matthew 5:27, 28) Someone who is worthy of our trust works hard to earn a living for himself and his family and does not seek to get easy

money at the expense of other people. (1 Timothy 5:8) Bearing in mind such reasonable and Scriptural standards will help us to recognize people we can trust. Moreover, adhering to the same standards of behavior will help each of us to be worthy of being trusted by others.

It would be delightful to live in a world where all people were trustworthy and where disappointments through breach of trust were things of the past! Is that a mere dream? Not for people who take the Bible's promises seriously, for God's Word foretells the coming of a beautiful "new earth" free from all deceit, lies, and exploitation and free from sorrow, sickness, and even death! (2 Peter 3:13; Psalm 37:11, 29; Revelation 21:3-5) Would it not be worthwhile to find out more about this prospect? Jehovah's Witnesses will be glad to provide you with more information on this and other vital topics.

***All of us need relationships
based on mutual trust***



WOMEN WHO MADE JEHOVAH'S HEART REJOICE

"May Jehovah reward the way you act, and may there come to be a perfect wage for you from Jehovah."—RUTH 2:12.

FEAR of God impelled two women to defy a Pharaoh. Faith moved a prostitute to risk her life so as to protect two Israelite spies. Sensibleness and humility in a crisis helped a woman to save many lives and to prevent the anointed of Jehovah from incurring blood-guilt. Faith in Jehovah God along with a spirit of hospitality moved a widow and mother to give the last of her food to a prophet of God. These are just some of the many Scriptural examples of women who made Jehovah's heart rejoice.

² Jehovah's attitude toward such women and the blessings he bestowed upon them demonstrate that what pleases him above all else are spiritual qualities, which transcend gender. In today's world, obsessed as it is with the physical, giving priority to one's spirituality is a challenge. But that challenge can be met, as is demonstrated by millions of God-fearing women who form a large part of God's people today. Such Christian women imitate the faith, discretion, hospitality, and other fine qualities demonstrated by God-fearing women mentioned in the Bible. Of course, Christian men too want to imitate the qualities shown by such exemplary women of ancient times. To see how we may do so to a fuller degree, let us consider in more detail the Bible accounts about the women mentioned at the outset.—Romans 15:4; James 4:8.

1, 2. How may we benefit by reflecting on Bible examples of women who made Jehovah's heart rejoice?

Women Who Defied a Pharaoh

³ At the Nuremberg trials, held in Germany after World War II, many who were convicted of mass murder tried to excuse the crimes they committed by arguing that they were simply obeying orders. Now compare these individuals with two Israelite midwives, Shiphrah and Puah, who lived in ancient Egypt during the reign of an unnamed but tyrannical Pharaoh. Fearing a burgeoning Hebrew population, Pharaoh ordered the two midwives to make sure that every newborn Hebrew male was killed. How did the women respond to that heinous command? "They did *not* do as the king of Egypt had spoken to them, but they would preserve the male children alive." Why did these women not succumb to fear of man? Because they "feared the true God."—Exodus 1:15, 17; Genesis 9:6.

⁴ Yes, the midwives took refuge in Jehovah, and he, in turn, proved to be "a shield" to them, protecting them from Pharaoh's wrath. (2 Samuel 22:31; Exodus 1:18-20) But Jehovah's blessing did not stop there. He rewarded Shiphrah and Puah with families of their own. He even honored these women by having their names and deeds recorded in his inspired Word for future generations to read, whereas the name of the Pharaoh has been lost in the sands of time.—Exodus 1:21; 1 Samuel 2:30b; Proverbs 10:7.

3, 4. (a) Why did Shiphrah and Puah refuse to obey Pharaoh when he ordered that every newborn Israelite male be killed? (b) How did Jehovah reward the two midwives for their courage and godly fear?



Many faithful women have served God despite "the order of the king"

⁵ Are there women like Shiphrah and Puah today? Yes, indeed! Each year, thousands of such women fearlessly preach the Bible's life-saving message in lands where "the order of the king" forbids it, thus risking their freedom or even their life. (Hebrews 11:23; Acts 5:28, 29) Impelled by love of God and neighbor, such brave women allow no one to stop them from sharing the good news of God's Kingdom with others. Consequently, many Christian women contend with opposition and persecution. (Mark 12:30, 31; 13:9-13) As with Shiphrah and Puah, Jehovah is fully aware of the deeds of such excellent, courageous women, and he will demonstrate his love for them by preserving their names in his "book of life," provided they endure faithfully to the end.—Philippians 4:3; Matthew 24:13.

5. How do many Christian women today show the same attitude as did Shiphrah and Puah, and how will Jehovah reward them?



A Former Prostitute Brings Joy to Jehovah's Heart

⁶ In the year 1473 B.C.E., a prostitute named Rahab lived in the Canaanite city of Jericho. Evidently, Rahab was a well-informed woman. When two Israelite spies sought refuge in her home, she was able to relate to them specific details about Israel's miraculous Exodus from Egypt, even though that had occurred 40 years earlier! She was also familiar with Israel's more recent victories over the Amorite Kings Sihon and Og. Note how that knowledge affected her. To the spies, she said: "I do know that Jehovah will certainly give you the land, . . . for Jehovah your God is God in the heavens above and on the earth beneath." (Joshua 2:1, 9-11) Yes, what Rahab learned about Jehovah and his deeds in behalf of Israel touched a responsive chord in her heart and caused her to have faith in him.—Romans 10:10.

⁷ Rahab's faith moved her to action. She received the Israelite spies "in a peaceable way," and she obeyed their life-saving instructions when Israel attacked Jericho. (Hebrews 11:31; Joshua 2:18-21) There is no

6, 7. (a) What did Rahab know about Jehovah and his people, and how did this knowledge affect her? (b) How does God's Word honor Rahab?

doubt that Rahab's works of faith brought joy to Jehovah's heart, for he inspired the Christian disciple James to place her name alongside that of Abraham, God's friend, as an example for Christians to imitate.

James wrote: "In the same manner was not also Rahab the harlot declared righteous by works, after she had received the messengers hospitably and sent them out by another way?"—James 2:25.

⁸ Jehovah rewarded Rahab in a number of ways. For one thing, he miraculously spared her life and the lives of all who sought refuge in her home—namely, "the household of her father and all who belonged to her." Then he allowed these ones to dwell "in the midst of Israel," where they were to be treated as natives. (Joshua 2:13; 6:22-25; Leviticus 19:33, 34) But that is not all. Jehovah also bestowed upon Rahab the honor of becoming an ancestress of Jesus Christ. What an overwhelming demonstration of loving-kindness toward a woman who had once been an idol-worshiping Canaanite!—Psalm 130:3, 4.

⁹ Like Rahab, some Christian women, from the first century right down to today,

* Jesus' genealogy, as recorded by Matthew, mentions four women by name—Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, and Mary. All are held in high esteem in God's Word.—Matthew 1:3, 5, 16.

8. How did Jehovah bless Rahab for her faith and obedience?
9. How can Jehovah's attitude toward Rahab and certain Christian women in the first century be encouraging to some women today?

have abandoned an immoral way of life in order to please God. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) No doubt some of them grew up in an environment comparable to that of ancient Canaan, where immorality was rife and even viewed as normal. Yet, they changed their ways, impelled by faith based on an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures. (Romans 10:17) Hence, it could also be said of such women that "God is not ashamed of them, to be called upon as their God." (Hebrews 11:16) What an honor!

Blessed for Her Sensibleness

¹⁰ Many faithful women of old displayed in an outstanding way the quality of sensibleness, making them a precious asset to Jehovah's people. One such woman was Abigail, wife of the wealthy Israelite land-owner Nabal. Abigail's sensibleness contributed to the saving of lives and prevented David, Israel's future king, from becoming blood-guilty. We can read about Abigail in the account recorded at 1 Samuel chapter 25.

¹¹ As the story begins, David and his followers are encamped near Nabal's flocks, which they protect free of charge day and night out of kindness to their Israelite brother Nabal. When David's provisions are running low, he sends ten young men to Nabal to request food. Nabal now has an opportunity to show his appreciation to David and to honor

- 10, 11. What circumstances involving Nabal and David moved Abigail to action?



Why is Rahab a fine example of someone having faith?



What qualities displayed by Abigail do you want to imitate?

him as Jehovah's anointed. But Nabal does the opposite. In a fit of rage, he insults David and turns the young men away empty-handed. When David hears about this, he assembles 400 armed men and sets out to exact revenge. Abigail learns about her husband's harsh response and acts quickly and prudently to appease David by sending a generous consignment of provisions. Then she herself goes to David.—Verses 2-20.

¹² When Abigail meets David, her humble appeal for mercy reveals her deep respect for Jehovah's anointed. "Jehovah will without fail make for my lord a lasting house, because the wars of Jehovah are what my lord is fighting," she says, adding that Jehovah will commission David as leader over Israel. (Verses 28-30) At the same time, Abigail shows considerable courage by telling David that his pursuit of revenge, if unchecked, will lead to bloodguilt. (Verses 26, 31) David is brought to his senses by Abigail's humility, deep respect, and clear thinking. He responds: "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me! And blessed be your sensibleness, and blessed be you who have restrained me this day from entering into bloodguilt."—Verses 32, 33.

¹³ Upon returning home, Abigail bravely seeks to inform her husband of her gift to David. When she finds him, however, he is "as drunk as could be." So she waits until he is sober and then tells him. How does Nabal react? He is so stunned that he is overcome by what may be some form of paralysis. Ten days later he dies at God's hand. When David learns of Nabal's death, he proposes marriage to Abigail, whom he evidently admires

12, 13. (a) How did Abigail prove to be sensible as well as loyal to Jehovah and his anointed one? (b) What did Abigail do when she returned home, and how did matters turn out for her?

and deeply respects. Abigail accepts David's offer.—Verses 34-42.

Can You Be Like Abigail?

¹⁴ Do you see some qualities in Abigail that you—men as well as women—would like to cultivate to a greater degree? Perhaps you desire to act more prudently and sensibly when difficulties arise. Or maybe you want to speak in a calm and reasonable manner when the emotions of others around you are running high. If so, why not pray to Jehovah about the matter? He promises to give wisdom, discernment, and thinking ability to all who "keep on asking in faith."—James 1:5, 6; Proverbs 2:1-6, 10, 11.

¹⁵ Such fine qualities are especially important for a woman with an unbelieving husband who pays little or no heed to Bible principles. Perhaps he drinks to excess. Hopefully, such men will change their ways. Many have done so—often in response to the mild manner, deep respect, and chaste conduct of their wives.—1 Peter 3:1, 2, 4.

¹⁶ Whatever difficulties you may have to put up with at home, remember that Jehovah is always there to support you. (1 Peter 3:12) So strive to fortify yourself spiritually. Pray for wisdom and a calm heart. Yes, draw closer to Jehovah through regular Bible study, prayer, meditation, and association with fellow Christians. Abigail's love for God and her attitude toward his anointed servant were not affected by her husband's unspiritual outlook. She acted on the basis of righteous principles. Even in a household

14. What qualities of Abigail may we want to cultivate to a greater degree?

15. Under what circumstances is it especially important for Christian women to display the qualities shown by Abigail?

16. Whatever her circumstances at home, how would a Christian sister demonstrate that she values her relationship with Jehovah above all else?

where the husband is an exemplary servant of God, a Christian wife realizes that she needs to continue to work hard to build up and maintain her own spirituality. True, her husband has the Scriptural obligation to care for her spiritually and materially, but in the final analysis, she must work out her "own salvation with fear and trembling."—Philippians 2:12; 1 Timothy 5:8.

She Received "a Prophet's Reward"

¹⁷ The way in which Jehovah cared for a poor widow in the time of the prophet Elijah shows that he deeply appreciates those who support true worship by giving of themselves and of their resources. Because of a prolonged drought in Elijah's day, starvation stared many in the face, including a widow and her young son living in Zarephath. Just when they were down to their last meal, a visitor arrived—the prophet Elijah. He made a most unusual request. Although aware of the woman's plight, he asked her to bake "a small round cake" for him, using the last of her oil and flour. But he added: "For this is what Jehovah the God of Israel has said, 'The large jar of flour itself will not get exhausted, and the small jar of oil itself will not fail until the day of Jehovah's giving a downpour upon the surface of the ground.'"—1 Kings 17:8-14.

¹⁸ How would you have responded to that?

17, 18. (a) The widow of Zarephath was presented with what unusual test of faith? (b) How did the widow respond to Elijah's request, and how did Jehovah reward her for this?



Many Christian women today reflect the spirit of the widow of Zarephath

extraordinary request? The widow of Zarephath, apparently recognizing that Elijah was Jehovah's prophet, "did according to Elijah's word." In what way did Jehovah respond to her act of hospitality? He miraculously provided food for the woman, her son, and Elijah during the drought. (1 Kings 17:15, 16) Yes, Jehovah gave the widow of Zarephath "a prophet's reward," even though she was not an Israelite. (Matthew 10:41) The Son of God also honored this widow when he held her up as an example before the faithless people of his hometown, Nazareth.—Luke 4:24-26.

¹⁹ Today, many Christian women reflect the spirit of the widow of Zarephath. For example, every week, unselfish Christian sisters—many of whom are poor and have families to care for—extend hospitality to travel-

ers. In what ways do many Christian women today reflect the spirit of the widow of Zarephath, and how does Jehovah feel about these ones?

In Review

- How did the following women make Jehovah's heart rejoice?
 - Shiphrah and Puah
 - Rahab
 - Abigail
 - The widow of Zarephath
- How can meditating on the examples set by these women help us personally? Illustrate.

ing overseers and their wives. Others share meals with local full-time ministers, help the needy, or in some other way give of themselves and of their resources to support the Kingdom work. (Luke 21:4) Does Jehovah note such sacrifices? Absolutely! “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.

FAITHFUL CHRISTIAN WOMEN —PRECIOUS WORSHIPERS OF GOD

“Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself.”—PROVERBS 31:30.

THE world places great emphasis on outward appearance, especially in regard to women. Jehovah, however, is primarily interested in the inner person, which can become even more beautiful with age. (Proverbs 16:31) Hence, the Bible exhorts women: “Do not let your adornment be that of the external braiding of the hair and of the putting on of gold ornaments or the wearing of outer garments, but let it be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God.”—1 Peter 3:3, 4.

² Such a praiseworthy spirit was shown by many of the women mentioned in the Bible.

1. How does Jehovah’s view of beauty compare with that of the world?

2, 3. How did women contribute to the advancement of the good news in the first century, and how was this foretold?

²⁰ In the first century, several God-fearing women had the privilege of ministering to Jesus and his apostles. In the next article, we will discuss how these women brought joy to Jehovah’s heart, and we will consider the example of modern-day women who serve Jehovah wholeheartedly, even in difficult circumstances.

20. What will be considered in the following article?

In the first century, some of these had the privilege of ministering to Jesus and his apostles. (Luke 8:1-3) Later, Christian women became zealous evangelizers; others gave valuable support to Christian men who were taking the lead, including the apostle Paul; and some showed exceptional hospitality, even making their home available for congregation meetings.

³ That Jehovah would use women in a mighty way in the outworking of his purpose was foretold in the Scriptures. For instance, Joel 2:28, 29 predicted that both men and women, young and old, would receive holy spirit and share in spreading the good news of the Kingdom. That prophecy began to be fulfilled at Pentecost 33 C.E. (Acts 2:1-4, 16-18) Some spirit-anointed women were granted miraculous gifts, such as the gift of prophesying. (Acts 21:8, 9) By their zeal

in the ministry, this large, spiritual army of faithful sisters contributed to the rapid spread of Christianity in the first century. In fact, about 60 C.E., the apostle Paul wrote that the good news had been "preached in all creation that is under heaven."—Colossians 1:23.

Commended for Their Courage, Zeal, and Hospitality

⁴ The apostle Paul, for one, was appreciative of the ministry performed by some women in particular—just as Christian overseers today value the ministry performed by zealous women. Among the women Paul mentioned by name were "Tryphaena and Tryphosa, women who are working hard in the Lord," and "Persis our beloved one, for she performed many labors in the Lord." (Romans 16:12) Euodia and Syntyche, wrote Paul, had "striven side by side with [him] in the good news." (Philippians 4:2, 3) Priscilla, along with her husband, Aquila, also served alongside Paul. She and Aquila, even "risked their own necks" for Paul, moving him to write: "Not only I but also all the congregations of the nations render thanks."—Romans 16:3, 4; Acts 18:2.

⁵ What contributed to Priscilla's zeal and courage? A clue is found at Acts 18:24-26, where we read that she supported her husband in helping Apollos, a gifted speaker, to be brought up-to-date with revealed truth. Evidently, then, Priscilla was a good student of God's Word and of the teaching of the apostles. As a result, she developed excellent qualities that made her precious to God and to her husband and a valuable member of the early congregation. Equally precious are

4. Why did Paul have good reason to commend a number of women in the first-century Christian congregation?

5, 6. In what ways did Priscilla set a fine example for sisters today?

the many hardworking Christian sisters today who diligently study the Bible and also take in the spiritual food Jehovah provides through "the faithful steward."—Luke 12:42.

⁶ Aquila and Priscilla were exceptionally hospitable. Paul stayed in their home when he worked with them in their tentmaking business in Corinth. (Acts 18:1-3) When the couple moved to Ephesus and later to Rome, they continued to show Christian hospitality, even making their home available for congregation meetings. (Acts 18:18, 19; 1 Corinthians 16:8, 19) Nympha and Mary the mother of John Mark likewise opened up their homes for congregation meetings.—Acts 12:12; Colossians 4:15.

A Precious Asset Today

⁷ As in the first century, faithful Christian women today play a key role in the outworking of God's purpose, especially in the evangelizing work. And what a fine record these sisters have! Consider the example of Gwen, who faithfully served Jehovah for over 50 years until her death in 2002. "Gwen's zeal as an evangelizer was almost legendary in our city," says her husband. "To her, every human was a potential recipient of Jehovah's love and promises. Her loyalty to God, his organization, and to our family—not to mention her loving encouragement when we were down—has been a great support to me and to our children throughout our full and rewarding life together. We miss her very much." Gwen and her husband were married for 61 years.

⁸ Tens of thousands of Christian women, single and married, serve as pioneer ministers and missionaries, being content with life's necessities as they spread the Kingdom message in territories ranging from bustling

7, 8. What commendable record of sacred service do many present-day Christian women have, and of what can they be assured?

Do you give commendation to unmarried sisters who loyally obey God's law?

cities to isolated regions. (Acts 1:8) Many have put aside owning a home or having children in order to serve Jehovah more fully. There are those who give loyal support to husbands who serve as traveling overseers, while thousands of sisters serve in Bethel homes around the world. Without doubt, these self-sacrificing women are among "the desirable things of all the nations" that fill Jehovah's house with glory.—Haggai 2:7.

⁹ Of course, many Christian women have family responsibilities to care for; yet, they keep Kingdom interests to the fore. (Matthew 6:33) A single pioneer sister wrote: "My mother, by virtue of her unwavering faith and fine example, played a key role in my becoming a regular pioneer. In fact, she was one of my best pioneer partners." A husband says of his wife, a mother of five grown girls: "Our home was always clean and tidy. Bonnie kept it simple and uncluttered so that our family could focus on spiritual pursuits. Her contribution to the careful management of our finances made it possible for me to work part-time for 32 years, enabling me to devote more time to our family and to spiritual matters. My wife also taught the children the value of hard work. I have nothing but praise for her." Today both husband and wife serve at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses.

¹⁰ A husband writes concerning his wife, a mother of grown children: "The qualities I admire most in Susan are her intense love for God and for people, as well as her understanding, empathy, and honesty. She has always held the view that Jehovah deserves the

9, 10. How have some family members expressed appreciation for the fine example set by Christian wives and mothers?



very best that we can give to him—a principle that she applies to herself both as a servant of God and as a mother." With his wife's support, this husband has been able to accept a number of spiritual privileges, including serving as an elder, pioneer, substitute circuit overseer, and Hospital Liaison Committee member. How precious such women are to their husbands, to fellow Christians, and above all, to Jehovah!—Proverbs 31:28, 30.

Precious Women Without a Husband

¹¹ Jehovah often expressed his concern for the welfare of widows. (Deuteronomy 27:19; Psalm 68:5; Isaiah 10:1, 2) He has not changed. He continues to be deeply interested not only in widows but also in single mothers as well as in women who are single by choice or who have not found a suitable Christian husband. (Malachi 3:6; James 1:27) If you are among those who faithfully serve Jehovah without the support of a Christian mate, you can be sure that you are precious in God's eyes.

¹² Consider, as an example, our Christian sisters who have not married because

11. (a) How has Jehovah revealed his concern for faithful women, especially widows? (b) Christian widows and other faithful sisters who do not have a husband may be assured of what?

12. (a) How do some Christian sisters demonstrate their loyalty to Jehovah? (b) Some of our sisters are coping with what feelings?

What specific requests can be mentioned in prayer before the children leave for school?

they loyally obey Jehovah's counsel to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39; Proverbs 3:1) God's Word assures them: "With someone loyal [Jehovah] will act in loyalty." (2 Samuel 22:26) Yet, for many of them, remaining single is a challenge. Says one sister: "I resolved to marry only in the Lord, but I have shed many tears as I watched my friends marry wonderful Christian men, while I continue alone." Notes another sister: "I've served Jehovah for 25 years. I am determined to remain loyal to him, but feelings of loneliness often sadden me." She adds: "Sisters like me long for encouragement." How may we help such loyal ones?

¹³ One way is seen in an ancient example. When Jephthah's daughter relinquished her opportunity to have a husband, the people realized that she was making a sacrifice. What was done to encourage her? "From year to year the daughters of Israel would go to give commendation to the daughter of Jephthah the Gileadite, four days in the year." (Judges 11:30-40) Likewise, we should give heartfelt commendation to single sisters who loyally obey God's law.* What is another way we can show our concern? In our prayers we should petition Jehovah to support such dear, faithful sisters to continue loyally in their service. They deserve to be re-

* On how to give such commendation, see *The Watchtower* of March 15, 2002, pages 26-8.

13. (a) What do we learn from the example set by those who visited Jephthah's daughter? (b) In what additional ways can we show concern for single sisters in our congregation?



assured that they are warmly loved and deeply appreciated by Jehovah and the entire Christian congregation.—Psalm 37:28.

How Single Parents Succeed

¹⁴ Christian women who are single parents also face numerous challenges. However, they can turn to Jehovah for help in rearing their children in harmony with Bible principles. True, if you are a single parent, you cannot be both mother and father in all respects. Nevertheless, Jehovah will help you care for your many responsibilities if you call upon him in faith. To illustrate: Imagine that you have a heavy bag of groceries to take to your apartment way up in a multistory building. Would you struggle up the stairs if an elevator was nearby? Of course not! Similarly, do not try to bear heavy emotional burdens alone when you can ask Jehovah to help you. In fact, he invites you to call on him. Says Psalm 68:19: "Blessed be Jehovah, who daily carries the load for us." Likewise, 1 Peter 5:7

- 14, 15. (a) Why should Christians who are single mothers call on Jehovah for help? (b) How may single parents act in harmony with their prayers?

invites you to throw all your anxieties upon Jehovah “*because he cares for you.*” So when problems and anxieties weigh you down, unburden yourself on your heavenly Father, doing so “incessantly.”—1 Thessalonians 5:17; Psalm 18:6; 55:22.

¹⁵ For example, if you are a mother, you are no doubt concerned about the influence peers may have on your children at school or the tests of integrity they may face. (1 Corinthians 15:33) These are valid concerns. But they are also matters for prayer. In fact, why not pray about such things with your children before they leave for school, perhaps after considering the daily text together? Heartfelt, specific prayers can make a powerful impression on young minds. Above all, you invite Jehovah’s blessing when you patiently strive to inculcate his Word into the heart of your children. (Deuteronomy 6:6, 7; Proverbs 22:6) Remember, “the eyes of Jehovah are upon the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their supplication.”—1 Peter 3:12; Philippians 4:6, 7.

¹⁶ Consider the example of Olivia, a mother of six. Her unbelieving husband abandoned the family just after the last child was born, but she readily took on the responsibility to train her children in God’s ways. Olivia’s son, Darren, now 31 and serving as a Christian elder and a pioneer, was about 5 years old at the time. Adding to Olivia’s anxieties, Darren developed a serious health problem that still troubles him. Reflecting on his childhood, Darren writes: “I still recall sitting in my hospital bed eagerly awaiting Mom. She would sit by me and read the Bible to me every day. Then she would sing the

16, 17. (a) What did one son say about the love shown by his mother? (b) How did the mother’s spiritual outlook affect her children?

EXAMPLES FOR REFLECTION

Would you like to consider some additional examples of faithful women mentioned in the Bible? If so, please read the scriptures cited below. As you meditate on the various individuals listed, try to discern principles that you may be able to apply to a greater extent in your life.—Romans 15:4.

- ❖ **Sarah:** Genesis 12:1, 5; 13:18a; 21:9-12; 1 Peter 3:5, 6.
- ❖ **Generous Israelite women:** Exodus 35:5, 22, 25, 26; 36:3-7; Luke 21:1-4.
- ❖ **Deborah:** Judges 4:1-5:31.
- ❖ **Ruth:** Ruth 1:4, 5, 16, 17; 2:2, 3, 11-13; 4:15.
- ❖ **Woman of Shunem:** 2 Kings 4:8-37.
- ❖ **Phoenician woman:** Matthew 15:22-28.
- ❖ **Martha and Mary:** Mark 14:3-9; Luke 10:38-42; John 11:17-29; 12:1-8.
- ❖ **Tabitha:** Acts 9:36-41.
- ❖ **Philip’s four daughters:** Acts 21:9.
- ❖ **Phoebe:** Romans 16:1, 2.

Kingdom song ‘We Thank You, Jehovah.’* To this day, that is my favorite Kingdom melody.”

¹⁷ Olivia’s trust in and love for Jehovah contributed to her success as a single mother. (Proverbs 3:5, 6) Her fine attitude was reflected in the goals she set before her children. “Mom always encouraged us to pursue the goal of the full-time ministry,” says Darren. “As a result, four of my five sisters and I entered the full-time ministry. Yet, Mom never boasted about these things to others. I try hard to imitate her wonderful qualities.” True, not all children grow up to serve God as did Olivia’s. But when a mother does her best to live by Bible principles, she may rest

* Song 212 in *Sing Praises to Jehovah*, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

assured of Jehovah's guidance and loving support.—Psalm 32:8.

¹⁸ Much of God's support is provided by means of the Christian congregation, with its regular spiritual feeding program, its Christian brotherhood, and its spiritually mature "gifts in men." (Ephesians 4:8) Faithful elders work hard to build up all in the congregation, giving special attention to the needs of "orphans and widows in their tribulation." (James 1:27) So stay close to God's people, never isolating yourself.—Proverbs 18:1; Romans 14:7.

The Beauty of Subjection

¹⁹ Jehovah created the woman as a complement of the man. (Genesis 2:18) Hence, the wife's subjection to her husband in no way implies inferiority. Rather, it dignifies a woman, allowing her to use her many gifts and talents in harmony with God's will. Proverbs chapter 31 describes the broad range of activities of a capable wife in ancient Israel. She helped the needy, planted vineyards, and purchased land. Yes, "in her

18. How can we show that we appreciate Jehovah's provision of the Christian congregation?
19. Why does wifely subjection not imply inferiority, and what Bible example supports this?

Do You Recall?

- How did some first-century Christian women prove to be precious in Jehovah's eyes?
- How have many sisters in our time made themselves precious to God?
- In what ways does Jehovah support single mothers and other sisters who are without a husband?
- How can a woman show heartfelt respect for the headship arrangement?

the heart of her owner . . . put trust, and there [was] no gain lacking.”—Verses 11, 16, 20.

²⁰ A modest, God-fearing woman does not ambitiously promote herself or compete with her husband. (Proverbs 16:18) She does not pursue self-fulfillment primarily through secular pursuits but uses her God-given gifts mainly to serve others—her family, fellow Christians, neighbors, and above all, Jehovah. (Galatians 6:10; Titus 2:3-5) Consider the Bible example of Queen Esther. Although physically beautiful, she was modest and submissive. (Esther 2:13, 15) When married, she showed deep respect for her husband, King Ahasuerus, unlike the king's former wife, Vashti. (Esther 1:10-12; 2:16, 17) Esther also respectfully deferred to Mordecai, her older cousin, on appropriate matters—even after she became queen. But she was no weakling! She boldly exposed Haman, a powerful and ruthless man who plotted to annihilate the Jews. Jehovah used Esther mightily for the preservation of his people.—Esther 3:8-4:17; 7:1-10; 9:13.

²¹ Clearly, in the past and today, godly women have shown their exclusive devotion to Jehovah and his worship. Therefore, God-fearing women are precious in Jehovah's eyes. Christian sisters, allow Jehovah through his spirit to fashion you progressively into an ever more desirable "vessel," one "prepared for every good work." (2 Timothy 2:21; Romans 12:2) Regarding such precious worshipers, God's Word says: "Give her of the fruitage of her hands, and let her works praise her even in the gates." (Proverbs 31:31) May that be true of each one of you.

20. (a) How should a Christian woman view her God-given abilities, or gifts? (b) What fine qualities did Esther display, and how was Jehovah able to use her as a result?
21. How may a Christian woman become ever more precious to Jehovah?



TAUGHT BY JEHOVAH FROM MY YOUTH

AS TOLD BY
RICHARD ABRAHAMSON

*"O God, you have taught me from my youth on,
and until now I keep telling about your wonderful works."* Let me explain
why those words of Psalm 71:17 have special meaning to me.

MY MOTHER, Fannie Abrahamson, was contacted in 1924 by the Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called. I was only a year old. As Mother was taught Bible truths, she would run to her neighbors and tell them the things she had learned, and she also taught me and my older brother and sister. Before I could read, she had helped me to memorize many scriptures about the blessings of God's Kingdom.

In the late 1920's, our Bible Student group in La Grande, in the state of Oregon, U.S.A., where I was born and raised, consisted of a few women and children. Though we were isolated, we were visited once or twice a

year by traveling ministers, known as pilgrims. These gave encouraging talks, accompanied us in the house-to-house ministry, and showed a kind interest in children. Among those dear ones were Shield Toutjian, Gene Orrell, and John Booth.

In 1931 no one from our group was able to attend the convention in Columbus, Ohio, where the Bible Students adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses. But companies, as congregations were then called, and isolated groups not represented at the convention met locally that August to adopt a resolution to accept the name. Our little group in La Grande did this. Then, in the 1933 campaign

to distribute the booklet *The Crisis*, I memorized a Bible presentation, and for the first time, I witnessed alone from house to house.

During the 1930's, there was growing opposition to our work. To cope with this, companies were grouped into what were called divisions, which held small assemblies and engaged in preaching missions, known as divisional campaigns, once or twice a year. At these assemblies, we were instructed in methods of preaching and were shown how to deal respectfully with police who interfered. Since Witnesses were frequently taken before a police judge or a regular court, we would rehearse material from an instruction sheet called Order of Trial. This equipped us to deal with opposition.

Early Growth in Bible Truth

I was growing in appreciation of Bible truths and the Bible-based hope of living forever on earth under God's heavenly Kingdom. At that time, baptism was not much emphasized for those who did not entertain the hope of ruling in heaven with Christ. (Revelation 5:10; 14:1, 3) Nevertheless, I was told that if I had determined in my heart to do Jehovah's will, it would be appropriate to get baptized. This I did in August 1933.

When I was 12 years old, my teacher thought I was doing well in public speaking, so she urged Mother to arrange additional training for me. Mother thought this might help me to serve Jehovah better. She therefore paid for my lessons by doing the instructor's laundry for a year. The training proved helpful to my ministry. When I was 14, I was stricken with rheumatic fever, which took me out of action for over a year.

In 1939 a full-time minister named Warren Henschel came to our area.* Spiritually,

he was a big brother to me, taking me out for long days in the field ministry. He soon helped me get started in the vacation pioneer service, a temporary form of full-time ministry. That summer, our group was organized as a company. Warren was appointed company servant, and I was appointed Watchtower Study conductor. When Warren left to serve

*With Mother in
1940, when I began
pioneering*



at Bethel, the international headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brooklyn, New York, I became company servant.

Starting in the Full-Time Ministry

The increased responsibility of serving as company servant further strengthened my desire to enter the regular full-time ministry, which I did at age 17 after completion of my third year of high school. Father did not share our religious beliefs, but he was a good provider and a man of high principles. He wanted me to go to college. He did say, though, that as long as I did not look to him for my room and board, I could do what I chose. So I started to pioneer September 1, 1940.

* Warren was the older brother of Milton Henschel, who served for many years as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

When I left home, my mother had me read Proverbs 3:5, 6: "Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight." Always leaving my life in Jehovah's hands has, indeed, been a big help to me.



With fellow pioneers Joe and Margaret Hart

Soon, I joined Joe and Margaret Hart in the ministry in north-central Washington State. The territory was varied—cattle ranches, sheep ranches, Indian reservations, as well as many small towns and villages. In the spring of 1941, I was assigned as company servant in the congregation in Wenatchee, Washington.

At one of our assemblies in Walla Walla, Washington, I served as the attendant, welcoming those entering the auditorium. I noticed a young brother struggling unsuccessfully to get the loud-speaker system working. So I suggested he take my assignment, and I would take his. When the regional servant, Albert Hoffman, returned and saw that I had

left my assignment, he explained to me with a friendly smile the value of sticking to one's assignment until directed otherwise. I have remembered his counsel ever since.

In August 1941, Jehovah's Witnesses planned a huge convention in St. Louis, Missouri. The Harts put a covering on the back of their pickup truck and installed benches. Nine of us pioneers made the 1,500-mile trip to St. Louis in that truck. It took about a week each way. At the convention, a police estimate put the peak attendance at 115,000. Even though the attendance was probably less than that, it was surely more than the some 65,000 Witnesses in the United States at the time. The convention was spiritually uplifting indeed.

Service at Brooklyn Bethel

After returning to Wenatchee, I got a letter asking me to report to Brooklyn Bethel. Upon my arrival on October 27, 1941, I was taken to the office of Nathan H. Knorr, the factory overseer. He kindly explained to me what Bethel was like and stressed that sticking close to Jehovah was essential to making a success of life there. Then I was taken to the Shipping Department and put to work tying literature cartons for shipping.

On January 8, 1942, Joseph Rutherford, who had been taking the lead among Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, died. Five days later the directors of the Society elected Brother Knorr to succeed him. When W. E. Van Amburgh, the Society's long-time secretary-treasurer, announced this to the Bethel family, he said: "I can remember when C. T. Russell died [in 1916] and was replaced by J. F. Rutherford. The Lord continued to direct and prosper His work. Now, I fully expect the work to move ahead with

Nathan H. Knorr as president because this is the Lord's work, not man's."

In February 1942, it was announced that the "Advanced Course in Theocratic Ministry" would be started. It was designed to train those at Bethel in order to improve their ability to do research on Bible subjects, properly organize their material, and present it effectively. Helped by my earlier training in public speaking, I was able to make rapid progress in the program.

Before long, I was assigned to the Service Department, which has oversight of the ministry of the Witnesses in the United States. Later that year, it was decided to reinstitute a program for ministers to visit companies of Witnesses. In time, these traveling ministers, called servants to the brethren, came to be called circuit overseers. During the summer of 1942, a course at Bethel was arranged to train brothers for this type of ministry, and I was privileged to be among those receiving training. I especially remember that Brother Knorr, one of the instructors, emphasized this point to us: "Don't try to please men. You will wind up pleasing no one. Please Jehovah, and you will please all those who love Jehovah."

The traveling work was implemented in October 1942. Some of us at Bethel shared in it on certain weekends, visiting congregations within 250 miles of New York City. We reviewed the congregation's preaching activity and meeting attendance, held a meeting with those caring for congregation responsibilities, gave a talk or two, and worked in the ministry with local Witnesses.

In 1944, I was among those from the Service Department sent into the traveling work for a six-month period, serving in Delaware, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Later, for a few months, I visited congregations in Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island. Upon returning to

Bethel, I worked part-time in the office with Brother Knorr and his secretary Milton Henschel, where I became acquainted with our work worldwide. I also served part-time in the Treasurer's Office under the oversight of W. E. Van Amburgh and his assistant, Grant Suiter. Then, in 1946, I was made overseer of a number of offices at Bethel.

Big Changes in My Life

While serving congregations in 1945, I became acquainted with Julia Charnauskas in Providence, Rhode Island. By mid-1947 we were considering marriage. I loved Bethel service very much, yet at the time, there was no provision to bring in a marriage mate to serve there. So in January 1948, I left Bethel, and Julia (Julie) and I were married. I obtained part-time work in a supermarket in Providence, and we started our pioneer ministry together.

In September 1949, I was invited to do circuit work in northwest Wisconsin. It was a big change for Julie and me to preach in mostly small towns and rural areas of dairy country. The winters were long and cold, with many weeks of subzero temperatures and lots of snow. We did not have a car. However, someone always provided a ride for us to the next congregation.

Shortly after I began the circuit work, we had a circuit assembly. I remember checking intently to see that all operations were being cared for, which made some a bit nervous. So the district overseer, Nicholas Kovalak, kindly explained that the local brothers were used to caring for things in their own way and that I need not try to manage things to such an extent. That advice has been helpful to me in dealing with many assignments since then.

In 1950, I received a temporary assignment—to oversee the providing of rooming accommodations for delegates to the first of

our many large conventions at Yankee Stadium in New York City. The convention was a thrill from beginning to end, with delegates from 67 countries and a peak attendance of 123,707! After the convention, Julie and I resumed our traveling ministry. We were quite happy in the circuit work. However, we felt we should continue to make ourselves



On our wedding day in January 1948

available. So each year, we filed applications both for Bethel and for missionary service. In 1952 we were delighted to receive an invitation to attend the 20th class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, where we received training for missionary work.

Service Abroad

Upon our graduation in 1953, we were assigned to Britain, where I served in the district work in the south of England. After less than a year in this activity, which Julie and I enjoyed immensely, we were surprised by the



In 1953, with fellow Gilead classmates. From left to right: Don and Virginia Ward, Geertruida Stegenga, Julie, and me



*With Frederick W. Franz and Nathan H. Knorr
in Copenhagen, Denmark, 1961*

assignment we received to move to Denmark. There was a need in Denmark for new oversight of the branch office. Since I was nearby and had received training for such work in Brooklyn, I was sent to help. We took a ferry to the Netherlands, and from there we caught a train to Copenhagen, Denmark. We arrived on August 9, 1954.

One of the problems to be dealt with was that a few in responsible positions failed to accept direction from headquarters in Brooklyn. Also, three of the four who were translating our publications into Danish left Bethel and eventually ceased associating with Jehovah's Witnesses. But Jehovah answered our prayers. Two pioneers, Jørgen and Anna Larsen, who had done some part-time

translation work, made themselves available full-time. The translation of our magazines into Danish thus continued without missing an issue. The Larsens are still at Bethel in Denmark, and Jørgen is coordinator of the Branch Committee.

A real source of encouragement in those early years were regular visits by Brother Knorr. He would take time to sit and talk, relating experiences that gave insight into how to deal with problems. During a visit in 1955, it was decided that we should build a new branch with printing facilities so that we could produce magazines for Denmark. Property was obtained in a northern suburb of Copenhagen, and by the summer of 1957, we moved into a newly constructed building. Harry Johnson, who with his wife, Karin, had recently arrived in Denmark after graduating from the 26th class of Gilead, helped get our printery set up and running.

We improved our organization for holding large conventions in Denmark, and the experience I had acquired while working with conventions in the United States proved helpful. In 1961 our large international convention in Copenhagen hosted delegates from over 30 countries. Peak attendance was 33,513. In 1969, we hosted what proved to be the largest of all the conventions held in Scandinavia, with a peak attendance of 42,073!

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Can You Believe in a Paradise Earth?

'Handle God's Word Aright'

Through Faith, Barak Routed
a Mighty Army

In 1963, I was invited to attend the 38th class of Gilead. This was an adjusted ten-month course designed in particular for training branch personnel. It was a pleasure to be with the Brooklyn Bethel family again and to benefit from the experience of those who had been working for many years taking care of headquarters operations.

After this training course, I returned to Denmark to continue caring for responsibilities there. In addition, I had the privilege of serving as a zone overseer, visiting branches in western and northern Europe to give personnel there encouragement and help them to fulfill their responsibilities. More recently I have done this work in West Africa and the Caribbean.

In the late 1970's, the brothers in Denmark began looking for a location where a larger facility could be built for increasing translation and printing activity. A fine piece of property was located about 40 miles west of Copenhagen. Along with others, I worked with the planning and designing of this new facility, and Julie and I looked forward to living with the Bethel family in its fine new home. However, things did not turn out that way.

Back to Brooklyn

In November 1980, Julie and I were invited to serve at Bethel in Brooklyn, where we arrived in early January 1981. We were then in our late 50's, and after having served nearly half of our lives with our dear brothers and sisters in Denmark, it was not easy for us to return to the United States. Yet, we did not dwell on where we preferred to be but tried to focus on our current assignments and whatever challenges they posed.

We arrived in Brooklyn and settled in. Julie was assigned to the accounting office, doing work similar to what she had done in Den-

mark. I was assigned to the Writing Department to help with scheduling the processing of our publications. The early 1980's was a time of change in our operations in Brooklyn, as we moved from the use of typewriters and typesetting in hot lead to computer processing and offset printing. I knew nothing about computers but had some understanding of



With Julie today

organizational procedures and working with people.

Shortly thereafter, there was a need to strengthen the organization of the Art Department as we moved into full-color offset printing and the use of color illustrations and photographs. Although I had no experience as an artist, I could help with organizing. So I had the privilege of overseeing that department for nine years.

In 1992, I was assigned to assist the Publishing Committee of the Governing Body and was transferred to the Treasurer's Office. Here I continue to serve in connection with the financial activities of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Service From My Youth On

From my early youth and during 70 years of dedicated service, Jehovah has patiently taught me by means of his Word, the Bible, and helpful brothers in his marvelous organization. I have enjoyed more than 63 years in the full-time ministry, over 55 of those years with my loyal wife, Julie. Truly, I feel richly blessed by Jehovah.

Back in 1940 when I left home to enter the pioneer service, my father made fun of my decision and said: "Son, when you leave home to do this, don't think that you can come running back to me for any help." Through the years, I never had to do that. Jehovah has generously provided for my needs, often by means of helpful fellow Christians. Later, my father came to respect our work, and he even made some progress in learning Bible truth before he died in 1972. Mother, who entertained the hope of heavenly life, continued to serve Jehovah faithfully until her death in 1985, at 102 years of age.

Although problems do arise in the full-time ministry, Julie and I have never considered leaving our assignment. Jehovah has always sustained us in this resolve. Even when my parents were getting old and needed help, my sister, Victoria Marlin, stepped in and kindly cared for them. We are deeply grateful for her loving contribution, which has helped us to continue in the full-time ministry.

Julie has loyally supported me in all our assignments, viewing this as part of her own dedication to Jehovah. And even though I am now 80 years of age and experiencing some health problems, I feel richly blessed by Jehovah. I find much encouragement from the psalmist who after proclaiming that God had taught him from his youth on, pleaded, 'Even until old age, O God, do not leave me, until I may tell about your mightiness to those to come.'—Psalm 71:17, 18.

Cultivate a Giving Spirit

NO ONE is born with a giving spirit. The natural inclination of an infant is to satisfy its own wants and needs, oblivious of the interests of even its caregivers. In time, though, the child learns that the world does not revolve around him. Others must be considered, and he must learn not only to take but also to give and share. A giving spirit needs to be cultivated.

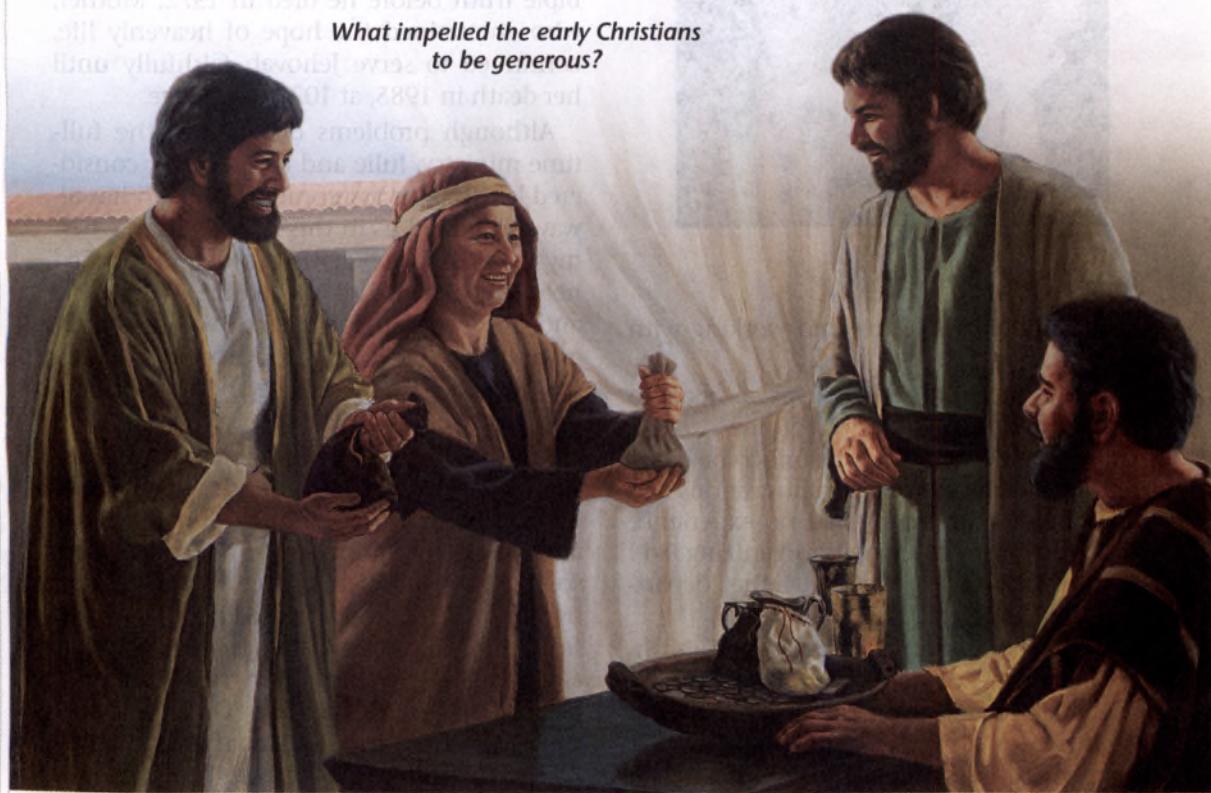
Not all individuals who give—even generously—have a giving spirit. Some may donate to a cause in order to pro-

mote their own interests. Others may contribute so as to receive the plaudits of men. However, giving practiced by genuine Christians is different. What, then, are the characteristics of the giving that is encouraged in God's Word? A brief consideration of the giving practiced by first-century Christians will answer that question.

Examples of Christian Giving

Christian giving, as described in the Bible, was generally "the sharing of things

What impelled the early Christians to be generous?



with others" who had a real need. (Hebrews 13:16; Romans 15:26) It was not to be done under compulsion. The apostle Paul wrote: "Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Giving was also not to be done for the purpose of making an outward show. Ananias and Sapphira made that pretense and paid dearly for it.—Acts 5:1-10.

The need for giving came to the fore when many Jews and proselytes from far-away places gathered in Jerusalem for the festival of Pentecost in 33 C.E. It was there that Jesus' followers became "filled with holy spirit and started to speak with different tongues." A large crowd gathered around them and heard Peter's stirring talk about Jesus Christ. Later, the people saw how Peter and John healed a lame man at the temple door, and they heard Peter speak once more about Jesus and the need for repentance. Thousands repented and were baptized as followers of Christ.—Acts, chapters 2 and 3.

The new converts wanted to remain in Jerusalem and receive more instruction from Jesus' apostles. But how could the apostles care for the needs of all those visitors? The Bible account tells us: "All those who were possessors of fields or houses would sell them and bring the values of the things sold and they would deposit them at the feet of the apostles. In turn distribution would be made to each one, just as he would have the need." (Acts 4:33-35) Truly, the newly formed Jerusalem congregation had a giving spirit!

Later, other congregations demonstrated the same giving spirit. For example, the Macedonian Christians, although poor themselves, went beyond their actual ability in making contributions for their needy brothers in Judea. (Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:1-7) The Philippian congregation was out-

standing in its support of Paul's ministry. (Philippians 4:15, 16) The Jerusalem congregation itself daily distributed food to needy widows, and the apostles appointed seven qualified men to see that no deserving widows were overlooked.—Acts 6:1-6.

The early Christian congregations were quick to respond even in anticipation of hard times. For example, when the prophet Agabus foretold the coming of a great famine, the disciples in the congregation of Syrian Antioch "determined, each of them according as anyone could afford it, to send a relief ministration to the brothers dwelling in Judea." (Acts 11:28, 29) What a fine spirit they showed in anticipating the needs of others!

What impelled the early Christians to be so generous and loving? Indeed, how does one acquire a giving spirit? We can learn much from briefly considering the example of King David.

David's Generous Support of True Worship

For almost 500 years, the ark of the covenant—a sacred chest that represented Jehovah's presence—had no permanent resting place. It was kept in a tent, or tabernacle, which was moved from place to place during Israel's wandering in the wilderness and then on into the Promised Land. King David greatly desired to take the ark from the tent in which it was kept and build a suitable house for Jehovah that would contain the sacred ark. Speaking to the prophet Nathan, David said: "Here I am dwelling in a house of cedars, but the ark of the covenant of Jehovah is under tent cloths."—1 Chronicles 17:1.

David, though, had been a man of war. So Jehovah decreed that it was his son Solomon who, during a peaceful reign, would build the temple to house the ark of the covenant. (1 Chronicles 22:7-10) This, however, did not stifle David's giving spirit. Organizing a great

task force, he set out to provide the materials that would be used in the temple's construction. He later told Solomon: "I have prepared for Jehovah's house a hundred thousand talents of gold and a million talents of silver, and the copper and the iron there is no means of weighing because they have come to be in such quantity; and timbers and stones I have prepared." (1 Chronicles 22:14) Not content with that, out of his personal fortune, David contributed gold and silver with a present-day value of more than \$1,200,000,000. Moreover, the princes con-

tributed liberally as well. (1 Chronicles 29:3-9) Certainly, David exhibited a generous, giving spirit!

What motivated David to give so generously? He appreciated that all he had acquired and accomplished was the result of Jehovah's blessing. He acknowledged in prayer: "O Jehovah our God, all this abundance that we have prepared to build for you a house for your holy name, from your hand it is, and to you it all belongs. And I well know, O my God, that you are an examiner of the heart,

Ways in Which Some Choose to Give

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

Many set aside, or budget, an amount that they place in the contribution boxes labeled "Contributions for the Worldwide Work—Matthew 24:14."

Each month, congregations forward these amounts to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves their respective countries. Voluntary donations of money may also be sent directly to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, c/o Office of the Secretary and Treasurer, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, New York 11201-2483, or to the branch office that serves your country. Checks should be made payable to "Watch Tower." Jewelry or other valuables may be

donated as well. A brief letter stating that such is an outright gift should accompany these contributions.

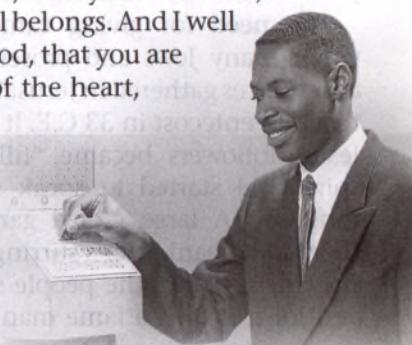
CONDITIONAL-DONATION ARRANGEMENT

Money may be donated under a special arrangement in which, should the donor request it, the donation may be returned to him. For more information, please contact the Office of the Secretary and Treasurer at the address noted above.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to outright gifts of money and conditional donations of money, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These include:

Insurance: The Watch Tower Society may be named as the



beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts may be placed in trust for or made payable on death to the Watch Tower Society, in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds may be donated to the Watch Tower Society as an outright gift.

Real Estate: Salable real estate may be donated either by making an outright gift or, in the case of residential property, by reserving a life estate to

and that it is in rectitude that you take pleasure. I, for my part, in the uprightness of my heart have voluntarily offered all these things, and now your people who are on hand here I have enjoyed seeing make offerings voluntarily to you." (1 Chronicles 29:16, 17) David treasured his relationship with Jehovah. He recognized the need to serve God "with a complete heart and with a delightful soul," and he found joy in doing so. (1 Chronicles 28:9) These same qualities also moved the early Christians to display a giving spirit.

the donor, who can continue to live therein during his or her lifetime. Contact the branch office in your country before deeding any real estate.

Gift Annuity: A gift annuity is an arrangement whereby one transfers money or securities to the Watch Tower Society. In exchange, the donor, or someone designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction the year the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to the Watch Tower Society by means of a legally executed will, or the Watch Tower Society may be named as beneficiary of a trust agreement. A trust benefiting a religious organization may

provide certain tax advantages.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some form of charitable planning, a brochure has been prepared in English and Spanish entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide*. The brochure was written in response to the many inquiries received regarding gifts, wills, and trusts. It also contains additional useful information on estate, financial, and tax planning. It informs individuals of a variety of ways that gifts may be made either now or through a bequest at death. After reading the brochure

Jehovah —The Greatest Giver

It is in Jehovah that we find the best example of giving. So loving and caring is he that "he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous." (Matthew 5:45) To all humankind he gives "life and breath and all things." (Acts 17:25) Indeed, as the disciple James points out, "every good gift and every perfect present is from above, for it comes down from the Father of the celestial lights."—James 1:17.

and conferring with their own legal or tax advisers and the Charitable Planning Office, many have been able to assist Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide and, at the same time, maximize their tax benefits of doing so. This brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy directly from the Charitable Planning Office.

For more information, you may contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below or at the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves your country.

Charitable Planning Office
Watch Tower Bible and Tract
Society of Pennsylvania
100 Watchtower Drive,
Patterson, New York 12563-
9204
Telephone: (845) 306-0707

Jehovah's greatest gift to us is his sending his "only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) No one can claim to deserve such a gift, "for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23, 24; 1 John 4:9, 10) Christ's ransom is the basis and channel for God's "indescribable free gift," that is, "the surpassing undeserved kindness of God." (2 Corinthians 9:14, 15) Appreciative of God's gift, Paul made it his life's work "to bear thorough witness to the good news of the undeserved kindness of God." (Acts 20:24) He recognized that it was God's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Timothy 2:4.

Today, this is being accomplished by a great preaching and teaching work that has now expanded to 234 lands earth wide. Jesus foretold this expansion when he said: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Yes, "in all the nations the good news has to be preached first." (Mark 13:10) Last year over six million proclaimers of the good news devoted 1,202,381,302 hours to this work and conducted over 5,300,000 Bible studies. With lives at stake, this instruction is most vital.—Romans 10:13-15; 1 Corinthians 1:21.

Millions of publications—including Bibles, books, and brochures—are printed each year to assist those who hunger for Bible truth. Additionally, well over a billion copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines are produced. As people respond to the good news, more and more Kingdom Halls and Assembly Halls of Jehovah's Witnesses are constructed, which serve as centers of Bible instruction. Circuit assemblies and special assembly days, as well as district conven-

tions, are arranged for each year. The training of missionaries, traveling overseers, elders, and ministerial servants is also an ongoing process. We are thankful to Jehovah for making all these provisions available through "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) How we love to express our gratitude to Him!

Showing Gratitude to Jehovah

As with the temple construction and the meeting of the needs of the early Christian congregations, financing for all these matters comes entirely from voluntary contributions. It must be remembered, however, that no one can enrich Jehovah, the Owner of all things. (1 Chronicles 29:14; Haggai 2:8) Contributions, then, are an evidence of our love for Jehovah and of our desire to advance true worship. These gestures of generosity, says Paul, produce "an expression of thanks to God." (2 Corinthians 9:8-13) Jehovah encourages such giving because it shows that we have the right spirit and a good heart toward him. Those who are generous and rely on Jehovah will be blessed by him and will prosper spiritually. (Deuteronomy 11:13-15; Proverbs 3:9, 10; 11:25) Jesus assured us that happiness would result, saying: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

Christians who have a giving spirit do not just wait until times of need. Rather, they look for opportunities to "work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to [them] in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) Encouraging godly generosity, Paul wrote: "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." (Hebrews 13:16) Using our assets—time, strength, finances—to help others and to promote pure worship is very pleasing to Jehovah God. Truly, he loves a giving spirit.

Questions From Readers

Why did Elisha ask for “two parts” of Elijah’s spirit?

Just before Elijah finished his assignment as a prophet in Israel, the younger prophet Elisha requested from him: “Please, that two parts in your spirit may come to me.” (2 Kings 2:9) Spiritually speaking, Elisha was evidently claiming a double portion such as that given to a firstborn son. (Deuteronomy 21:17) A brief consideration of the account will make this clear and will help us to draw lessons from what happened.

In harmony with Jehovah’s direction, the prophet Elijah had anointed Elisha as his successor. (1 Kings 19:19-21) For some six years, Elisha served as Elijah’s faithful attendant and was determined to do this to the end. Even on Elijah’s last day as a prophet in Israel, Elisha stuck to his mentor. Although Elijah urged Elisha to stop following him, the younger prophet stated three times: “I will not leave you.” (2 Kings 2:2, 4, 6; 3:11) Indeed, Elisha viewed the older prophet as his spiritual father.—2 Kings 2:12.

However, Elisha was not the only spiritual son of Elijah. Elijah and Elisha associated with a group of men known as “the sons of the prophets.” (2 Kings 2:3) The account in Second Kings indicates that these “sons” also felt a close bond with their spiritual father, Elijah. (2 Kings 2:3, 5, 7, 15-17) Yet, as the anointed successor, Elisha was the foremost among Elijah’s spiritual sons—he was like the firstborn. In ancient Israel, a literal firstborn son received two parts of his father’s inheritance, whereas the other sons each received one part. Hence, Elisha asked for two parts of Elijah’s spiritual inheritance.

Why did Elisha make this request at that particular time? Because he

was about to take on a weighty task—that of succeeding Elijah as prophet in Israel. Elisha realized that in order to fulfill the responsibilities related to this daunting assignment, he needed spiritual power far beyond his own capabilities, power that only Jehovah could provide. He needed to be as fearless as Elijah had been. (2 Kings 1:3, 4, 15, 16) Thus, he asked for two parts of Elijah’s spirit, a spirit of courage and of being “absolutely jealous for Jehovah”—desirable qualities produced by God’s spirit. (1 Kings 19:10, 14) How did Elijah respond?

Elijah knew that Elisha had asked for something that was not his but only God’s to give. So Elijah modestly replied: “You have asked a difficult thing. If you see me when taken from you, it will happen to you that way.” (2 Kings 2:10) And, indeed, Jehovah allowed Elisha to see Elijah ascend in a windstorm. (2 Kings 2:11, 12) Elisha’s request was granted. Jehovah provided him with the spirit he needed to take on his new task and to face coming trials.

Today, anointed Christians (sometimes called the Elisha class) and God’s servants in general can draw much encouragement from this Bible account. At times, we may feel overwhelmed and inadequate in the face of a new assignment, or we may be losing some of our courage to continue with our Kingdom-preaching work as we face increasing indifference or opposition in our territory. Yet, if we beg Jehovah for his support, he will give us holy spirit as we need it to cope with challenges and changing circumstances. (Luke 11:13; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 4:13) Yes, just as Jehovah strengthened Elisha for his weightier responsibilities, he will help all of us, young and old, to accomplish our ministry. —2 Timothy 4:5.



"I Found Friendship, Love, and Attention"

BY THIS all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) True to Jesus' words, love became the trademark of the early Christian brotherhood. Tertullian, writing more than a hundred years after Christ's death, quoted observers as saying: 'See how they love one another and how they are even ready to die for one another.'

Can that kind of love still be found in the world? Yes. Consider, for example, a letter that was received by the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Brazil. The letter writer, a woman named Marília, wrote:

"While living in Villa Mercedes, Argentina, my mother, who is one of Jehovah's Witnesses, developed osteoarthritis, leaving her paralyzed from the waist down. For the first eight months of her illness, it was the Witnesses in Villa Mercedes who lovingly and considerately looked after her.

They took care of everything, cleaning her home and preparing her meals. Even while in the hospital, Mother always had someone with her, day and night.

Mother and I have since returned to Brazil, where she is still recovering from her illness. The Witnesses where we now live are doing everything they can to aid Mother's recovery."

Marília concludes her letter: "I confess that I myself am not a Witness, but I found friendship, love, and attention among the Witnesses."

Yes, there are still people who act with true Christian love. In doing so, they demonstrate the power that Jesus' teachings can have on our lives.