

JUNE 15, 1994

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

IN THIS ISSUE

8 Your Dead Loved Ones

—Will You See Them Again?

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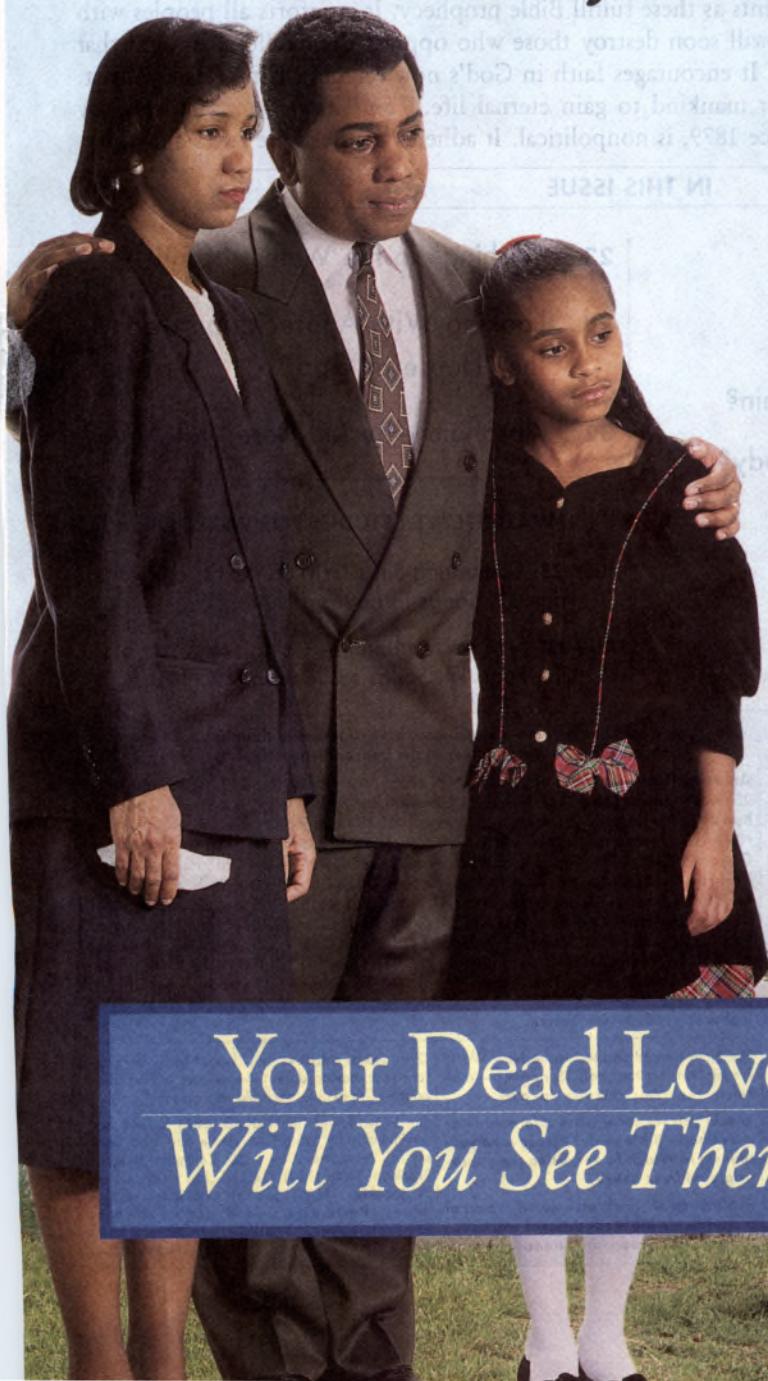
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THE WATCHTOWER®

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June 15, 1994

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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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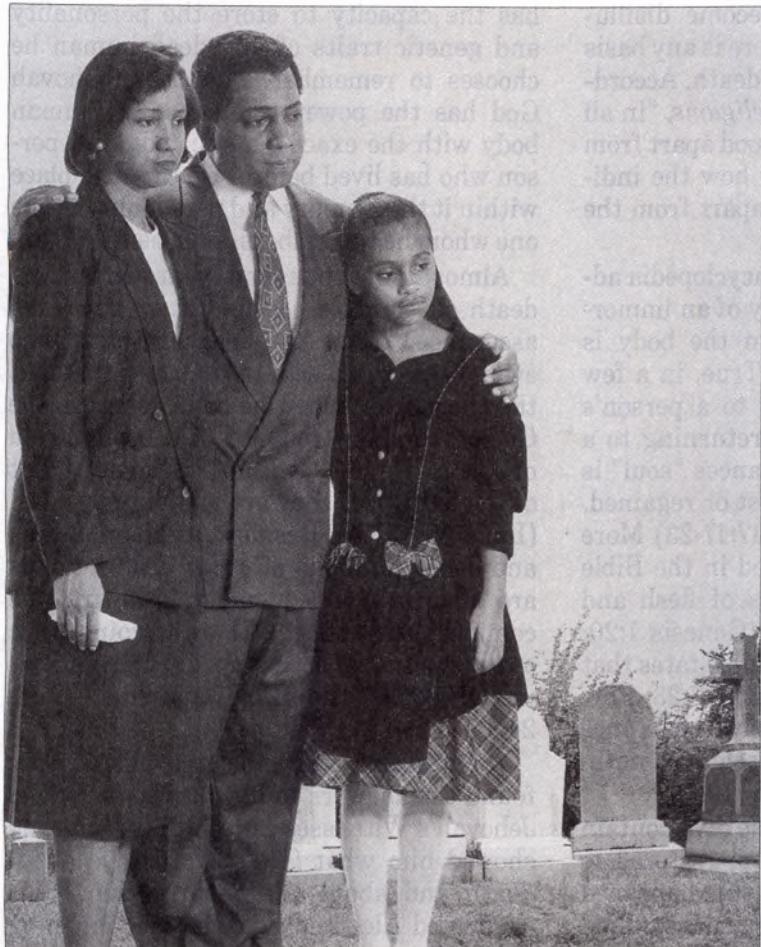
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Your Dead Loved Ones *Where Are They?*



A LEC was devastated. Within a week, he lost two of his friends. One of them, Nevil, died from a gunshot wound. The other, Tony, was killed in an automobile accident. Questions that had not bothered him before now plagued the 14-year-old South African boy. 'Why do

people have to die? And what happens after death?' he wondered.

On his way to Nevil's funeral, Alec sincerely hoped he would get answers to these questions. "But," he recalls, "the priest just read from a book and said that Nevil had gone to heaven. Then, at the graveside, he said we await the resurrection. I was confused. If Nevil was in heaven, how could he be awaiting a resurrection?"

Later that same day, Alec attended Tony's funeral. The ritualistic service was held in a language that he could not understand. Yet, the hysterical behavior of some mourners convinced Alec that no comfort was given. "That night," he explains, "I was terribly upset. I felt

helpless and lost. No one could give satisfactory answers to my questions. For the first time in my life, I really wondered whether there is a God."

Each year millions, like Alec, lose loved ones in death. "Worldwide," explains the 1992 *Britannica Book of the Year*, "there

were 50,418,000 deaths in 1991." And how many millions more have since died? Imagine the rivers of tears shed by the bereaved survivors! Adding to their sorrow is the confusion caused by conflicting views about death.

Thus many, like Alec, become disillusioned and doubt whether there is any basis for hope in a future life after death. According to the *Encyclopedia of Religions*, "in all ages, thoughtful men have stood apart from the multitude, . . . doubting how the individual soul or life can exist apart from the individual brain and body."

Interestingly, the above encyclopedia admits that the religious theory of an immortal soul existing apart from the body is not supported in the Bible. True, in a few places, the Bible does refer to a person's "soul" as leaving and even returning to a dead body, but in these instances "soul" is used in the sense of "life," lost or regained. (Genesis 35:16-19; 1 Kings 17:17-23) More often, the word "soul" is used in the Bible to describe visible creatures of flesh and blood, yes, living creatures. (Genesis 1:20; 2:7) Hence, the Bible repeatedly states that souls die. (Ezekiel 18:4, 20; Acts 3:23; Revelation 16:3) God's Word says that once souls are dead, they "are conscious of nothing at all."—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10.

On the other hand, the Bible does contain accounts of dead people being restored to life. In the case of Lazarus, this happened after he had been dead for four days. (John 11:39, 43, 44) What, though, will happen to people who died hundreds or thousands of years ago? Does their prospect for future life require that God resurrect the selfsame body they had when they died?

No. Such a thought is inconsistent with what happens to the atoms that make up a dead body. In time, some of these same atoms are absorbed by vegetation that, in

turn, is consumed by other creatures and becomes part of their bodies.

Does this mean that there is no hope for people long dead? No. The Creator of our vast universe has an awesome, unlimited memory. Within his perfect memory, he has the capacity to store the personality and genetic traits of any dead human he chooses to remember. Moreover, Jehovah God has the power to recreate a human body with the exact genetic code of a person who has lived before. He can also place within it the memory and personality of the one whom he remembers, such as Abraham.

Almost two thousand years after the death of Abraham, Jesus Christ gave this assurance: "That the dead are raised up even Moses disclosed, in the account about the thornbush, when he calls Jehovah 'the God of Abraham and God of Isaac and God of Jacob.' He is a God, not of the dead, but of the living, for they are all living to him." (Luke 20:37, 38) Besides Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, millions of other dead humans are alive in God's memory, awaiting the coming resurrection. "There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous," the Bible confirms.—Acts 24:15.

A few weeks after his bereavement, Alec found the answers to his questions. One of Jehovah's Witnesses called at his home and showed him what God's Word says about death and about the resurrection. This comforted Alec and brought new meaning to his life.

Would you too like to learn more about the Bible-based hope of the resurrection? For example, will most resurrections take place in heaven or on earth? And what must a person do to gain God's approval and experience the fulfillment of His wonderful promise that people may be reunited with dead loved ones?

Your Dead Loved Ones Will You See Them Again?

JOHN was only nine when his mother died. Later, he recalled what happened at the funeral parlor: "I drew a picture for her and wrote a little note on it asking her to wait in heaven for all of us. I gave it to Daddy to put in the coffin with her, and even though she was dead, I like to think that she got that last message from me." —*How It Feels When a Parent Dies*, by Jill Krementz.

There can be no doubt that John dearly loved his mother. After describing her good qualities, he said: "Maybe it's just that I don't want to recall the bad things, but I can't think of anything bad about her. She was the prettiest lady I've ever seen in my whole life."

Like John, many have fond memories of their beloved dead and admit to the emotional need to see them again. Edith, whose 26-year-old son died of cancer, said: "I have the need to believe that my son exists somewhere but I do not know where. Will I see him again? I do not know but hope I will."

Certainly, man's loving Creator is not unfeeling about this normal human desire. That is why he has promised that the time will come when millions will be reunited with their dead loved ones. God's Word contains numerous references to this promise of a coming resurrection of the dead.—Isaiah 26:19; Daniel 12:2, 13; Hosea 13:14; John 5:28, 29; Revelation 20:12, 13.

Who Are Resurrected to Heaven?

Let us consider John's hope that his beloved mother is waiting for him in heaven.

Many churchgoers have this hope or belief. In an endeavor to support such views, clergymen and some social workers misapply texts from the Bible.

For example, an expert in helping the bereaved, Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, said in her book *On Children and Death*: "Dying means only that we discard our body the way we may cast aside an old worn-out coat, or step from one room into another. In Ecclesiastes, 12:7, we read: 'Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it.' Jesus said: 'I go to prepare a place for you that where I am there you may be also.' And to the thief on the cross: 'Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.'"

Do the above texts really mean that our dead loved ones are now alive and waiting for us in heaven? Let us consider the texts more carefully, starting with Ecclesiastes 12:7. Obviously, the wise man who wrote those words did not intend to contradict what he had already stated in the same Bible book: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5) He was discussing the death of mankind in general. Is it reasonable to believe that all avowed atheists and hardened criminals return to God upon their death? Hardly. In fact, that cannot be said of any of us, regardless of whether we consider ourselves good or bad. Since none of us have been with God in heaven, how can it be said that we *return* to him?

What, then, did the Bible writer mean by

saying that upon death, 'the spirit returns to the true God'? In using the Hebrew word translated "spirit," he was not referring to something unique that distinguishes one human from another. Rather, at Ecclesiastes 3:19, the same inspired Bible writer explains that man and animals "all have but one spirit." Evidently he meant that "spirit" is the life force in the cells that make up the physical bodies of man and animals. We did not receive this spirit directly from God. It was passed on to us by our human parents when we were conceived and later born. Furthermore, this spirit does not literally travel through space and return to God upon death. The expression, 'the spirit returns to the true God,' is a figure of speech meaning that the future life prospects of a dead person now rest with God. It is up to him to decide whom he will remember and eventually resurrect. Note for yourself how clearly the Bible shows this at Psalm 104:29, 30.

Jehovah God has purposed that a limited number of faithful followers of Christ, totaling only 144,000, will be resurrected to heavenly life as spirit sons of God. (Revelation 14:1, 3) These form a heavenly government with Christ for the blessing of mankind on earth.

The first ones to learn about this were Jesus' faithful apostles, to whom he said: "In the house of my Father there are many abodes. Otherwise, I would have told you, because I am going my way to prepare a place for you. Also, if I go my way and prepare a place for you, I am coming again and will receive you home to myself, that where I am you also may be." (John 14:2, 3) Those apostles and other early Christians died and had to wait unconscious in death until Jesus' coming to reward them with a heavenly resurrection. That is why we read that the first Christian martyr, Stephen, "fell

asleep in death."—Acts 7:60; 1 Thessalonians 4:13.

Resurrection to Life on Earth

But what about Jesus' promise to the criminal who died alongside him? Like many Jews of that time, this man believed that God would send a Messiah who would set up a kingdom and restore peace and security to the Jewish nation on earth. (Compare 1 Kings 4:20-25 with Luke 19:11; 24:21 and Acts 1:6.) Moreover, the evildoer expressed faith that Jesus was the very One chosen by God to be the King. Yet, at that moment, Jesus' imminent death as a condemned man made this seem unlikely. That is why Jesus reassured the criminal by introducing His promise with these words: "*Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise.*"—Luke 23:42, 43.

Bible translations that insert a comma before the word "today" create a problem for people who want to understand Jesus' words. Jesus did not go to any paradise that very same day. Rather, he lay unconscious in death for three days until God resurrected him. Even after Jesus' resurrection and ascension to heaven, he had to wait at his Father's right hand until the time came for him to rule as King over mankind. (Hebrews 10:12, 13) Soon, Jesus' Kingdom rule will bring relief to mankind and transform the entire earth into a paradise. (Luke 21: 10, 11, 25-31) Then he will fulfill his promise to that criminal by resurrecting him to life on earth. And Jesus will be with the man in the sense that He will help with all the man's needs, including the need to bring his life-style into harmony with God's righteous laws.

Resurrection of Many

As with that repentant criminal, the resurrection of most humans will take place

here on earth. This is in harmony with God's purpose in creating man. The first man and woman were placed in a paradise garden and told to subdue the earth.

If they had stayed obedient to God, they would never have grown old and died. In God's due time, the whole earth would have been subdued, made a global paradise by Adam and his perfect descendants.—Genesis 1:28; 2:8, 9.

However, because Adam and Eve willfully sinned, they brought death upon themselves and their future offspring. (Genesis 2:16, 17; 3:17-19) That is why the Bible states: "Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12.

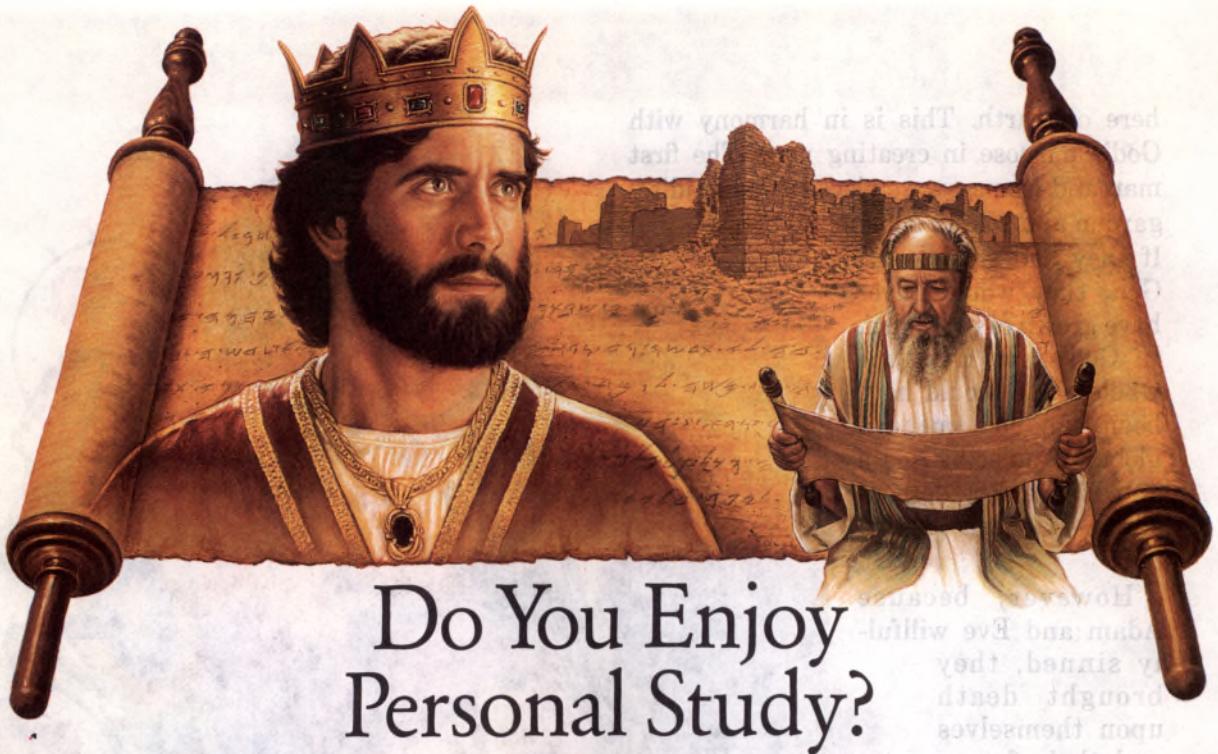
There has been only one human who was born free from inherited sin. That was the perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ, whose life was transferred from heaven to the womb of a Jewish virgin, Mary. Jesus remained sinless and did not deserve to be put to death. Therefore, his death has ransoming value in behalf of "the sin of the world." (John 1:29; Matthew 20:28) That is why Jesus could say: "I am the resurrection and the life. He that exercises faith in me, even though he dies, will come to life."—John 11:25.

So, yes, you can entertain the prospect of being reunited with your beloved dead, but this requires that you exercise faith in Je-



sus as your Ransomer and obey him as God's appointed King. Soon God's Kingdom will sweep away all badness from this earth. All humans who refuse to submit to its rule will be destroyed. However, subjects of God's Kingdom will survive and will busy themselves in the work of transforming this earth into a paradise.—Psalm 37:10, 11; Revelation 21:3-5.

Then the thrilling time will arrive for the resurrection to start. Will you be on hand to welcome back the dead? It all depends on what you do now. Wonderful blessings await all who now submit to the rulership of Jehovah's Kingdom by his Son, Jesus Christ.



Do You Enjoy Personal Study?

ANY sincere servant of God would be delighted to devote a good amount of time to personal Bible study. (Psalm 1:1, 2) Yet, feeling great demands on their time and strength, many find it hard to spend as much time and energy on personal study as they would like.

However, in order to carry on as active servants of God, all need to have their joy and strength renewed from day to day by finding new or deeper aspects of the truth of God's Word. The Bible truths that deeply moved you years ago may not be moving you as much now. Hence, it is good, even vital, that we make a conscious and constant effort to gain fresh insight into the truth so as to keep ourselves spiritually stimulated.

How did ancient men of faith make themselves spiritually strong through personal study of God's Word? How do some of the modern-day servants of Jehovah make their study more enjoyable as well as fruit-

ful? How have they been rewarded for their efforts?

They Renewed Their Strength Through Personal Study

King Josiah of Judah undertook his campaign against idolatry with even greater zeal after having ‘the very book of Jehovah's law by the hand of Moses’ read to him. No doubt that was not the first time that he had considered this portion of the Word of God; but hearing the message directly from the original manuscript spurred him on in his battle for pure worship.—2 Chronicles 34:14-19.

The prophet Daniel discerned ‘the number of the years for fulfilling the devastations of Jerusalem’ and its certainty not just from the book of Jeremiah but also from “the books.” These most likely included such books as Leviticus (26:34, 35), Isaiah (44:26-28), Hosea (14:4-7), and Amos (9:13-15). What he confirmed through his

diligent study of the Bible books led this devout man to seek God in fervent prayer. His earnest petition was answered with further revelation and reassurance with regard to the city of Jerusalem as well as his people.—Daniel, chapter 9.

Josiah, who did “what was right in Jehovah’s eyes,” and Daniel, who was “someone very desirable” in the sight of God, were not basically different from us today. (2 Kings 22:2; Daniel 9:23) Their personal efforts in the way of highly motivated study of the Scriptures available at the time led them to greater spirituality and helped them enjoy stronger ties with God. The same can be said of many other ancient servants of Jehovah, such as Jephthah, a psalmist of the house of Asaph, Nehemiah, and Stephen. All of these gave evidence of careful personal study of the portion of the Bible that was available in their time.—Judges 11:14-27; Psalms 79, 80; Nehemiah 1:8-10; 8:9-12; 13:29-31; Acts 6:15-7:58.

Let the Ministry Be an Incentive

Most servants of Jehovah today who have served him for many years have a schedule for personal Bible study. They have found this essential in order to stay awake and fully meet their Christian responsibilities. Even so, many of them admit that it is not always easy to balance the use of their time and energy between study and other matters that should not be neglected.

Still, staying spiritually alert through diligent personal study is essential in dealing with the needs in the Christian ministry at this advanced stage of worldwide Kingdom-preaching work. Those who are thrilled by fresh and deeper insights into the Word of God can meet the challenge of touching hungering hearts. This is true whether one is assigned where big catches

in the way of spiritual fishing can be expected or one is persevering in well-worked territories where general indifference prevails.

Regularly Feed on God’s Word

What others are doing may give you ideas on how you could enjoy your study routine more or how you and your family could make more rewarding use of study time. Among the things that a servant of God will not want to miss is reading God’s Word itself on a regular basis. Many have made it a goal to read a minimum of three to four chapters of the Bible each week. Do you want to read the entire Bible in one year? Then you will be happy to spend more time reading it, perhaps half an hour a day.

Have you read through the Bible more than once? Why not set a new goal next time? For a change, one Christian woman read the Bible books according to the order in which they were written. She captured many details, based on chronological background, that she had missed before. Another Christian woman has read the Bible from cover to cover five times over the past five years, each time from a different perspective. The first time, she read it straight through. During the second reading, she summarized the content of each chapter in one or two lines in a notebook. From the third year on, she switched to a large-size reference edition, first selectively checking cross-references in the margin and then paying closer attention to the footnotes as well as to the appendix information. The fifth time, she used Bible maps to increase understanding from the geographical aspect. She says: “For me, Bible reading became as enjoyable as having a meal.”

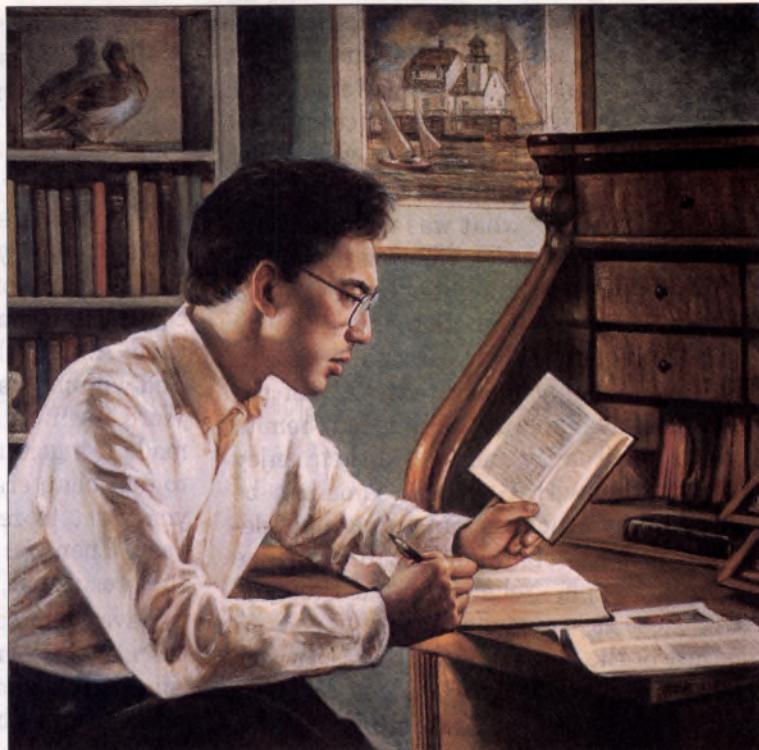
Some eager students of the Bible have found it beneficial to have a copy of the

Bible used only for personal study, noting briefly in its margins interesting comments, thought-provoking illustrations, or the page numbers of other publications to which they can refer later. One full-time minister deems it a pleasure at the end of each month to write in her study copy new points that she has learned during the month. "Looking forward to these valued hours of mine," she says, "helps me attain other goals for the month sooner."

Some Ingenious Ideas

Do you feel that your schedule is filled with daily and weekly musts and that you need some hints for better use of your limited time? Well, have with you what you intend to read, and utilize your leisure moments. At home or where you normally study, to the extent reasonably possible arrange books and other study tools so that they are easy to reach. Make your study corner cozy but not so comfortable that you become drowsy. Do you have a talk assignment? Read through the material at the earliest possible occasion, then let ideas come to you when you are resting or doing odd jobs.

Others may cooperate with you in making better use of time for mutual benefit. For example, you may have someone read light items aloud to you while you are doing chores or serving tea to your kind reader.



How about all in the home agreeing to a time of quiet for personal study? "What have you enjoyed reading lately?" At times you may be able to tap what your friends have learned by striking up a conversation this way.

Are you interested in introducing some fresh ideas to your study program? You can set a time goal for study the same way many set a time goal for talking about the Bible to others. A full-time (pioneer) publisher sets a monthly minimum goal for hours of study and delights as she sees her goal chart filling up. Others limit time for television watching and in that way secure time for study. Many choose a study theme that they pursue for some time, such as the fruits of the spirit, background of Bible books, or art of teaching. Some enjoy

making chronological charts, such as ones that show the relation between Israelite kings and prophets* or Acts of Apostles and the Pauline letters.

Young ones, do you want stronger faith? Why not pick a publication for thorough study during your next school vacation? A baptized high school student selected *Mankind's Search for God*, a book published by the Watch Tower Society. Chapter by chapter, she made brief summaries in a notebook of what she learned. It was challenging and took more time than she had thought. However, when she finished the entire book, she was overwhelmed by the truthfulness of the Bible's message.

Be Ever Eager to Learn

A great many modern-day faithful servants of Jehovah already have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord." (1 Corinthians 15:58) Even with a reviewed schedule and sincere endeavors, the routine you follow in a typical week may not change greatly. Yet, unfailing eagerness on your part to gain a deeper understanding of the truth and to keep yourself fully attuned to the unfolding of Jehovah's purposes will make a difference.

It is encouraging to hear the rewards of those who have improved their study pattern. One Christian man, realizing he was losing a positive attitude toward seeking a deeper understanding of the truth, organized his life so that he could devote more of his free hours to personal study. "It has brought me delight that I did not know before," he says. "With ever-growing confidence in the Bible's divine authorship, I find I can talk to others about my faith with

* As a basis for your enlarged study, you may like to use the chart found in *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., Volume 1, pages 464-6.

real enthusiasm. I feel I am well nourished, spiritually sound, and content at the end of each day."

A traveling overseer of Jehovah's Witnesses, who visits many congregations, described other benefits in this way: "Those who are diligent in personal study are generally lively and vivid in their expressions. They get along better with others, and they are not easily swayed by negative remarks from others. When in the field ministry, they are adaptable as well as alert to the needs of the people they meet."

He adds a point that some may wish to keep in mind when they analyze their own study pattern. "At meetings for Scriptural discussions, many tend to read their comments right from the printed page. They would benefit more if they would meditate on how the material is related to what they have previously learned or to their own lives." Do you think you could improve in this respect?

The prophet Daniel, after well over 90 years of life, did not feel he understood enough of the ways of Jehovah. In his final years, he asked regarding a matter he could not fully grasp: "O my lord, what will be the final part of these things?" (Daniel 12:8) No doubt this unchanging eagerness to learn more of God's truth was a key to his superb integrity throughout the eventful course of his life.—Daniel 7:8, 16, 19, 20.

Each one of Jehovah's servants has no less responsibility to stand firm as one of His Witnesses. Be ever eager to learn to keep yourself spiritually strong. Try to add one or two new features to your weekly, monthly, or yearly personal study schedule. See how God will bless any small effort that you make. Yes, enjoy your personal Bible study and the results it brings.—Psalm 107:43.

COMBATING SIN'S GRIP ON THE FALLEN FLESH

"The minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace."—ROMANS 8:6.

GOD proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them." (Genesis 1:27) An image is the reflection of an object or a source. Thus, humans were created to be a reflection of God's glory. By manifesting godly qualities—such as love, goodness, justice, and spirituality—in all their endeavors, they bring praise and honor to the Creator, as well as happiness and satisfaction to themselves.—1 Corinthians 11:7; 1 Peter 2:12.

² The first human pair, created in perfection, were well equipped for this role. Like mirrors polished to a high finish, they were capable of reflecting God's glory with brilliance and fidelity. However, they allowed that high finish to be tarnished when they deliberately chose to disobey their Creator and God. (Genesis 3:6) Thereafter, they could no longer reflect God's glory perfectly. They fell short of the glory of God, missing the purpose of their being created in God's image. In other words, they sinned.*

³ This helps us to understand the true

* The Bible generally uses the Hebrew verb *chata'* and the Greek verb *ha-mar-ta'no* to denote "sin." Both of these words mean "miss," in the sense of missing or not reaching a goal, mark, or target.

1. For what purpose were humans created?
2. How did the first human pair miss the mark?
3. What is the true nature of sin?

nature of sin, which mars man's reflection of God's likeness and glory. Sin makes man unholy, that is, unclean and tarnished in a spiritual and moral sense. All mankind, being descendants of Adam and Eve, are born in that tarnished and unclean state, coming short of God's expectation of them as his children. And the outcome? The Bible explains: "Just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12; compare Isaiah 64:6.

The Grip of Sin on Fallen Flesh

⁴ Most people today do not think of themselves as unclean, tarnished, or sinful. In fact, sin, as a word, has practically vanished from most people's vocabulary. They will perhaps talk about errors, indiscretions, and miscalculations. But sin? Hardly! Even to those who still claim to believe in God, "his teachings constituted a set of moral beliefs rather than a moralistic code, the '10 suggestions' rather than the 10 commandments," observes Alan Wolfe, a professor of sociology.

⁵ What is the outcome of this way of thinking? Denial of, or at least the ignoring of, the reality of sin. This has produced a generation of people with a badly distorted

- 4-6. (a) How do most people view sin today?
- (b) What is the outcome of modern views of sin?

sense of right and wrong, who feel free to set their own standards of behavior and feel responsible to no one for whatever they choose to do. To such people, feeling good is the sole criterion in judging whether a course of action is proper or not.—Proverbs 30:12, 13; compare Deuteronomy 32:5, 20.

⁶ For instance, on a television talk show, young people were invited to express their views of the so-called seven deadly sins.* “Pride isn’t a sin,” declared one participant. “You’re supposed to feel good about yourself.” Regarding sloth, another said: “It’s good to be like that sometimes. . . . Sometimes it’s good to sit back and give yourself personal time.” Even the narrator provided this succinct comment: ‘The seven deadly sins are not evil acts but, rather, universal human compulsions that can be troubling and highly enjoyable.’ Yes, gone along with sin is the feeling of guilt, for, after all, guilt is the very opposite of feeling good.—Ephesians 4:17-19.

⁷ In sharp contrast with all of this, the Bible plainly states: “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) Even the apostle Paul acknowledged: “I know that in me, that is, in my flesh, there dwells nothing good; for ability to wish is present with me, but ability to work out what is fine is not present. For the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice.” (Romans 7:18, 19) Paul was not here indulging in self-pity. Rather, because he fully realized how far mankind has fallen short of God’s glory, he felt all the more painfully sin’s grip on the fallen flesh. “Miserable man that I am!” he declared, “who will rescue me from the

* Traditionally, the seven deadly sins are pride, covetousness, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, and sloth.

7. According to the Bible, how are humans affected by sin?

body undergoing this death?”—Romans 7:24.

⁸ What is your view of this matter? You may acknowledge that as a descendant of Adam, you, like everyone else, are imperfect. But how does that knowledge affect your thinking and your way of life? Do you accept it as a fact of life and simply go along doing what comes naturally? Or do you put forth constant effort to combat sin’s grip on the fallen flesh, striving to reflect as brightly as possible God’s glory in all that you do? This should be of serious concern to each one of us in view of what Paul said: “Those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those in accord with the spirit on the things of the spirit. For the minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace.”—Romans 8:5, 6.

Minding of the Flesh

⁹ What did Paul mean when he said that “the minding of the flesh means death”? The term “flesh” is often used in the Bible to denote man in his imperfect state, ‘conceived in sin’ as a descendant of rebellious Adam. (Psalm 51:5; Job 14:4) Thus, Paul was admonishing Christians not to set their minds on the sinful tendencies, impulses, and desires of the imperfect, fallen flesh. And why not? Elsewhere Paul told us what the works of the flesh are and then added the warning: “Those who practice such things will not inherit God’s kingdom.”—Galatians 5:19-21.

¹⁰ But is there not a big difference between minding something and practicing it? True, thinking about something does

8. What questions should we ask ourselves? Why?

9. Why is it that “the minding of the flesh means death”?

10. What is meant by “minding”?

not always lead to doing it. However, minding is more than just having a passing thought. The word used by Paul is *phronema* in Greek, and it denotes "way of thinking, mind(-set), . . . aim, aspiration, striving." Therefore, "the minding of the flesh" means being controlled, possessed, dominated, and driven by the desires of the fallen flesh.—1 John 2:16.

¹¹ The point is well illustrated by the course that Cain followed. When jealousy and anger rose up in Cain's heart, Jehovah God warned him: "Why are you hot with anger and why has your countenance fallen? If you turn to doing good, will there not be an exaltation? But if you do not turn to doing good, there is sin crouching at the entrance, and for you is its craving; and will you, for your part, get the mastery over it?" (Genesis 4:6, 7) There was a choice before Cain. Would he "turn to doing good," that is, put his mind, aim, and aspiration on something good? Or would he continue minding the flesh and focus his mind on the bad tendencies lurking in his heart? As Jehovah explained, sin was "crouching at the entrance," waiting to pounce on and devour Cain if he would allow it. Instead of combating and 'getting the mastery' over his fleshly desire, Cain allowed it to dominate him—to a disastrous end.

¹² What about us today? Certainly we do not want to go "in the path of Cain," as Jude lamented regarding certain ones among the first-century Christians. (Jude 11) We should never rationalize and think that a little indulgence or liberty taken here or there is harmless. On the contrary, we should be alert to identify any ungodly and

11. How was Cain minding the flesh, and what was the result?

12. What should we do so as not to go "in the path of Cain"?

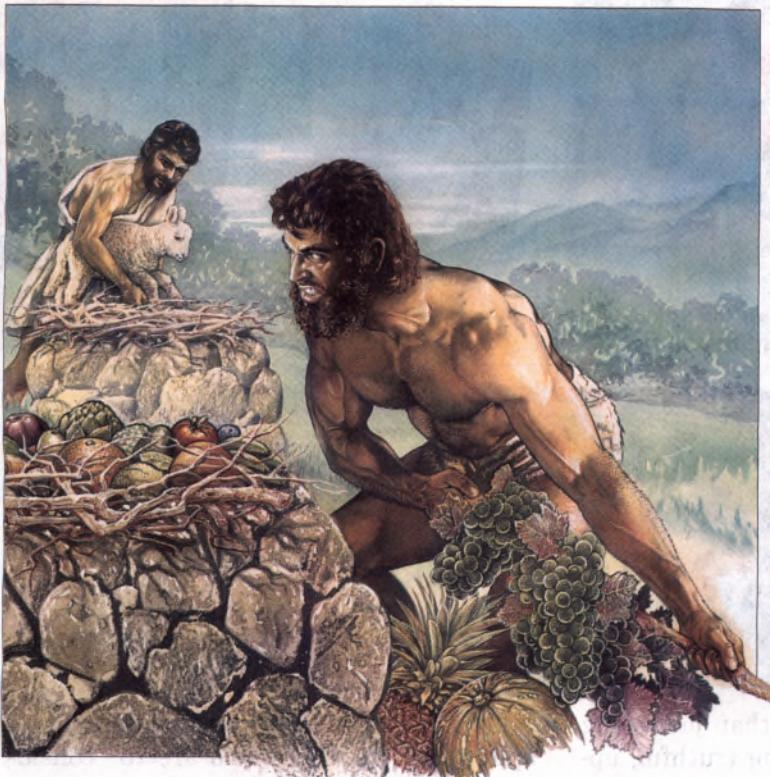
corrupting influence that may have come into our heart and mind and quickly remove it before it takes root. Combating sin's grip on the fallen flesh starts from within. —Mark 7:21.

¹³ For example, you might catch sight of a shocking or gruesome scene or a particularly suggestive or provocative image. It could be a picture in a book or a magazine, a scene on a movie or television screen, an ad on a billboard, or even in a real-life situation. That in itself need not be alarming, since it can—and does—happen. However, this image or scene, although it may have lasted just a few seconds, may tend to linger in the mind and resurface from time to time. What do you do when that happens? Do you immediately take action to combat that thought and get it out of your mind? Or do you allow it to dwell in your mind, perhaps reliving the experience each time that thought comes up? To do the latter is to risk setting off the chain of events described by James: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death." That is why Paul said: "The minding of the flesh means death."—James 1:14, 15; Romans 8:6.

¹⁴ Living as we do in a world in which sexual immorality, violence, and materialism are glorified—being openly and liberally featured in books, magazines, movies, television programs, and popular music—we are literally bombarded by wrong thoughts and ideas every day. What is your reaction? Do you feel amused and entertained by all of

13. How can a person be "enticed by his own desire"?

14. With what are we confronted daily, and how should we react?



Cain allowed fleshly tendencies to dominate him to his own ruin

this? Or do you feel as did righteous Lot, "who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people . . . tormenting his righteous soul by reason of their lawless deeds"? (2 Peter 2:7, 8) To succeed in combating sin's grip on the fallen flesh, we need to be resolved to do as the psalmist did: "I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing. The doing of those who fall away I have hated; it does not cling to me."—Psalm 101:3.

Minding of the Spirit

¹⁵ Something that can help us to combat sin's grip on the fallen flesh is what Paul went on to say: "The minding of the spirit means life and peace." (Romans 8:6) Thus, rather than be dominated by the flesh, we

15. What help do we have to combat sin's grip on us?

must let our mind come under the influence of the spirit and thrive on things of the spirit. What are they? At Philippians 4:8, Paul makes a list of them: "Finally, brothers, whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things

are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." Let us take a closer look and get a better understanding of what we should continue considering.

¹⁶ First of all, Paul listed eight moral qualities. We, of course, realize that Christians are not restricted to thinking only on Scriptural or doctrinal matters at all times. There is a wide range of subjects or topics on which we can set our minds. But the important thing is that they must measure up to the moral qualities specified by Paul. Each of the categories of "things" cited by Paul deserves our attention. Let us consider them in turn.

16. What qualities did Paul encourage us to "continue considering," and what does each involve?



□ “*True*” involves more than just being true or false. It means being truthful, upright, and trustworthy, something that is real, not merely giving the appearance of being so.—1 Timothy 6:20

□ “*Of serious concern*” refers to things that are dignified and respectful. It evokes a sense of reverence, something that is lofty, noble, and honorable rather than vulgar and low.

□ “*Righteous*” means meeting God’s standard, not man’s. Worldly men occupy their minds with unrighteous schemes, but we are to think on and take delight in things that are righteous in God’s sight. —Compare Psalm 26:4; Amos 8:4-6.

□ “*Chaste*” means pure and holy not only in conduct (sexual or otherwise) but also in thought and motive. “The wisdom from above is first of all chaste,” says James. Jesus, who is “pure,” is the perfect Example for us to consider.—James 3:17; 1 John 3:3.

□ “*Lovable*” is that which incites and inspires love in others. We are to “consider one another to incite to love and fine works,” rather than put our minds on things that arouse hatred, bitterness, and contention.—Hebrews 10:24.

□ “*Well spoken of*” means not just being “reputable” or “of good report” but also, in the active sense, being upbuilding and commending. We set our minds on things that are wholesome and upbuilding rather than demeaning and offensive.—Ephesians 4:29.

□ “*Virtue*” basically means “goodness” or “moral excellence,” but it can mean excellence of any kind. Thus, we can appreciate the valuable qualities, merits, and accomplishments of others in line with God’s standard.

□ “*Praiseworthy*” things are truly so if the praise comes from God or from authority duly recognized by him.—1 Corinthians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:14.

Promise of Life and Peace

¹⁷ When we follow Paul's admonition and "continue considering these things," we will succeed in "the minding of the spirit." The result is not only the blessing of life, that is, everlasting life in the promised new world, but also peace. (Romans 8:6) Why? Because our minds are protected from the evil influence of fleshly things, and we are no longer so greatly affected by the agonizing struggle between flesh and spirit as described by Paul. By resisting the influence of the flesh, we also gain peace with God "because the minding of the flesh means enmity with God."—Romans 7:21-24; 8:7.

¹⁸ Satan and his agents are doing everything they can to tarnish our reflection of the glory of God. They try to gain control

17. What blessings result from "the minding of the spirit"?

18. What battle is Satan waging, and how can we be victorious?

of our minds by bombarding them with fleshly desires, knowing that this will eventually lead to enmity with God and to death. But we can come out victorious in this battle. Like Paul, we too can proclaim: "Thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord" for providing us with the means to combat sin's grip on the fallen flesh.—Romans 7:25.

Can You Explain?

- What is sin, and how can it develop a grip on the fallen flesh?
- How can we combat "the minding of the flesh"?
- What can we do to promote "the minding of the spirit"?
- How does "the minding of the spirit" bring life and peace?

MAKE HEALTHFUL TEACHING YOUR WAY OF LIFE

"Godly devotion is beneficial for all things." —1 TIMOTHY 4:8.

MOST people will readily agree that good health is one of the most precious possessions in life. They devote a great deal of time and money to keeping themselves physically fit and making sure that they receive proper medical atten-

1, 2. To what extent do people show concern for their health, and with what result?

tion when they need it. In the United States, for example, the annual health-care cost for a recent year was more than \$900 billion. That amounts to well over \$3,000 a year for every man, woman, and child in that country, and the per capita cost in other developed nations is not far behind.

² What has all the expenditure of time,



Many today
are applying
the counsel
at Titus 2:2-4



energy, and money brought? Certainly no one will deny that, on the whole, we have far more advanced medical facilities and provisions today than at any other time in history. Yet, this does not automatically translate into healthful living. In fact, in a speech outlining a proposed health-care program for the United States, the president pointed out that in addition to "the outrageous costs of violence in this country," residents of the United States "have higher rates of AIDS, of smoking and excessive drinking, of teen pregnancy, of low-birth-weight babies" than any other developed nation. His conclusion? "We have to change our ways if we ever really want to be healthy as a people."—Galatians 6:7, 8.

A Healthful Way of Life

³ In the first century, the Greeks were known for their devotion to physical culture, bodybuilding, and athletic contests. Against this background, the apostle Paul was inspired to write to the young man Timothy: "Bodily training is beneficial for a little; but godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) Thus, Paul was pointing out what people today are coming to acknowledge, namely, that medical or physical provisions do not guarantee a truly healthful way of

3. In view of ancient Greek culture, what counsel did Paul offer?

life. Paul assures us, though, that what is indispensable is the cultivating of spiritual well-being and godly devotion.

⁴ Such a course is beneficial for “the life now” because it provides a protection against all the harmful things that ungodly people, or those who have only “a form [or, appearance] of godly devotion,” inflict upon themselves. (2 Timothy 3:5; Proverbs 23:29, 30; Luke 15:11-16; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Those who allow godly devotion to shape their lives have a healthy respect for God’s laws and requirements, and that motivates them to make God’s healthful teaching their way of life. Such a course brings them spiritual and physical health, satisfaction, and happiness. And they are “safely treasuring up for themselves a fine foundation for the future, in order that they may get a firm hold on the real life.”—1 Timothy 6:19.

⁵ Since a life guided by the healthful teaching of God brings such blessings now and in the future, we need to know, in practical terms, how we can make God’s healthful teaching our way of life. The apostle Paul provided the answer in his letter to Titus. We will take special note of the second chapter of that book, where he instructed Titus to “keep on speaking what things are fitting for healthful teaching.” Surely all of us, young and old, male and female, can benefit from such “healthful teaching” today.—Titus 1:4, 5; 2:1.

Counsel for Older Men

⁶ First, Paul had some counsel for the older men in the congregation. *Please read*

4. What are the benefits of godly devotion?
5. What instructions did Paul provide in the second chapter of his letter to Titus?
6. What counsel did Paul offer for “the aged men,” and why was it a kindness on his part to do so?

Titus 2:2. “*The aged men,*” as a group, are honored and looked up to as examples of faith and loyalty. (Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 16:31) Because of this, others may be reluctant to offer counsel or suggestions to older men on matters that are less than extremely serious. (Job 32:6, 7; 1 Timothy 5:1) Therefore, it is a kindness on Paul’s part to address the older men first, and it would be well for them to take to heart Paul’s words and to be sure that they, like Paul, are worthy of imitation.—1 Corinthians 11:1; Philippians 3:17.

⁷ The older Christian men are, first of all, to be “*moderate in habits.*” Though the original word can refer to the drinking habit (“sober,” *Kingdom Interlinear*), it also has the meaning of being watchful, clearheaded, or keeping the senses. (2 Timothy 4:5; 1 Peter 1:13) Thus, whether in drinking or in other things, the older men must be moderate, not given to excesses or extremes.

⁸ Then, they are also to be “*serious*” and “*sound in mind.*” Being serious, or august, venerable, and worthy of respect, normally comes with age. Some, though, may tend to be overly serious, becoming intolerant of the energetic ways of youth. (Proverbs 20:29) That is why “*serious*” is balanced with “*sound in mind.*” The older men need to maintain the seriousness commensurate with age, yet at the same time be balanced, having full control of their feelings and impulses.

⁹ Finally, older men are to be “*healthy in faith, in love, in endurance.*” Many times in his writings, Paul listed faith and love along with hope. (1 Corinthians 13:13;

- 7, 8. (a) What does being “*moderate in habits*” involve? (b) Why must being “*serious*” be balanced with being “*sound in mind*”?
9. Why must the older men be healthy in faith and love and especially in endurance?

1 Thessalonians 1:3; 5:8) Here he replaced “hope” with “endurance.” Perhaps it is because the feeling of resignation can easily slip in with advancing age. (Ecclesiastes 12:1) However, as Jesus pointed out, “he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved.” (Matthew 24:13) In addition, older ones are worthy examples to the rest not simply because of their age or experience but because of their robust spiritual qualities—faith, love, and endurance.

For the Older Women

¹⁰ Paul next turned his attention to the older women in the congregation. *Please read Titus 2:3.* “The aged women” are the senior members among the women in the congregation, including wives of “the aged men” and mothers and grandmothers of other members. As such, they can have considerable influence, for good or for bad. That is why Paul introduced his words with “likewise,” meaning that “the aged women” also have certain responsibilities to live up to so as to fulfill their role in the congregation.

¹¹ First, “let the aged women be reverent

10. What counsel does Paul provide for “the aged women” in the congregation?
11. What is reverent behavior?

In Our Next Issue

A Divided Church—Can It Survive?

At Which Table Are You Feeding?

Joyful Submission to Authority

in behavior,” said Paul. “Behavior” is the outward expression of one’s inner attitude and personality, as reflected in both conduct and appearance. (Matthew 12:34, 35) What, then, should be the attitude or personality of an aged Christian woman? In one word, “reverent.” This is translated from a Greek word that means “that which is befitting in persons, actions or things consecrated to God.” This is certainly appropriate counsel in view of the influence they have on others, especially on the younger women in the congregation.—1 Timothy 2:9, 10.

¹² Next come two negatives: “*not slanderous, neither enslaved to a lot of wine.*” It is interesting that these two are grouped together. “In ancient times, when wine was the only beverage,” observes Professor E. F. Scott, “it was at their little wine-parties that old women would tear their neighbours’ characters to pieces.” Women are generally more concerned about people than are men, which is commendable. Yet, concern can deteriorate into gossip and even slander, especially when the tongue is loosened by drink. (Proverbs 23:33) Surely, all who are pursuing a healthful way of life, men and women, do well to watch out for this pitfall.

¹³ For a constructive way to use the available time, older women are encouraged to be “*teachers of what is good.*” Elsewhere, Paul gave clear instructions that women are not to be teachers in the congregation. (1 Corinthians 14:34; 1 Timothy 2:12) This, however, does not prevent them from imparting precious knowledge of God in their household and to the public. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15) They can also accomplish much good by being Christian examples to

12. What misuse of the tongue should all avoid?
13. In what ways can older women be teachers?

the younger women in the congregation, as the following verses show.

For the Young Women

¹⁴ In encouraging the older women to be "teachers of what is good," Paul particularly mentioned the younger women. *Please read Titus 2:4, 5.* While much of the instruction centers on domestic affairs, younger Christian women are not to go overboard, allowing material concerns to dominate their lives. Rather, they are to be "*sound in mind, chaste, . . . good,*" and above all, ready to support the Christian headship arrangement, "*so that the word of God may not be spoken of abusively.*"

¹⁵ Today, the family scene has changed considerably from what it was in Paul's day. Many families are divided as to faith, and others have only one parent. Even in so-called traditional families, it is increasingly uncommon that the wife or mother is a full-time homemaker. All of this puts tremendous pressure and responsibility on young Christian women, but this does not exempt them from their Scriptural obligations. It is a great pleasure, therefore, to see many faithful young women working hard to balance their many duties and still managing to put Kingdom interests first, some even being in the full-time ministry as auxiliary or regular pioneers. (Matthew 6:33) They are truly to be commended!

For the Young Men

¹⁶ Paul then came to the younger men, including Titus. *Please read Titus 2:6-8.* In view of the irresponsible and destructive ways of many of today's youths—smoking,

14. How can younger Christian women show balance in caring for their duties?
15. Why are many of the younger women in the congregations to be commended?
16. What counsel did Paul have for the younger men, and why is this timely?

drug and alcohol abuse, illicit sex, and other worldly pursuits, such as wild sports and debased music and entertainment—this is indeed timely advice for Christian youths who want to follow a healthful and satisfying way of life.

¹⁷ In contrast with the youths of the world, a young Christian man should be "*sound in mind*" and "*an example of fine works.*" Paul explained that a sound and mature mind is gained, not by those who simply study, but by those who "through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) How wonderful it is to see young people volunteering their time and energy to have a full share in the many duties in the Christian congregation, instead of wasting their youthful strength in selfish pursuits! Doing so, they, like Titus, can become examples of "*fine works*" in the Christian congregation.—1 Timothy 4:12.

¹⁸ The younger men are reminded that they should be "*showing uncorruptness in [their] teaching, seriousness, wholesome speech which cannot be condemned.*" Teaching that is '*uncorrupt*' must be solidly based on God's Word; hence, the younger men must be diligent students of the Bible. Like the older men, the younger men also are to be serious. They need to recognize that being a minister of God's Word is a serious responsibility, and therefore they must "*behave in a manner worthy of the good news.*" (Philippians 1:27) Likewise their speech must be "*wholesome*" and such that it "*cannot be condemned*" so that they may give no cause for complaint by opposers.—2 Corinthians 6:3; 1 Peter 2:12, 15.

17. How can a younger man become "*sound in mind*" and an "*example of fine works?*"
18. What does it mean to be *uncorrupt* in teaching, *serious* in action, and *wholesome* in speech?

For Slaves and Servants

¹⁹ Finally, Paul turned to those who are in other people's employ. *Please read Titus 2:9, 10.* Not many of us today are slaves or servants, but many are employees and workers rendering service to others. Thus, the principles enumerated by Paul apply just as well today.

²⁰ To "be in subjection to their owners in all things" means that Christian employees must show their employers and supervisors genuine respect. (Colossians 3:22) They must also have the reputation of being honest workers, giving a full day's work as their employer's due. And they must maintain the high standard of Christian conduct at their places of work regardless of the behavior of others there. All of this is "so that they may adorn the teaching of our Savior, God, in all things." How often we hear about the happy results when sincere observers respond to the truth because of the fine conduct of their Witness workmates or employees! This is a reward that Jehovah bestows upon those who follow his healthful teaching even at their places of employment.—Ephesians 6:7, 8.

A Cleansed People

²¹ The healthful teaching that Paul expounded is not just some code of ethical principles or moral ideas that we might consult as we wish. Paul went on to explain the purpose of it. *Please read Titus 2:11, 12.* Out of his love and undeserved kindness for us, Jehovah God has provided the healthful teaching so that we may learn to live a purposeful and satisfying life in these critical and dangerous times. Are you willing to accept and make the healthful teaching

19, 20. How may those in other people's employ "adorn the teaching of our Savior, God"?

21. Why has Jehovah provided the healthful teaching, and how should we respond?

your way of life? Doing so will mean your salvation.

²² More than that, making the healthful teaching our way of life brings us a unique privilege now and a happy hope for the future. *Please read Titus 2:13, 14.* Indeed, making the healthful teaching our way of life sets us apart from the corrupt and dying world as a cleansed people. Paul's words parallel Moses' reminders to the sons of Israel at Sinai: "As for Jehovah, . . . he will put you high above all the other nations that he has made, resulting in praise and reputation and beauty, while you prove yourself a people holy to Jehovah your God, just as he has promised."—Deuteronomy 26:18, 19.

²³ May we ever treasure the privilege of being Jehovah's cleansed people by making healthful teaching our way of life! Always be alert to repudiate any form of ungodliness and worldly desires, thus remaining cleansed and fit to be used by Jehovah in the grand work that he is having done today.—Colossians 1:10.

22, 23. What blessings do we reap by making healthful teaching our way of life?

Do You Remember?

- Why is godly devotion beneficial for all things?
- How can older Christian men and women pursue healthful teaching as a way of life?
- What healthful teaching did Paul have for younger men and women in the congregation?
- What privilege and blessing can be ours if we make healthful teaching our way of life?

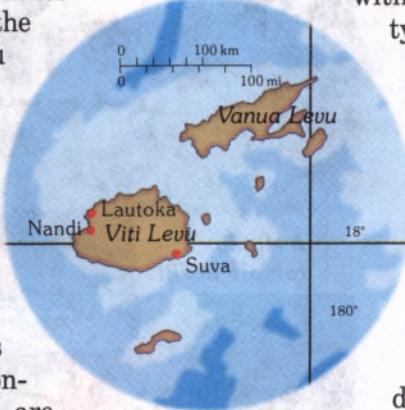
"Fishing" in the Waters of

F · I · J · I

FIJI—the name evokes images of a South Seas paradise. Blue-green waters, coral reefs, swaying coconut palms, verdant mountains, tropical fish, exotic fruits and flowers. You can find all of these in abundance on this archipelago of 300 islands about 1,100 miles north of New Zealand in the South Pacific. Hence, you might agree that Fiji could be everyone's dream of a tropical paradise.

Fiji is fascinating in more than its natural beauty, however. Yes, just as there is great variety among the fish of the coral reefs, great variety is also found on land. The contrasts in Fiji's ethnic mix are, perhaps, unequaled in the South Pacific. The two largest groups among its almost 750,000 inhabitants are the indigenous Fijians, who are of Melanesian origin, and Fiji-born Indians, descendants of workers brought in from India during the British colonial days. But there are also Banabans, Chinese, Europeans, Gilbertese, Rotumans, Tuvaluans, and others.

In this multicultural society, Jehovah's Witnesses are busily engaged in a "fishing" work. (Mark 1:17) It is a challenge to preach the good news of God's Kingdom in such a diversified community. First, there are the language and cultural barriers to overcome. Though English is the lingua franca, many times Fijian, Hindi, Rotuman, or other languages must be used.



Different approaches must also be taken to converse with those of different religious backgrounds. Most indigenous Fijians and other islanders belong to various Christian denominations. The Indian population consists of Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs, with Hindus being in the majority. Churches are plentiful in the towns and villages, but on Fiji's two largest islands, the many Hindu temples and Muslim mosques provide a contrast.

Many local Witnesses have grown up speaking the three main languages—English, Fijian, and Hindi. Having this skill is a great advantage in the "fishing" work.

At times people are surprised to hear a Fijian speaking fluent Hindi and a Hindu speaking fluent Fijian. With cultural, religious, and language differences to cope with, it requires a versatile approach to be "a sharer of [the good news] with others." —1 Corinthians 9:23.

"Fishing" in a Fijian Village

The indigenous Fijians are a friendly, hospitable people. It is difficult to imagine that little more than a century ago, tribal warfare was rife. In fact, at the time of the first European contact, Fiji was known as the Cannibal Islands. Eventually, with the ascendancy of a paramount chief and his conversion, fighting and cannibalism died

out. Tribal differences remain only in the many dialects that are found in the various provinces, although the Bauan dialect is widely understood.

In addition to Suva, the capital, there are many towns throughout Fiji. Most Fijians live in village communities under the control of a *turaga ni koro*, or head man. When entering a village to engage in "fishing," it is customary to approach this man to seek permission to visit the various bures, or local homes. Only occasionally, usually because of opposition to Jehovah's Witnesses by some village clergyman, is permission refused. What is it like calling at a Fijian home?

Entering the bure, we sit cross-legged on the floor. A carefully worded introduction, as used to capture interest in Western lands, is not needed here. Anyone coming to talk about God is welcome. When invited, the householder readily gets up and, with expressions of "*tulou*" (excuse me), reaches up to a shelf for a copy of the Bible in Fijian and eagerly reads various texts that the visiting minister mentions. However, the hospitable and respectful Fijian attitude presents a challenge in a different way. Considerable discernment and tact are needed to draw householders into the conversation, to encourage them to follow the line of reasoning being pursued, or to help



A bure, or local home



A Hindu temple in Fiji



Fiji Visitors Bureau



them to see the need of comparing their own beliefs with the Bible's teachings.

Fijian householders are generally more interested in discussing doctrinal topics than in talking about social conditions or issues. In fact, many of the more than 1,400 active Witnesses of Jehovah in Fiji became interested in Bible truth as a result of a discussion on such questions as, What sort of place is hell? Who goes to heaven? and Will the earth be destroyed? Following up



**Successful
"fishing"
for men
in Fiji**

on interest shown, however, requires adaptability and persistence. Returning at an agreed-upon time, one often finds that the householder has gone to the *teitei* (plantation) or somewhere else. No, it is not that they are unappreciative of the visit but just that their sense of time is different. Of course, to the local Witnesses, this does not seem unusual. They persevere by calling at another time. There are no street names or house numbers to write down, so one needs

a good memory when calling back.

"Fishing" Polynesian Style

Now, let us go "fishing" with a traveling minister, or circuit overseer, as he visits the small congregation in Rotuma. This group of volcanic islands is 300 miles north of Fiji. To reach it, we fly in a 19-seat aircraft. The main island is only 19 square miles in area, with a total population of about 3,000. A sandy road runs along the coastline, connecting some 20 villages. Rotuma is administered by Fiji but has a different culture and language. Being of Polynesian origin, its people differ in appearance from the Melanesian Fijians. Religiously speaking, most are either Roman Catholics or Methodists.

As the aircraft descends and maneuvers for landing, we see the lush green vegetation of the island. The featherlike fronds of coconut palms can be seen everywhere. A large crowd is on hand to welcome the once-a-week flight. Among them is a group of Witnesses. We are warmly greeted, and several large green coconuts with the "eyes" opened are handed to us to quench our thirst.

After a short trip, we arrive at our accommodations. A meal baked in a ground oven has been prepared. Roast pork, chicken, fried fish, crayfish, and the local root

crop, taro, are spread before us. What a feast, and what a paradisaic setting under the young coconut trees!

The next day we visit people in the villages, called *ho'aga* in Rotuman. As we approach the first home, a piglet that has escaped from one of the sties scampers past, squealing as it goes. The householder has seen us coming and with a smile opens the door, greeting us with "Noya!" in Rotuman, and then invites us to be seated. A plate of ripe bananas is placed in front of us, and we are also invited to drink from some green coconuts. Hospitality comes first in Rotuma.

There are no agnostics or evolutionists here. Everyone believes in the Bible. Subjects like God's purpose for the earth capture their attention easily. The householder is surprised to learn that the earth will not be destroyed but will be inhabited by righteous people who will live on it forever. (Psalm 37:29) He follows along closely when Bible texts that establish this point are read, and he eagerly accepts the Bible literature we offer. As we prepare to leave, he thanks us for calling and offers us a plastic bag full of ripe bananas that we can eat along the way. One can easily put on weight preaching here!

Adapting to the Indian Community

Though many other island countries of the South Pacific are also multiracial, Fiji stands out in this respect. Alongside the Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian cultures is one transplanted from Asia. Between 1879 and 1916, indentured laborers from India were brought in to work the sugarcane fields. This arrangement, called *girmit* (agreement), resulted in thousands of Indians coming to Fiji. The descendants of these workers make up a large segment

of the country's population. They have retained their culture, language, and religion.

On the leeward side of Fiji's main island is the city of Lautoka. This is the center of Fiji's sugarcane industry and is home to a large part of the country's Indian population. Members of the three congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses here need to be very adaptable in their "fishing" work. When calling from house to house, one has to be prepared to change topics depending on the race and religion of the householder. Let us join a group of local Witnesses as they call at the homes scattered among the sugarcane fields just outside of Lautoka.

As we approach the first house, we notice some long bamboo poles with pieces of red cloth tied at the top in the front corner of the compound. This identifies the family as Hindu. Most Hindu homes are decorated with pictures of their gods. Many have a favorite god, such as Krishna, and often there is a small shrine.*

Most Hindus believe that all religions are good and are but different ways to worship. Thus, a householder may listen politely, accept some literature, offer refreshments, and feel that he has done his duty. To raise appropriate questions to draw householders into more meaningful discussions, it is often helpful to know some of the stories that are part of their belief. For example, knowing that some of their stories portray their gods indulging in acts that many people would question, we can ask: "Would you approve of such conduct by your wife (husband)?" The answer is generally: "No, definitely not!" Then, the question can be put to the person: "Well, should a god act like

* See the book *Mankind's Search for God*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., pages 115-17.

this?" Such discussions often open up opportunities for showing the value of the Bible.

The belief in reincarnation, another feature of Hinduism, is a fertile subject for discussion. One well-educated Hindu woman who had recently lost her father in death was asked: "Would you like to see your father again just as he was before?" She answered: "Yes, that would be wonderful." From her response and the subsequent conversation, it was clear that she was not satisfied with the belief that her father was now alive in some other form and she would never know him again. But the Bible's wonderful teaching of the resurrection touched her heart.

Some Hindus do have questions and are searching for satisfying answers. When a Witness called at a Hindu home, the man asked: "What is the name of your god?" The Witness read to him Psalm 83:18 and explained that God's name is Jehovah and that Romans 10:13 says that to gain salvation we must call upon that name. The man was impressed and wanted to know more. In fact, he was desperate to know. He explained that his father, who was very devoted to their family idol, fell ill after worshiping before it and died shortly thereafter. The same thing had happened to his brother. Then he added: "That image is bringing us death, not life. So there must be something wrong with worshiping it. Maybe this God, Jehovah, can help us find the way to life." So a Bible study was started with him, his wife, and his two children. They made rapid progress and were soon baptized. They have left their idols and are now walking in the way of Jehovah, the God of life.

We next come to the home of a Muslim family. The same hospitable spirit is evi-

dent, and soon we are seated with cool drinks in our hands. We see no religious pictures on the walls with the exception of a small framed verse in Arabic script. We mention that there is a common link between the Bible and the Koran, namely the patriarch Abraham, and that God promised Abraham that through his seed all nations would be blessed. This promise is to be fulfilled in Jesus Christ, His Son. Some Muslims will object to the thought that God has a son. Thus, we explain that just as the first man, Adam, is called God's son because of his being created by God, in the same way, Jesus is God's Son. God does not need a literal wife to produce such sons. Because Muslims do not believe in the teaching of the Trinity, we use this common ground to show that Jehovah God is supreme.

By now it is lunchtime, and the members of our group are coming back to the road, out from the sugarcane fields, to wait for the bus back to town. Though a little tired, all are enthused about the morning's "fishing" activity. The effort made to adapt to the different situations and beliefs encountered was well worth it.

Fiji's waters and reefs are endowed with many kinds of fish. To be successful, the Fijian *gonedau* (fisherman) needs to be skilled in his work. The same is true of the "fishing" work that Jesus Christ assigned to his disciples. Christian "fishers of men" must be skillful, adapting their presentation and argumentation to suit the varied beliefs of the populace. (Matthew 4:19) This is certainly needed in Fiji. And the results are evident at the annual conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses, where Fijians, Indians, Rotumans, and people of mixed ethnic backgrounds worship Jehovah God in unity. Yes, his blessing is upon the "fishing" work in Fijian waters.

Looking With Appreciation Upon the “House of God”

“ONE thing I have asked from Jehovah—it is what I shall look for, that I may dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of my life, to behold the pleasantness of Jehovah and to look with appreciation upon his temple.”

—Psalm 27:4.

Appreciative King David looked with pleasure, or delight, upon Jehovah’s temple. Do you feel similarly about centers of true worship today? The more than 95 Bethel homes at branches of the Watch Tower Society are among the facilities that are associated with the worship of Jehovah in our time.

“Looking back over my many years of Bethel service fills me with deep gratitude and great appreciation, which has grown from year to year,” explains Helga, who commenced work at the home in Germany in 1948. Helga is one of the 13,828 joyful Bethel workers worldwide who in the 1993 service year ‘beheld the pleasantness of Jehovah.’ What exactly does the name Bethel mean? How can every one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, whether he serves God inside Bethel or outside, look with appreciation upon this arrangement?

A Name That Demands Devotion

“Bethel” is a most appropriate name, as the Hebrew word *Beith-’El’* means “House of God.” (Genesis 28:19, footnote) Yes, Bethel resembles a well-organized house, or ‘a household built up by wisdom,’ with God and his will holding center stage. (Proverbs 24:3) “It is like living in a family. We have

a well-organized daily routine,” says Herta appreciatively. She has been serving at the same Bethel as Helga for over 45 years. Each member of this large family has his function and his place, allowing him to feel happy and secure. Consistent with the name Bethel, good arrangement and organization characterize each of the departments. This promotes peace, makes effective preaching of the good news possible, and gives the congregations sound reason to hold the “House of God” in the highest esteem.—1 Corinthians 14:33, 40.

Why are such facilities necessary? This magazine, for example, was produced in a Bethel printery. The preaching of the Kingdom message and the distribution of spiritual food, both foreseen by Jesus Christ, make organizational arrangements like Bethel indispensable—supported by willing workers and held in great regard by all worshipers of Jehovah.—Matthew 24: 14, 45.

Would you like to learn more about the workday routine here? Where Helga and Herta live, a melodious chime sounds a call in all residence buildings at 6:30 a.m., though many of the over 800 regular workers get up even earlier to prepare for the day. By 7:00 a.m., Monday to Saturday, the family is assembled in the dining halls for a discussion of the daily text, or morning worship. A nourishing breakfast follows. Each workday begins at 8:00 a.m. and lasts eight hours, interrupted only by a lunch break. (The family normally works half a day on Saturday.) Be it in the kitchen,

printery, laundry, offices, workshops, bookbindery, or any other department, there is much to do.

During evenings and on weekends, members of the family associate with local congregations at meetings and in public preaching. Many Bethel brothers are elders or ministerial servants in these congregations. The local Witnesses truly appreciate this cooperation, both groups working together harmoniously as one body, with mutual respect and understanding. (Colossians 2:19) Each Bethel worker knows that his assignment in the "House of God" takes priority over other activities. However, enthusiasm for preaching and involvement with the congregation, coupled with a balanced attitude, strengthen the Bethel worker's spirituality, increase his joy, and make him a more productive member of the family. How crucial these qualities are when working in a "house" whose name is linked with whole-souled devotion!

Making Bethel Service a Success

What has helped countless ones of Jehovah's Witnesses to make a success of Bethel service? Bethel family members in France with experience going back many years comment as follows: "Love for Jehovah. Having the determination to persevere wherever he places us; humility, submission, and obedience to the direction given us by the Society." (Denise) "I have noted how important it is to respect the principle mentioned by Paul at Romans 12:10: 'In showing honor to one another take the lead.' This scripture shows us the importance of not insisting that our personal opinion be accepted but, rather, taking into consideration the opinions of others. In other words, not seeking preeminence." (Jean-Jacques) "Our respect for Bethel service could be ruined if we looked at things

from a fleshly, human viewpoint," says Barbara, "for this could lead us to lose sight of the fact that Jehovah is directing his organization. Such respect could be lost if we stumble over the imperfections of others."

Everyone at Bethel is imperfect, so association needs careful thought. Young ones or recent arrivals do well not to limit their association solely to their peers. Those who might display a tendency to complain or to think negatively do not make for upbuilding company in Bethel or in the congregation. On the other hand, imitating the "wisdom from above," described at James 3:17, brings blessings. This is "first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable, ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical." Such qualities, along with long-suffering and kindness, are noticeable in the "House of God," making one's stay there pleasant and stimulating. Even non-Witness visitors often express admiration for the good behavior, friendliness, and joyful spirit of the workers.

Anny, who is over 70 years of age and has been a member of the Bethel family in Germany since 1956, explains how she maintains her readiness to serve: "For my spiritual well-being, I put forth great effort to keep abreast with the Society's publications, to attend meetings regularly, and to have a regular share in preaching. I also try to stay in good physical shape by doing exercises each morning, by refraining from use of the elevator most of the time, and by walking as often as possible, especially in field service."

Many experienced in Bethel life would agree with Anny. They never cease to learn, never stop working. Physical health demands that they get sufficient sleep and some exercise and show moderation in

eating and drinking. Most important of all, they do not neglect personal prayer and study of the Bible.

High Regard for Sacred Service in Bethel

"Where do you work?" is a query commonly put to members at Bethel. Work assignments are diverse, but each deserves to be held in high esteem by everyone. Why? Because each assignment—whether operating a machine printing spiritual food, washing clothes, cooking and cleaning for the family, or performing office work—constitutes sacred service. As mentioned above, Christians make no partial distinctions. Bear in mind that all necessary duties carried out by priests and Levites at the temple, in its courtyards and dining halls, were all considered sacred service to Jehovah. That included slaughtering and preparing animals for sacrifice, refilling oil lamps, even cleaning up and performing watchmen's duties. Likewise, each assignment at Bethel is a satisfying and worthwhile activity "in the work of the Lord," hence an exceptional privilege.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Consider briefly one trait that can prevent our looking with appreciation upon the "House of God." Christians both in Bethel and outside need to be on guard against envy and jealousy, which are "rotteness to the bones." (Proverbs 14:30) No one has reason to be envious of service privileges of Bethel workers. Moreover, there is no room within a Bethel family for jealousy, which is one of the works of the flesh. Wait humbly—that is sound counsel for one who might seem to have been overlooked while others are granted greater privileges. What is more, persons of greatly differing financial backgrounds live close together in Bethel. How frustrating if one views his

circumstances "in comparison with the other person"! Being satisfied with "sustenance and covering" has helped many to continue faithfully for decades in the "House of God."—Galatians 5:20, 26; 6:4; 1 Timothy 6:8.

Jehovah's Witnesses and millions of others derive great benefit from the unpaid services performed at Bethel—work done selflessly out of love for God and neighbor. The Bethel homes and printeries of the Watch Tower Society, like other theocratic facilities, are financed by voluntary contributions. (2 Corinthians 9:7) Like King David and the princes and chiefs of Israel, we can show our esteem and appreciation for the "House of God" by giving moral and financial support to the Society. (1 Chronicles 29:3-7) Let us now see how it is possible "to behold the pleasantness of Jehovah" at Bethel.

Blessings in the "House of God"

When attending an assembly, do you sense a deep contentment, surrounded as you are by happy worshipers of Jehovah? Just imagine, a Bethel worker has the privilege of serving Jehovah amid a group of brothers every day! (Psalm 26:12) What excellent prospects for spiritual growth that offers! A brother remarked that he learned more to help him shape his personality within one year at Bethel than he did in three years elsewhere. Why? Because nowhere else did he have the opportunity to observe and imitate the faith of so many mature Christian personalities.—Proverbs 13:20.

At Bethel a person is surrounded by experienced counselors, as it were. In addition, there is the benefit of hearing well-prepared comments presented during morning worship and at the Bethel family

These Christians have taken pleasure in sacred service at Bethel in Germany for decades

Watchtower Study and when listening to lectures on Monday evenings. New arrivals get instruction in the Bethel Entrants' School and are assigned to read the entire Bible within the first 12 months.

Reports and experiences from visitors from other countries offer further encouragement. Moreover, members of the Governing Body or their representatives pay visits to branch offices.

"Although they have much to do," reflects Helga, "the brothers always find time for a friendly word or a smile." How encouraging to behold personally the refreshing and modest manner of such loyal men!

Especially at Bethel can one observe closely how God's organization operates and how his holy spirit galvanizes willing hearts and hands into action. "At Bethel one feels nearer 'the hub of the wheel,'" explains a brother, who has been serving at Bethel in France since 1949. He continues: "I can truly say that for me Bethel is the form of full-time service that allows me to devote the maximum amount of time and strength to Jehovah's service and to serve the greatest number of brothers." And is that not our real purpose in life—to do the will of God? At Bethel one can "offer praise all day long." What a blessing!—Psalm 44:8.

As we have discovered, one working in a Bethel home can behold the pleasantness of



Jehovah and find a wide range of blessings. (Hebrews 6:10) Could service at the "House of God" be something worthwhile for you? Those among Jehovah's Witnesses who are at least 19 years of age, who enjoy good spiritual and physical health, and who, like Timothy, are "well reported on by the brothers" can apply to serve at Bethel. (Acts 16:2) Many have made Bethel service their life's work, like those quoted above. For them the deep yearning of the psalmist—to 'dwell in the house of Jehovah all the days of his life'—has become reality.

Jehovah's Witnesses have great respect for the self-sacrificing spirit shown by their brothers and sisters at Bethel, who carry out assignments both willingly and joyfully. Whether we serve Jehovah at Bethel or elsewhere, each of us has good reason to feel as did King David—to look with appreciation, or delight, upon the "House of God."

ABRAHAM

Buried Here, yet Alive?



For centuries Jews, Muslims, and Christians have made their way to this place.

You can visit it in the ancient city of Hebron, south of Jerusalem. This structure is called both Haram el-Khalil and the Tomb of the Patriarchs. Yes, this is widely accepted as the burial place of the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as well as their respective wives Sarah, Rebekah, and Leah.

Recall from the Bible that upon the death of his beloved wife, Sarah, Abraham bought as a burial site a cave and some land at Machpelah, near Hebron. (Genesis 23:2-20) Later, Abraham too was buried here, as were other family members. Centuries afterward, around the traditional burial site, Herod the Great constructed an impressive building that in time was altered and enlarged by conquerors, reflecting their own religious persuasions.

Upon entering, you see six cenotaphs (monuments or empty tombs). The inset shows the one for Isaac, son of Abraham. Near it are holes through the floor, which have been used to gain access to what lies beneath. Investigators have found chambers that may have held numerous ancient bones.

What of Abraham? If he was laid to rest in a cave now beneath this site, he is long dead, correct? Most visitors would agree. Yet a prophet greater than Abraham said that in a sense Abraham still lives. How? And what bearing might this have upon your faith?

Please read the article "Your Dead Loved Ones—Where Are They?" (Page 3) It presents what that great prophet said about Abraham's being alive, which information can be of immense value to you and to your family.