

SEPTEMBER 1, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



We Need
Good
Neighbors

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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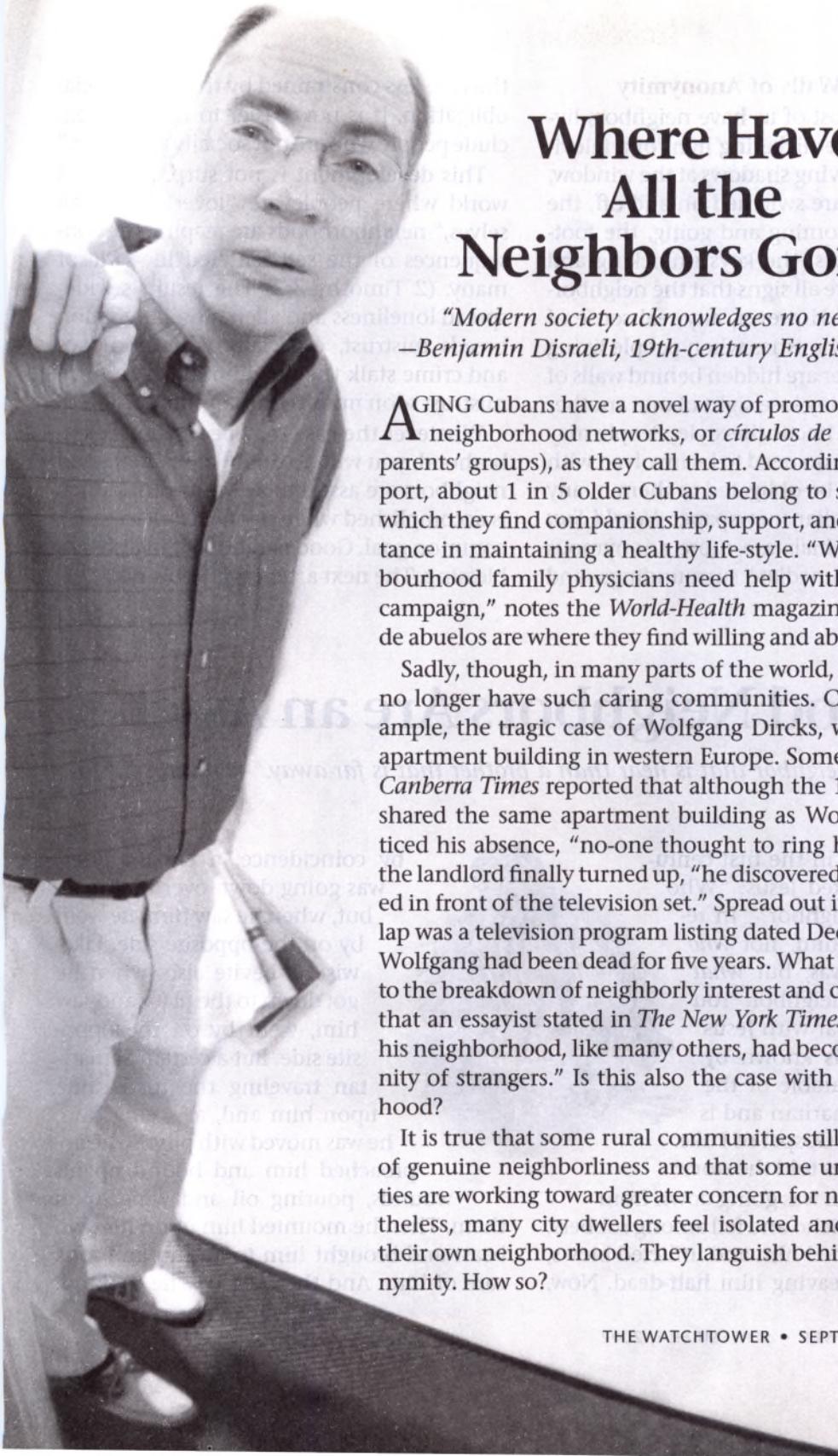
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Where Have All the Neighbors Gone?

"Modern society acknowledges no neighbour."

—Benjamin Disraeli, 19th-century English statesman.

AGING Cubans have a novel way of promoting well-being: neighborhood networks, or *círculos de abuelos* (grandparents' groups), as they call them. According to a 1997 report, about 1 in 5 older Cubans belong to such groups, in which they find companionship, support, and practical assistance in maintaining a healthy life-style. "Whenever neighbourhood family physicians need help with a vaccination campaign," notes the *World-Health* magazine, "the *círculos de abuelos* are where they find willing and able resources."

Sadly, though, in many parts of the world, neighborhoods no longer have such caring communities. Consider, for example, the tragic case of Wolfgang Dircks, who lived in an apartment building in western Europe. Some years ago, *The Canberra Times* reported that although the 17 families who shared the same apartment building as Wolfgang had noticed his absence, "no-one thought to ring his bell." When the landlord finally turned up, "he discovered a skeleton seated in front of the television set." Spread out in the skeleton's lap was a television program listing dated December 5, 1993. Wolfgang had been dead for five years. What a sad testimony to the breakdown of neighborly interest and care! No wonder that an essayist stated in *The New York Times Magazine* that his neighborhood, like many others, had become "a community of strangers." Is this also the case with your neighborhood?

It is true that some rural communities still enjoy a feeling of genuine neighborliness and that some urban communities are working toward greater concern for neighbor. Nevertheless, many city dwellers feel isolated and vulnerable in their own neighborhood. They languish behind walls of anonymity. How so?

Behind Walls of Anonymity

Of course, most of us have neighbors living close by. The flickering light of a television set, the moving shadows at the window, the lights that are switched on and off, the sound of cars coming and going, the footsteps in corridors, the keys unlocking and locking doors are all signs that the neighborhood is "alive." However, any real sense of neighborliness vanishes when people living near one another are hidden behind walls of anonymity or they lose sight of one another in the rush of a hectic life-style. People may feel that there is no need to be involved with neighbors or to be obligated to them in any way. The Australian newspaper *Herald Sun* admits: "Individuals are more anonymous within their immediate surroundings, and

thus are less constrained by the ties of social obligation. It is now easier to ignore or exclude people who are not socially attractive."

This development is not surprising. In a world where people are "lovers of themselves," neighborhoods are reaping the consequences of the self-centered life-style of many. (2 Timothy 3:2) The result is widespread loneliness and alienation. Alienation breeds mistrust, especially when violence and crime stalk the neighborhood. In turn, mistrust soon numbs human compassion.

Whatever the case may be in your neighborhood, you will no doubt agree that good neighbors are assets to a community. Much is accomplished when people work toward a common goal. Good neighbors can also be a blessing. The next article will show how.

Good Neighbors Are an Asset

"Better is a neighbor that is near than a brother that is far away."—Proverbs 27:10.

A SCHOLAR in the first century C.E. asked Jesus: "Who really is my neighbor?" In reply Jesus told him, not *who* his neighbor was, but *what* makes a real neighbor. You are likely familiar with Jesus' illustration. It is known by many as the parable of the neighborly Samaritan and is recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Here is how Jesus told the story:

"A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who both stripped him and inflicted blows, and went off, leaving him half-dead. Now,



by coincidence, a certain priest was going down over that road, but, when he saw him, he went by on the opposite side. Likewise, a Levite also, when he got down to the place and saw him, went by on the opposite side. But a certain Samaritan traveling the road came upon him and, at seeing him, he was moved with pity. So he approached him and bound up his wounds, pouring oil and wine upon them. Then he mounted him upon his own beast and brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day he took out

two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him, and whatever you spend besides this, I will repay you when I come back here.' Who of these three seems to you to have made himself neighbor to the man that fell among the robbers?"—Luke 10:29-36.

The scholar evidently got the point. Without hesitation he correctly identified the one who was a neighbor to the wounded man: "The one that acted mercifully toward him." Jesus then said to him: "Go your way and be doing the same yourself." (Luke 10:37) What a forceful illustration of what it means to be a real neighbor! Jesus' parable may even prompt us to ask ourselves: 'What kind of neighbor am I? Does my racial or national background influence me in determining who my neighbors are? Do such factors limit my obligation to help any fellowman whom I see in trouble? Do I go out of my way to be a good neighbor?'

Where to Start?

If we feel the need to improve in this matter, we must begin with our mental attitude. Our concerns should center on *being* a good neighbor. This can also contribute to our having good neighbors. Nearly two thousand years ago, Jesus stressed that important principle of human relations in his famous Sermon on the Mount. He said: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) Treating others with respect, dignity, and kindness encourages them to treat you the same way.

In the article "Loving Thy Neighborhood," appearing in the magazine *The Nation Since 1865*, journalist and author Lise Funderburg mentioned some simple things that can be done to encourage neighborliness. She wrote: "I want . . . points of intersection to be contained in the myriad small favors neighbors do for each other—taking in news-

papers, watching children, picking up something at the store. I want this proximity in an increasingly alienated world, where communities are made fragile by fear and crime." She then adds: "You have to start somewhere. And it might as well be next door."

The magazine *Canadian Geographic* also made a helpful point that can assist neighbors in developing a healthy attitude toward one another. Writer Marni Jackson observed: "Neighbours, like family, are people in your life that you don't always get to choose. The relationships call for tact, a certain courtliness and tolerance."

Good Neighbors—Good Givers

Granted, many of us may feel awkward about approaching neighbors. It may seem a lot easier to avoid contact and to isolate ourselves. However, the Bible says that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) Therefore, a good neighbor endeavors to make an effort to acquaint himself with people around him. While not necessarily wanting to develop close friendships, he goes to the trouble of exchanging a few words from time to time, perhaps starting just with a friendly smile or gesture.

As stated above, it is "the myriad small favors" that neighbors do for one another that really count in establishing and maintaining neighborly relationships. So it is good to look for small expressions of kindness that you can show a neighbor, for this will often promote a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect. Moreover, by doing so, we will follow the Biblical admonition: "Do not hold back good from those to whom it is owing, when it happens to be in the power of your hand to do it."—Proverbs 3:27; James 2:14-17.

Good Neighbors—Gracious Receivers

It would be ideal if we could say that everyone receives help and gifts graciously.

Unfortunately, this is not always so. Many offers of help and well-meaning gifts have been received so ungraciously that the sincere giver may think, 'That is the last time I'll do that!' On occasion, all your efforts with friendly greetings and waves to your neighbors may elicit only a reluctant nod in return.

Yet, in many cases the receiver is actually not ungracious, although he may appear to be so on the surface. Perhaps his cultural background makes him hesitant or embarrassed and causes him to act in a casual, seemingly unfriendly manner. On the other hand, in this ungrateful world, some people may find your friendliness unusual, or may even suspect your motives. They may need some reassurance. Thus, establishing friendly relations may take time and patience. However, neighbors who learn the art of being good givers and gracious receivers will contribute to a neighborhood spirit that is peaceful and happy.

When Adversity Strikes

A good neighbor is an especially valuable asset when disaster strikes. During times of adversity, the true spirit of neighborliness is seen. There are many accounts of unselfish acts by neighbors during such times. The common tragedy seems to cause neighbors to cooperate spontaneously and to extend themselves in behalf of one another. Even those with opposing views will often work together.

For example, *The New York Times* reported that when a devastating earthquake hit Turkey in 1999, traditional enemies showed neighborly solidarity. "We have been taught to hate the Turks for years," Greek columnist Anna Stergiou wrote in an Athens newspaper. "But their unbelievable pain gives us no joy. We were moved, we cried as if the age-old hatred disappeared at the sight of dead

babies." When rescue operations were officially stopped, Greek rescue teams refused to give up the search for survivors.

Engaging in rescue work *after* disasters strike is certainly a noble and heroic neighborly deed. Even so, to save a neighbor's life by warning him *before* an adversity can surely be considered an even more valuable neighborly deed. Unfortunately, history reveals that those who warn neighbors of coming disasters are often not welcomed, since at the time of the warning, the impending disaster is not readily discernible. Those who sound a warning are often met with disbelief. It takes much persistence and self-sacrifice on the part of any who are trying to help individuals who are unaware of their precarious situation.

The Greatest Neighborly Deed

Today, something far more momentous than a natural disaster is coming upon mankind. It is the foretold act of Almighty God that will rid the earth of crime, wickedness, and associated problems. (Revelation 16:16;



21:3, 4) This momentous event is not a remote possibility but a certainty! Jehovah's Witnesses are eager to share the knowledge needed to survive this impending world-shaking event with as many people as possible.



That is why they engage so persistently in their well-known preaching activity throughout the world. (Matthew 24:14) They do this willingly, out of love for God and neighbor.

Therefore, do not let prejudice or irritation prevent you from listening when the Witnesses come to your door or approach you elsewhere. They are trying to be good neighbors. So accept their offer to study the Bible with you. Learn how God's Word assures us that a future of joyful coexistence between neighbors is at hand. At that time, no more racial, religious, or class discrimination will ruin the cordial relationship that most of us really desire.



It is good to perform acts of kindness in your neighborhood

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"NEVER HAS ANOTHER MAN SPOKEN LIKE THIS"

"They all began to give favorable witness about him and to marvel at the winsome words proceeding out of his mouth."—LUKE 4:22.

THE officers failed in their mission. They were sent to lay hold of Jesus Christ, but they returned empty-handed. The chief priests and Pharisees demanded an explanation: "Why is it you did not bring him in?" Indeed, why did the officers not seize a man who would offer no physical resistance? The officers explained: "Never has another man spoken like this." They were so impressed with Jesus' teaching that they could not bring themselves to take this peaceful man into custody.*—John 7:32, 45, 46.

Those officers were not the only ones who were impressed with Jesus' teaching. The Bible tells us that people turned out in great numbers just to hear him speak. The people in his hometown marveled "at the winsome words proceeding out of his mouth." (Luke 4:22) More than once he spoke from a boat to great crowds assembled on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. (Mark 3:9; 4:1; Luke 5:1-3) On one occasion, "a big crowd" stayed with him for days, even going without eating.—Mark 8:1, 2.

* The officers were likely agents of the Sanhedrin and under the authority of the chief priests.

1, 2. (a) Why did the officers who were sent to lay hold of Jesus return empty-handed? (b) What shows that the officers were not the only ones who were impressed with Jesus' teaching?



³ What made Jesus an outstanding teacher? Love was the primary reason.* Jesus loved the truths he conveyed, and he loved the people he taught. But Jesus also had an extraordinary grasp of teaching methods. In the study articles appearing in this issue, we will discuss some of the effective methods he used and how we can imitate them.

Simplicity and Clarity

It is not uncommon for well-educated people to use language that is far above the heads of their listeners. But if we do not make ourselves understood by others, how can they benefit from our knowledge? As a teacher, Jesus never talked over the heads of others. Imagine the range of the vocabulary he could have had at his disposal. Yet, despite his vast knowledge, he thought of his listeners, not of himself. He knew that many of them were "unlettered and ordinary." (Acts 4:13) To reach them, he used lan-

* See the articles "I Set the Pattern for You" and "Follow Me Continually," in the August 15, 2002, issue of *The Watchtower*.

3. What was the primary reason why Jesus was such an outstanding teacher?

4, 5. (a) Why did Jesus use plain language in his teaching, and what is remarkable about the fact that he did so? (b) How is the Sermon on the Mount an example of the simplicity with which Jesus taught?

guage that such people could understand. The words may have been simple, but the truths they conveyed were profound.

⁵ Take, for example, the Sermon on the Mount, recorded at Matthew 5:3–7:27. It may have taken Jesus just 20 minutes to deliver that sermon. Yet, its teachings are deep, getting to the very heart of such matters as adultery, divorce, and materialism. (Matthew 5: 27-32; 6:19-34) There are, however, no complicated or high-sounding expressions. Why, there is hardly a word that even a child could not readily understand! No wonder that when he finished, the crowds—likely including many farmers, shepherds, and fishermen—“were astounded at his way of teaching”!—Matthew 7:28.

⁶ Often using clear, short phrases, Jesus uttered sayings that were simple but rich in meaning. In the era before printed books, he thus imprinted his message indelibly on the minds and hearts of his listeners. Note some examples: “No one can slave for two masters; . . . you cannot slave for God and for Riches.” “Stop judging that you may not be judged.” “By their fruits you will recognize those

6. Give an example of how Jesus uttered sayings that were simple but rich in meaning.

***Jesus used plain language
that ordinary people
could understand***

men.” “Persons in health do not need a physician, but the ailing do.” “All those who take the sword will perish by the sword.” “Pay back Caesar’s things to Caesar, but God’s things to God.” “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”* (Matthew 6:24; 7:1, 20; 9:12; 26:52; Mark 12:17; Acts 20: 35) To this day, nearly 2,000 years after they were spoken by Jesus, such powerful sayings are easily called to mind.

Use of Questions

⁷ Jesus made remarkable use of questions. He often did so even when it would have been less time-consuming just to tell his listeners the point. Why, then, did he ask questions? Occasionally, he used piercing questions to expose the motives of his opposers, thereby silencing them. (Matthew 12:24-30; 21:23-27; 22:41-46) In many cases,

* This last excerpt, found at Acts 20:35, is quoted only by the apostle Paul, although the sense of those words is found in the Gospels. Paul may have received that statement orally (either from a disciple who heard Jesus say it or from the resurrected Jesus) or by divine revelation.—Acts 22:6-15; 1 Corinthians 15:6, 8.

7. Why did Jesus ask questions?



however, Jesus took the time to ask questions in order to convey truths, to get his listeners to express what was in their hearts, and to stimulate and train the thinking of his disciples. Let us examine two examples, both involving the apostle Peter.

⁸ First, recall the occasion when tax collectors asked Peter if Jesus paid the temple tax.* Peter, impulsive at times, answered, "Yes." However, a short while later, Jesus reasoned with him: "'What do you think, Simon? From whom do the kings of the earth receive duties or head tax? From their sons or from the strangers?' When he said: 'From the strangers,' Jesus said to him: 'Really, then, the sons are tax-free.'" (Matthew 17:24-27) The point of Jesus' questions should have been obvious to Peter. Why is that?

⁹ In Jesus' day, the family members of monarchs were known to be tax exempt. Thus, as the only-begotten Son of the heavenly King who was worshiped at the temple, Jesus should not have been obligated to pay the tax. Note that rather than just telling Peter the right answer, Jesus effectively but gently used questions to help Peter arrive at the right conclusion—and perhaps to see the need to think more carefully before speaking.

¹⁰ The second example involved an incident that took place on Passover night 33 C.E. when a mob came to arrest Jesus. The disciples asked Jesus whether they should

* The Jews were required to pay an annual temple tax of two drachmas (about two days' wages). The tax money was used to pay for the maintenance of the temple, the service performed there, and the daily sacrifices offered on behalf of the nation.

8, 9. How did Jesus use questions to help Peter come to the right conclusion on the matter of paying the temple tax?

10, 11. How did Jesus respond when Peter cut off a man's ear on Passover night 33 C.E., and how does this show that Jesus appreciated the value of questions?



The Pharisees 'strained out the gnat but gulped down the camel'

fight in his defense. (Luke 22:49) Not waiting for an answer, Peter cut off one man's ear with a sword (though it may be that Peter intended to inflict more serious harm). Peter acted in a manner contrary to his master's will, for Jesus was fully prepared to give himself up. How did Jesus respond? Ever patient, he asked Peter three questions: "The cup that the Father has given me, should I not by all means drink it?" "Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels? In that case, how would the Scriptures be fulfilled that it must take place this way?"—John 18:11; Matthew 26:52-54.

¹¹ Reflect for a moment on that account. Jesus, surrounded by an angry mob, knew that his death was imminent and that the clearing of his Father's name and the salvation of the human family rested on his shoulders. Yet, he took the time right then and there to impress important truths on Peter's mind by questions. Is it not obvious that Jesus appreciated the value of questions?

Vivid Hyperbole

¹² In his ministry, Jesus often made use of another effective teaching method—hyperbole. This is an intentional exaggeration for the purpose of emphasis. With hyperbole, Jesus created mental pictures that were hard to forget. Let us consider a few examples.

¹³ In the Sermon on the Mount, when stressing the need to “stop judging” others, Jesus said: “Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the rafter in your own eye?” (Matthew 7:1-3) Can you visualize the scene? Someone who is prone to be critical offers to extract a mere straw from his brother’s “eye.” The critic would be claiming that his brother could not see matters clearly enough so as to render acceptable judgments. But the critic’s own ability to judge is impaired by a “rafter”—a log or beam that might be used to support a roof. What an unforgettable way to stress how foolish it is to criticize the minor faults of our brothers when we may have major faults of our own!

¹⁴ On another occasion, Jesus denounced the Pharisees as “blind guides, who strain out the gnat but gulp down the camel.” (Matthew 23:24) This was a particularly powerful use of hyperbole. Why? The contrast between a tiny gnat and a camel, which was one of the largest animals known to Jesus’ hearers, was striking. It is estimated that it would take up to 70 million gnats to equal the weight of an average camel! Also, Jesus knew that the Pharisees strained their wine through a cloth sieve. Those sticklers for rules did that in order to avoid swallowing a gnat and thereby become ceremonially un-

12, 13. (a) What is hyperbole? (b) How did Jesus use hyperbole to stress the foolishness of criticizing minor faults of our brothers?

14. Why were Jesus’ words about straining out the gnat and gulping down the camel particularly powerful hyperbole?

clean. Yet, they figuratively gulped down the camel, which was also unclean. (Leviticus 11:4, 21-24) Jesus’ point was clear. The Pharisees meticulously complied with the smallest of the Law’s requirements, but they disregarded the weightier matters—“justice and mercy and faithfulness.” (Matthew 23:23) How clearly Jesus exposed them for what they were!

¹⁵ Throughout his ministry, Jesus often used hyperbole. Consider some examples. “Faith the size of a [tiny] mustard grain” that could move a mountain—Jesus could hardly have found a more effective way to emphasize that even a little faith can accomplish much. (Matthew 17:20) A huge camel trying to squeeze through the eye of a sewing needle—how well that illustrates the difficulty facing a rich person who tries to serve God while holding on to a materialistic life-style! (Matthew 19:24) Do you not marvel at Jesus’ colorful figures of speech and his ability to achieve maximum effect with minimum words?

Irrefutable Logic

¹⁶ With his perfect mind, Jesus was a master at reasoning logically with people. Yet, he never misused this ability. In his teaching, he always employed his keen mental faculties to advance truth. At times, he used powerful logic to refute the false charges of his religious opposers. In many instances, he used logical reasoning in order to teach his disciples important lessons. Let us look at Jesus’ masterful ability to employ logic.

¹⁷ Consider the occasion when Jesus healed a demon-possessed man who was blind and

15. What are some lessons that Jesus taught by using hyperbole?

16. Jesus always used his keen mental faculties in what way?

17, 18. What powerful logic did Jesus use to refute a false charge of the Pharisees?

unable to speak. Upon hearing about it, the Pharisees said: "This fellow does not expel the demons except by means of Beelzebub [Satan], the ruler of the demons." Note that the Pharisees conceded that superhuman power was needed to expel Satan's demons. However, to keep the people from believing in Jesus, they attributed his power to Satan. Showing that they had not thought their argument through to its logical conclusion, Jesus replied: "Every kingdom divided against itself comes to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. In the same way, if Satan expels Satan, he has become divided against himself; how, then, will his kingdom stand?" (Matthew 12:22-26) Jesus was, in effect, saying: 'If I were, as you say, an agent of Satan, undoing what Satan did, then Satan would be working against his own interests and would soon fall.' Powerful logic, was it not?

¹⁸ Then Jesus reasoned further on this matter. He was aware that some from the Pharisees' own ranks had cast out demons. Hence, he asked a simple but devastating question: "If I expel the demons by means of Beelzebub, by means of whom do your sons [or disciples] expel them?" (Matthew 12:27) Jesus' argument, in a sense, was this: 'If, in fact, I expel demons by the power of Satan, then

Do You Recall?

- What examples show that Jesus taught with simplicity and clarity?
- Why did Jesus use questions in his teaching?
- What is hyperbole, and how did Jesus use this teaching method?
- How did Jesus use logical reasoning to teach his disciples heartwarming truths about Jehovah?

your own disciples must be acting under this same power.' What could the Pharisees say? They would never acknowledge that their disciples acted under Satan's power. With irrefutable logic, Jesus reduced their charge against him to an absurdity.

¹⁹ In addition to using logic to silence his opposers, Jesus also used logical, persuasive arguments to teach positive, heartwarming truths about Jehovah. A number of times, he used what might be called a 'how much more so' line of reasoning, helping his listeners to advance from a familiar truth to further conviction. Let us examine just two examples.

²⁰ When responding to his disciples' request to teach them how to pray, Jesus related the illustration of a man whose "bold persistence" finally persuaded an unwilling friend to grant his request. Jesus also described the willingness of parents "to give good gifts" to their children. Then he concluded: "If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, *how much more so* will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:1-13) The point Jesus made is based, not on similarity, but on contrast. If an unwilling friend could finally be persuaded to meet his neighbor's need, and if imperfect human parents care for the needs of their children, how much more will our loving heavenly Father grant holy spirit to his loyal servants who humbly come to him in prayer!

²¹ Jesus used similar reasoning when offering counsel on dealing with anxiety about

^{19, 20. (a)} In what positive way did Jesus use logic? (b) How did Jesus use a 'how much more so' line of reasoning when responding to his disciples' request to teach them how to pray?

^{21, 22. (a)} What reasoning did Jesus use when offering counsel on dealing with anxiety about material things? (b) After reviewing a few of Jesus' teaching methods, what conclusion do we reach?

material things. He said: "Mark well that the ravens neither sow seed nor reap, and they have neither barn nor storehouse, and yet God feeds them. Of *how much more* worth are you than birds? Mark well how the lilies grow; they neither toil nor spin . . . If, now, God thus clothes the vegetation in the field that today exists and tomorrow is cast into an oven, *how much rather* will he clothe you, you with little faith!" (Luke 12:24, 27, 28) Yes, if Jehovah looks after birds and flowers, how much more will he care for his servants! Such tender but powerful reasoning

no doubt touched the heart of Jesus' listeners.

²² After reviewing a few of the teaching methods of Jesus, we can easily conclude that those officers who failed to seize him were by no means exaggerating when they said: "Never has another man spoken like this." But the teaching method for which Jesus is perhaps best known is that of using illustrations, or parables. Why did he use this method? And what made his illustrations so effective? These questions will be discussed in the next article.

"WITHOUT AN ILLUSTRATION HE WOULD NOT SPEAK TO THEM"

"Jesus spoke to the crowds by illustrations. Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them."—MATTHEW 13:34.

CAN you recall an illustration you heard, perhaps in a public discourse, many years ago? Effective illustrations are not quickly forgotten. One author noted that illustrations "turn ears into eyes and free listeners to think with pictures in their heads." Because we often think best in pictures, illustrations can make concepts easier to grasp. Illustrations can breathe life into words, teaching lessons that become fixed in our memory.

² No teacher on earth has ever been more skillful at using illustrations than was Jesus Christ. The many parables of Jesus are

called with ease nearly two thousand years after they were spoken.* Why did Jesus rely heavily on this particular teaching method? And what made his illustrations so effective?

Why Jesus Taught With Illustrations

³ The Bible gives two noteworthy reasons why Jesus used illustrations. First, his doing so fulfilled prophecy. The apostle Matthew wrote: "Jesus spoke to the crowds

* Jesus' illustrations took many forms, including examples, comparisons, similes, and metaphors. He is well-known for his use of the parable, which has been defined as "a short, usually fictitious, narrative from which a moral or spiritual truth is drawn."

3. (a) According to Matthew 13:34, 35, what is one reason why Jesus used illustrations? (b) What indicates that Jehovah must value this method of teaching?

1, 2. (a) Why are effective illustrations not easily forgotten? (b) What forms of illustrations did Jesus use, and what questions arise about his use of illustrations? (See also footnote.)

by illustrations. Indeed, without an illustration he would not speak to them; that there might be fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet who said: 'I will open my mouth with illustrations.' " (Matthew 13:34, 35) "The prophet" quoted by Matthew was the composer of Psalm 78:2. That psalmist wrote under the inspiration of God's spirit centuries before Jesus' birth. Is it not remarkable that hundreds of years in advance, Jehovah determined that his Son would teach with illustrations? Surely Jehovah must value this method of teaching!

⁴ Second, Jesus himself explained that he used illustrations to sift out those whose hearts were unresponsive. After he related to "great crowds" the parable of the sower, his disciples asked: "Why is it you speak to them by the use of illustrations?" Jesus answered: "To you it is granted to understand the sacred secrets of the kingdom of the heavens, but to those people it is not granted. This is why I speak to them by the use of illustrations, because, looking, they look in vain, and hearing, they hear in vain, neither do they get the sense of it; and toward them the prophecy of Isaiah is having fulfillment, which says, 'By hearing, you will hear but by no means get the sense of it; and, looking, you will look but by no means see. For the heart of this people has grown unreceptive.'"—Matthew 13:2, 10, 11, 13-15; Isaiah 6:9, 10.

⁵ What was it about Jesus' illustrations that separated people? In some cases, his listeners had to dig in order to get the full meaning of his words. Humble individuals were moved to ask for more information. (Matthew 13:36; Mark 4:34) Jesus' illustrations, then, revealed truth to those whose hearts hungered for it; at the same time, his illustrations concealed truth from those with proud hearts. What a

4. How did Jesus explain why he used illustrations?
5. How did Jesus' illustrations sift the humble listeners from the proudhearted?

remarkable teacher Jesus was! Let us now examine some of the factors that made his illustrations so effective.

Selective Use of Details

⁶ Have you ever wondered what it must have been like for those first-century disciples who directly heard Jesus teach? Privileged though they were to hear the voice of Jesus, they did not yet have the advantage of consulting a written record to remind them of the things he said. Instead, they had to carry Jesus' words in their minds and hearts. Through his skillful use of illustrations, Jesus made it easier for them to remember what he taught. In what way?

⁷ Jesus was selective in his use of details. When specifics were relevant to a story or necessary for emphasis, he took great care to provide them. So he said exactly how many sheep were left behind while the owner searched for a stray, how many hours workers labored in the vineyard, and how many talents were given in trust.—Matthew 18:12-14; 20:1-16; 25:14-30.

⁸ At the same time, Jesus left out nonessential details that might get in the way of our grasping the meaning of the illustrations. For example, in the parable of the unmerciful slave, no explanation was given as to how that slave had managed to run up a debt of 60,000,000 denarii. Jesus was stressing the need to be forgiving. What mattered was, not how the slave fell into debt, but how his debt was forgiven and how he, in turn, treated a fellow slave who owed him relatively little money. (Matthew 18:23-35) Similarly, in the illustration of the prodigal son, Jesus offered no explanation as to why the younger son suddenly demanded his inheritance and why he squandered it. But Jesus did detail

- 6-8. (a) What advantage did Jesus' first-century listeners not yet have? (b) What examples show that Jesus was selective in his use of details?

how the father felt and responded when his son had a change of heart and returned home. Such details regarding the father's response were essential to the point Jesus was making, that Jehovah forgives "in a large way."—Isaiah 55:7; Luke 15:11-32.

⁹ Jesus was also judicious in the way he portrayed the characters in his parables. Instead of providing elaborate descriptions of the characters' appearance, Jesus often focused on what they did or how they responded to the events he narrated. Hence, rather than describing what the neighborly Samaritan looked like, Jesus related something far more significant—how the Samaritan compassionately came to the aid of an injured Jew lying on the road. Jesus provided the details that were needed to teach that love of neighbor should extend to people other than those of our own race or nationality.—Luke 10:29, 33-37.

¹⁰ Jesus' careful use of details kept his illustrations concise and uncluttered. He thus made it easier for his first-century listeners—and countless others who would later read the inspired Gospels—to recall them and the valuable lessons they taught.

Drawn From Everyday Life

¹¹ Jesus was a master at using illustrations that related to the lives of people. Many of his parables reflect things that he had no doubt

9, 10. (a) When portraying the characters in his illustrations, on what did Jesus focus? (b) How did Jesus make it easier for his listeners and others to recall his illustrations?

11. Give examples of how Jesus' parables reflected things that he no doubt had observed while growing up in Galilee.



Jesus told of a slave who refused to forgive a relatively small debt and of a father who forgave a son who had squandered his whole inheritance

observed while growing up in Galilee. Think, for a moment, about his early life. How often did he see his mother prepare leavened bread by taking a piece of fermented dough saved from a previous baking and using it as a leavening agent? (Matthew 13:33) How many times did he watch the fishermen as they let down their nets into the clear blue waters of the Sea of Galilee? (Matthew 13:47) How often did he observe children playing in the marketplace? (Matthew 11:16) Jesus likely took note of other commonplace things that found their way into his illustrations—seeds being sown, joyful marriage feasts, and grain fields ripening in the sun.—Matthew 13:3-8; 25:1-12; Mark 4:26-29.

¹² Not surprisingly, then, circumstances and situations of everyday life are sprinkled throughout Jesus' many illustrations. Therefore, to appreciate more fully his skill in employing this teaching method, it is helpful to consider what his words meant to his Jewish listeners. Let us take a look at two examples.

¹³ First, in the parable of the wheat and the weeds, Jesus told about a man who sowed fine wheat in his field but "an enemy" invaded the field and oversowed it with weeds. Why did Jesus select that particular hostile act? Well, keep in mind that he related the illustration near the Sea of Galilee, and the main occupation of the Galileans was evidently agriculture. What could be more damaging to a farmer than to have an enemy come secretly into his field and oversow it with harmful weeds? Secular laws of that time show that such attacks did happen. Is it not obvious that Jesus used a situation that his listeners could relate to?—Matthew 13:1, 2, 24-30.

¹⁴ Second, recall the parable of the neighborly Samaritan. Jesus began by saying: "A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among robbers, who both stripped him and inflicted blows, and went off, leaving him half-dead." (Luke 10:30) Significantly, Jesus used the road that went "from Jerusalem to Jericho" to make his point. When relating this parable, he was in Judea, not far from Jerusalem; so his listeners likely

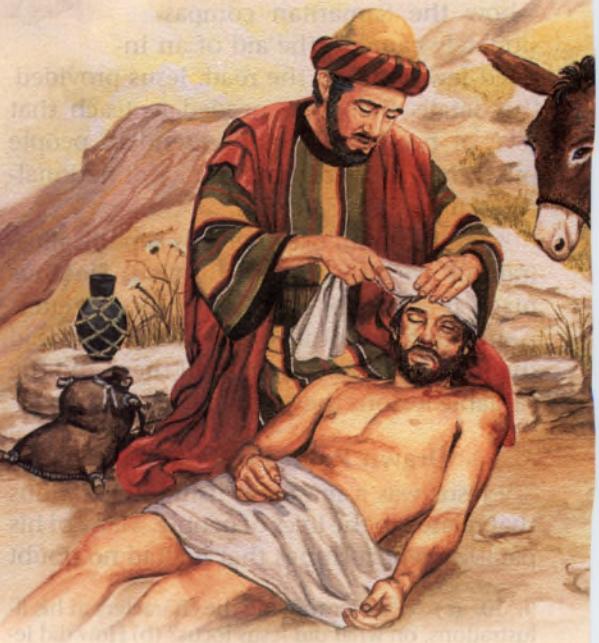
12, 13. How did Jesus' parable of the wheat and the weeds reflect his familiarity with local conditions?

14. In the parable of the neighborly Samaritan, why is it significant that Jesus used the road that went "from Jerusalem to Jericho" to make his point?

knew about the road in question. That particular road was notoriously dangerous, especially for someone traveling alone. It wound through lonely terrain, providing many lurking places for robbers.

¹⁵ Something else is noteworthy about Jesus' reference to the road that went "down from Jerusalem to Jericho." According to the story, first a priest and then a Levite were also traveling that road—although neither stopped to help the victim. (Luke 10:31, 32) The priests served at the temple in Jerusalem, and the Levites assisted them. Many priests and Levites resided in Jericho when they were not working at the temple, for Jericho was only 14 miles from Jerusalem. Hence,

15. Why could no one rightly justify the indifference of the priest and the Levite in the illustration involving the neighborly Samaritan?



What was the point

*of Jesus' parable of
the neighborly Samaritan?*

they undoubtedly had occasion to travel that road. Note, too, that the priest and the Levite were going along the road “from Jerusalem,” thus heading *away* from the temple.* So no one could rightly justify the indifference of these men by saying, ‘They avoided the injured man because he appeared to be dead, and touching a corpse would have made them temporarily unfit to serve at the temple.’ (Leviticus 21:1; Numbers 19:11, 16) Is it not clear that Jesus’ illustration reflected things that were familiar to his listeners?

Drawn From Creation

¹⁶ A number of Jesus’ illustrations and parables reveal his acquaintance with plants, animals, and the elements. (Matthew 6:26, 28-30; 16:2, 3) Where did he get such knowledge? While growing up in Galilee, he no doubt had ample opportunity to observe Jehovah’s creations. More than that, Jesus is “the firstborn of all creation,” and Jehovah used him as the “master worker” in creating all things. (Colossians 1:15, 16; Proverbs 8:30,

* Jerusalem was higher in elevation than Jericho. Therefore, when traveling “from Jerusalem to Jericho,” as mentioned in the parable, a traveler would be “going down.”

16. Why is it no wonder that Jesus was intimately acquainted with creation?

31) Is it any wonder that Jesus was intimately acquainted with creation? Let us see how he put this knowledge to skillful use in his teaching.

¹⁷ Among the most tender of Jesus’ illustrations is the one recorded in John chapter 10, where he likens his close relationship with his followers to that of a shepherd with his sheep. Jesus’ words reveal that he was very familiar with the traits of domestic sheep. He indicated that sheep allow themselves to be led and that they faithfully follow their shepherd. (John 10:2-4) The unique bond between shepherds and sheep has been observed by visitors to Bible lands. In the 19th century, naturalist H. B. Tristram noted: “I once watched a shepherd playing with his flock. He pretended to run away; the sheep pursued and surrounded him. . . . Finally all the flock formed a circle, gambolling round him.”

¹⁸ Why do sheep follow their shepherd? “Because they know his voice,” said Jesus. (John 10:4) Do sheep really know the voice of their shepherd? From personal

17, 18. (a) How do Jesus’ words recorded in John chapter 10 reveal that he was familiar with the traits of sheep? (b) What have visitors to Bible lands observed about the bond between shepherds and their sheep?

Do sheep really know the voice of their shepherd?



observation, George A. Smith wrote in his book *The Historical Geography of the Holy Land*: "Sometimes we enjoyed our noonday rest beside one of those Judæan wells, to which three or four shepherds come down with their flocks. The flocks mixed with each other, and we wondered how each shepherd would get his own again. But after the watering and the playing were over, the shepherds one by one went up different sides of the valley, and each called out his peculiar call; and the sheep of each drew out of the crowd to their own shepherd, and the flocks passed away as orderly as they came." Jesus could hardly have found a better way to illustrate his point. If we recognize and obey his teachings and if we follow his lead, then we can come under the tender and loving care of "the fine shepherd."—John 10:11.

Drawn From Events Known to His Hearers

¹⁹ Effective illustrations can take the form of experiences or examples from which lessons can be drawn. On one occasion, Jesus used a recent event to reject the false notion that tragedy befalls those who deserve it. He said: "Those eighteen upon whom the tower

19. To reject a false notion, how did Jesus make effective use of a local tragedy?

Do You Remember?

- Why did Jesus teach with illustrations?
- What example shows that Jesus used illustrations that his first-century listeners could relate to?
- How did Jesus put his knowledge of creation to skillful use in his illustrations?
- In what ways did Jesus make use of events that were known to his hearers?

in Siloam fell, thereby killing them, do you imagine that they were proved greater debtors [sinners] than all other men inhabiting Jerusalem?" (Luke 13:4) Jesus argued eloquently against fatalistic reasoning. Those 18 souls did not perish because of some sin that evoked divine displeasure. Rather, their tragic death was a result of time and unforeseen occurrence. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) He thus refuted a false teaching by referring to an event that was well-known to his hearers.

²⁰ In his teaching, Jesus also drew upon Scriptural examples. Recall the time when the Pharisees condemned his disciples for plucking grain and eating it on the Sabbath. In reality, the disciples violated, not God's Law, but the Pharisees' strict interpretation of what constituted unlawful work on the Sabbath. To illustrate that God never purposed such an unduly rigid application of his Sabbath law, Jesus referred to an incident recorded at 1 Samuel 21:3-6. When hungry, David and his men stopped at the tabernacle and ate the loaves of presentation, which had been replaced. The old loaves were ordinarily reserved for the priests to eat. Yet, under the circumstances, David and his men were not condemned for eating them. Remarkably, that account is the only recorded instance in the Bible regarding the use of the old loaves by nonpriests. Jesus knew just the right account to use, and his Jewish listeners no doubt were familiar with it.—Matthew 12:1-8.

²¹ Truly, Jesus was a Great Teacher! We cannot help but marvel at his matchless ability to convey important truths in a way that reached his listeners. How, though, can we imitate him in our teaching? This will be discussed in the following article.

20, 21. (a) Why did the Pharisees condemn Jesus' disciples? (b) What Scriptural account did Jesus use to illustrate that Jehovah never purposed a rigid application of his Sabbath law? (c) What will be discussed in the following article?

IMITATE THE GREAT TEACHER

"Go therefore and make disciples of people . . . , teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—MATTHEW 28:19, 20.

ARE you a teacher? In a sense, we all are. Every time you give directions to a lost traveler, show a fellow worker how to perform a particular task, or explain to a child how to tie his shoes, you are teaching. Helping others in such ways brings a measure of satisfaction, does it not?

² When it comes to teaching, true Christians have a unique responsibility. We are commissioned to "make disciples of people . . . , teaching them." (Matthew 28:19, 20) Within the congregation too, we have occasion to teach. Qualified men are appointed to serve as "shepherds and teachers," with a view to building up the congregation. (Ephesians 4:11-13) In their daily Christian activities, mature women are to be "teachers of what is good" to younger women. (Titus 2:3-5) All of us are urged to encourage fellow believers, and we can heed that admonition by using the Bible to build up others. (1 Thessalonians 5:11) What a privilege it is to be a teacher of God's Word and to share spiritual values that can have long-lasting benefits!

³ How, though, can we improve our effectiveness as teachers? Primarily, it is by imitating the Great Teacher, Jesus. 'But how can we imitate Jesus?' some may wonder. 'He was

1, 2. (a) How are we all, in a sense, teachers?
(b) When it comes to teaching, what unique responsibility do true Christians have?

3. How can we improve our effectiveness as teachers?



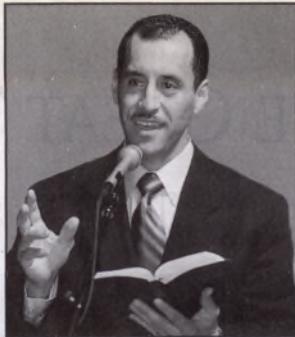
perfect.' Granted, we cannot be perfect teachers. Still, regardless of our abilities, we can do our best to imitate the way Jesus taught. Let us discuss how we can employ four of his methods—simplicity, effective questions, logical reasoning, and fitting illustrations.

Keeping It Simple

⁴ The basic truths of God's Word are not complicated. In prayer, Jesus said: "I publicly praise you, Father, . . . because you have hidden these things from the wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to babes." (Matthew 11:25) Jehovah has caused his purposes to be revealed to those with sincere and humble hearts. (1 Corinthians 1:26-28) Thus, simplicity is a key feature of Bible truth.

⁵ When you conduct a home Bible study or make return visits on interested ones, how can you teach with simplicity? Well, what did we learn from the Great Teacher? To reach his listeners, many of whom were "unlettered and ordinary," Jesus used plain language that they could grasp. (Acts 4:13) To teach with simplicity, then, a first requirement is to watch our vocabulary. We do not need to use high-sounding words or phrases in order to make the truth of God's Word more convincing to others. Such "extravagance of speech"

4, 5. (a) Why is simplicity a key feature of Bible truth? (b) To teach with simplicity, why is it important to watch our vocabulary?



could be intimidating, especially to those with limited education or ability. (1 Corinthians 2:1, 2) Jesus' example shows that simple words carefully chosen can convey the truth with much power.

⁶ To teach with simplicity, we must also be careful to avoid overwhelming a Bible student with too much information. Jesus was considerate of the limitations of his disciples. (John 16:12) We, too, must take the student into consideration. For example, when conducting a study in the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, we do not need to explain every detail.* Nor is it necessary to rush through the information, as if covering a set amount of material is the most important thing. Rather, it is wise to let the student's needs and abilities determine the pace of the study. Our goal is to help the student to become a disciple of Christ and a worshiper of Jehovah. We need to take whatever time is necessary to help the interested student to grasp clearly what he is learning. Thus, the truth may touch his heart and move him to action.—Romans 12:2.

⁷ When we give talks in the congregation, especially if there are newcomers in the audience, how can we utter speech that is "easily understood"? (1 Corinthians 14:9) Consider

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

6. How can we avoid overwhelming a Bible student with too much information?
7. What suggestions can help us to teach with simplicity when we give talks in the congregation?

three suggestions that can help. First, explain any unfamiliar terms that you have to use. Our understanding of God's Word has given us a unique vocabulary. If we use such expressions as "the faithful and discreet slave," "other sheep," and "Babylon the Great," we may

need to explain them with simple phrases that make the meaning clear. Second, avoid wordiness. Too many words, too elaborately stated, may lose the audience. Clarity comes from pruning out unnecessary words and phrases. Third, do not try to cover too much material. Our research may yield many interesting details. But it is best to organize the material into a few main points, using only the information that supports those points and that can be clearly developed in the allotted time.

Effective Use of Questions

⁸ Recall that Jesus was a master at using questions to get his disciples to express what was on their minds and to stimulate and train their thinking. With his questions, Jesus gently reached and touched their hearts. (Matthew 16:13, 15; John 11:26) How can we, like Jesus, make effective use of questions?

⁹ When preaching from house to house, we can use questions to arouse interest, paving the way for us to talk about God's Kingdom. How can we choose a question that is tailored to the interests of the householder? Be observant. When approaching a house, look at the surroundings. Are there toys in the yard, indicating that there are children in the home? If so, we might ask, 'Have you ever wondered what the world will be like when your children grow up?' (Psalm 37:10, 11) Are there a number of locks on the front door, or is there

- 8, 9. How can we choose a question that is tailored to a householder's interest? Give examples.

Elders can use questions to help fellow believers to draw comfort from God's Word

a security system? We could ask: 'Do you think the time will ever come when people like you and me can feel safe in our home and on the street?' (Micah 4:3, 4) Is there a ramp for wheelchair access? We might ask: 'Will there ever be a time when everyone living will enjoy good health?' (Isaiah 33:24) Many suggestions can be found in the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures*.*

¹⁰ How can we put questions to good use when conducting Bible studies? Unlike Jesus, we cannot read hearts. However, tactful but discerning questions can help us to 'draw up' the thoughts and feelings of the student's heart. (Proverbs 20:5) For example, suppose we are studying the chapter "Why Living a Godly Life Brings Happiness," in the *Knowledge* book. It discusses God's view of dishonesty, fornication, and other matters. The student may answer the printed questions correctly, but does he agree with what he is learning? We might ask: 'Does Jehovah's view of such matters seem reasonable to you?' 'How can you apply these Bible principles in your life?' Keep in mind, though, the need to be respectful, according to the student dignity. We would not want to ask questions that embarrass or humiliate the Bible student.—Proverbs 12:18.

¹¹ Public speakers can also make effective use of questions. Rhetorical questions—questions that we do not expect our listeners to answer aloud—can help an audience to think and reason. Jesus occasionally used such questions. (Matthew 11:7-9) In addition,

* See the section "Introductions for Use in the Field Ministry," on pages 9-15.—Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

10. How can we use questions to 'draw up' the thoughts and feelings of a Bible student's heart, but what should we keep in mind?

11. In what ways can public speakers make effective use of questions?



after introductory remarks, a speaker might use questions to outline the main points that will be discussed. He could say: "In our discussion today, we are going to consider the answers to the following questions . . ." Then, in the conclusion, he could refer to those questions to review the main points.

¹² In their shepherding work, Christian elders can use questions to help a 'depressed soul' to draw comfort from Jehovah's Word. (1 Thessalonians 5:14) For example, to help one who feels dejected, an elder might direct attention to Psalm 34:18. It says: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." To be sure that the discouraged one sees how this applies to him personally, the elder might ask: 'Jehovah is near to whom? Do you at times feel "broken at heart" and "crushed in spirit"? If, as the Bible says, Jehovah is near to such ones, does that not mean that he is near to you?' Such tender reassurance can revive the spirit of one who is downhearted.—Isaiah 57:15.

Logical Reasoning

¹³ In our ministry, we want to reach hearts with sound, persuasive reasoning. (Acts 19:8;

12. Give an example to show how Christian elders can use questions to help a fellow believer to draw comfort from God's Word.

13, 14. (a) How might we reason with someone who says he does not believe in a God he cannot see? (b) Why should we not expect that everyone will be convinced?

28:23, 24) Does that mean that we must learn to employ sophisticated logic in order to convince others about the truth of God's Word? Not at all. Sound reasoning does not need to be complicated. Logical arguments presented in a simple manner are often most effective. Consider an example.

¹⁴ How might we respond when someone says that he does not believe in a God he cannot see? We could reason on the natural law of cause and effect. When we observe an effect, we accept that there must be a cause. We might say: 'If you were in a remote area and came across a well-built house that was stocked with food (effect), you would readily accept that someone (cause) built that house and filled its cupboards. So, too, when we see the design evident in nature and the abundance of food in earth's "pantry" (effect), does it not make sense to accept that Someone (cause) is responsible?' The Bible's simple argument puts it best: "Of course, every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God." (Hebrews 3:4) However, no matter how sound our reasoning may be, not everyone will be convinced. The Bible reminds us that only those who are "rightly disposed" will become believers. —Acts 13:48; 2 Thessalonians 3:2.

¹⁵ In our teaching, whether in the field ministry or in the congregation, we can use logical reasoning to highlight Jehovah's qualities and ways. Particularly effective is the 'how much more so' line of reasoning that Jesus occasionally used. (Luke 11:13; 12:24) Based on contrast, this type of reasoning can make a deep impression. To expose the absurdity of the hellfire doctrine, we might say: 'No loving father would punish his child by holding his child's hand in a fire. How

15. What line of reasoning can we use to highlight Jehovah's qualities and ways, and what two examples demonstrate how we might use such reasoning?

much more so must the very idea of hellfire be repugnant to our loving heavenly Father!' (Jeremiah 7:31) To teach that Jehovah cares for his servants as individuals, we could say: 'If Jehovah knows each of the billions of stars by name, how much more must he care about humans who love him and were bought with the precious blood of his Son!' (Isaiah 40:26; Acts 20:28) Such powerful reasoning can help us to reach the hearts of others.

Fitting Illustrations

¹⁶ Effective illustrations are a seasoning that can make our teaching more appetizing to others. Why are illustrations valuable in teaching? One educator noted: "The ability to think abstractly is one of the most difficult of human accomplishments." Illustrations impress meaningful pictures on our mind, helping us more fully to grasp new ideas. Jesus was outstanding in his use of illustrations. (Mark 4:33, 34) Let us consider how we can make use of this teaching method.

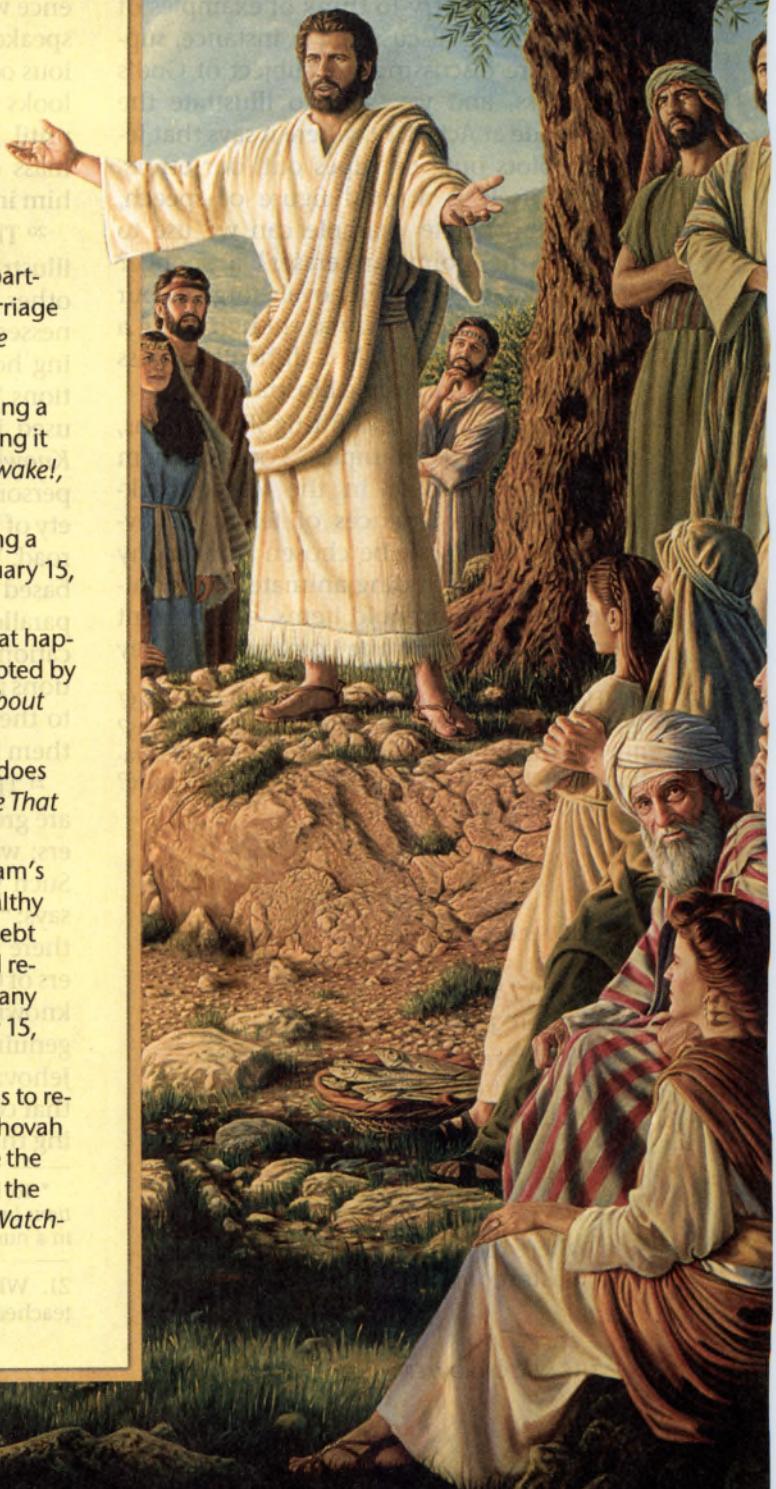
¹⁷ What makes an illustration effective? First, it should fit our audience, drawing on circumstances that our listeners can readily relate to. We remember that Jesus drew many of his illustrations from the everyday life of his hearers. Second, an illustration should reasonably parallel the point that is being made. If the comparison is strained, the illustration may only distract our listeners. Third, an illustration should not be cluttered with unnecessary details. Recall that Jesus provided necessary specifics but omitted nonessentials. Fourth, when we use an illustration, we should make sure that the application is clear. Otherwise, some may not get the point.

16. Why are illustrations valuable in teaching?
17. What four factors make an illustration effective?

Do You Remember These Illustrations?

Following are just a few effective illustrations. Why not look up the reference and note how the illustration helped to make the point under discussion?

- Like trapeze artists or figure-skating partners, those seeking to build a good marriage depend greatly on a good partner.—*The Watchtower*, May 15, 2001, page 16.
- Expressing your feelings is like throwing a ball. You can toss it gently or you can fling it with such force that it causes injury.—*Awake!*, January 8, 2001, page 10.
- Learning to express love is like learning a new language.—*The Watchtower*, February 15, 1999, pages 18, 22-3.
- Inherited sin can be compared to what happens when a computer's files are corrupted by a virus.—*Is There a Creator Who Cares About You?*, page 156.
- Spiritism does for demons what bait does for hunters. It attracts prey.—*Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, page 111.
- How Jesus comes to the rescue of Adam's descendants can be compared to a wealthy benefactor who pays off a company's debt (incurred by a dishonest manager) and re-opens the factory, thus benefiting its many employees.—*The Watchtower*, February 15, 1991, page 13.
- As lovers of art will go to great lengths to restore a badly damaged masterpiece, Jehovah can look beyond our imperfections, see the good in us, and eventually restore us to the perfect standing that Adam lost.—*The Watchtower*, February 15, 1990, page 22.



¹⁸ How can we come up with fitting illustrations? We do not need to think up long, elaborate stories. Short illustrations can be very effective. Simply try to think of examples of the point being discussed. For instance, suppose we are discussing the subject of God's forgiveness, and we want to illustrate the point made at Acts 3:19, where it says that Jehovah 'blots out,' or wipes out, our errors. That in itself is a vivid figure of speech, but what concrete example can we use to illustrate the point—an eraser? a sponge? We might say: 'When Jehovah forgives our sins, he wipes them away as though using a sponge (or an eraser).' It is difficult to miss the point of such a simple illustration.

¹⁹ Where can you find fitting illustrations, including true-life examples? Look for them in your own life or in the varied backgrounds and experiences of fellow believers. Illustrations can be chosen from many other sources, including animate and inanimate objects, household items, or a current event well-known in the community. A key

18. How can we come up with fitting illustrations?
- 19, 20. (a) Where can we find good illustrations?
(b) What are some examples of effective illustrations that have been published in our literature?
(See also box.)

Do You Remember?

- How can we teach with simplicity when conducting a home Bible study? when giving a talk in the congregation?
- How can we make effective use of questions when preaching from house to house?
- How may we use logical reasoning to highlight Jehovah's qualities and ways?
- Where can we find fitting illustrations?

to finding good illustrations is being alert, "carefully observing" the everyday circumstances around us. (Acts 17:22, 23) One reference work on public speaking explains: "The speaker who observes human life and its various occupations, talks with all sorts of men, looks straight at things and asks questions until he understands them, will gather a mass of illustrative material that will serve him in good stead when needed."

²⁰ There is another rich source of effective illustrations—*The Watchtower, Awake!*, and other literature produced by Jehovah's Witnesses. You can learn much from observing how these publications employ illustrations.* Take, for example, the illustration used in paragraph 11 of chapter 17 in the *Knowledge* book. It compares the diversity of personalities in the congregation to the variety of vehicles traveling alongside you on the road. What makes it effective? Note that it is based on everyday circumstances, it closely parallels the point being made, and the application is clear. We may use published illustrations in our teaching, perhaps adapting them to the needs of a Bible student or adjusting them for use in a talk.

²¹ The rewards of being an effective teacher are great. When we teach, we share with others; we give part of ourselves to help them. Such giving brings happiness, for the Bible says: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) For teachers of God's Word, that happiness is the joy of knowing that we are imparting something of genuine and lasting value—the truth about Jehovah. We can also have the satisfaction that comes from knowing that we are imitating the Great Teacher, Jesus Christ.

* To locate examples, see the *Watch Tower Publications Index 1986-2000*, under "Illustrations."—Published in a number of languages by Jehovah's Witnesses.

21. What rewards come from being an effective teacher of God's Word?



"I WOULD NOT CHANGE A THING!"

AS TOLD BY
GLADYS ALLEN

I am sometimes asked, "If you had your life to live over again, what would you change?" I can truthfully answer, "I would not change a thing!" Let me explain why I feel this way.

IN THE summer of 1929, when I was two years old, something wonderful happened to my father, Matthew Allen. He obtained the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die!*, published by the International Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. After devouring just a few pages, Dad exclaimed, "This is the greatest thing I have ever read!"

Shortly thereafter, Dad obtained other publications of the Bible Students. He wasted no time in sharing what he was learning with all the neighbors. However, there was no congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in our rural community. Recognizing the need for regular Christian association, Dad moved the family

to Orangeville, Ontario, Canada, in 1935 because there was a congregation there.

In those days, children were not always encouraged to attend congregation meetings; they usually stayed outside the meeting place and played until the adults were through. This did not suit Dad. He reasoned, "If the meetings are good for me, they are good for my children." So although newly associated, Dad instructed my brother Bob, my sisters Ella and Ruby, and me to join the adults at the meetings, and we did. Soon the children of other Witnesses were sitting in too. Meeting attendance and commenting became a very important part of our lives.

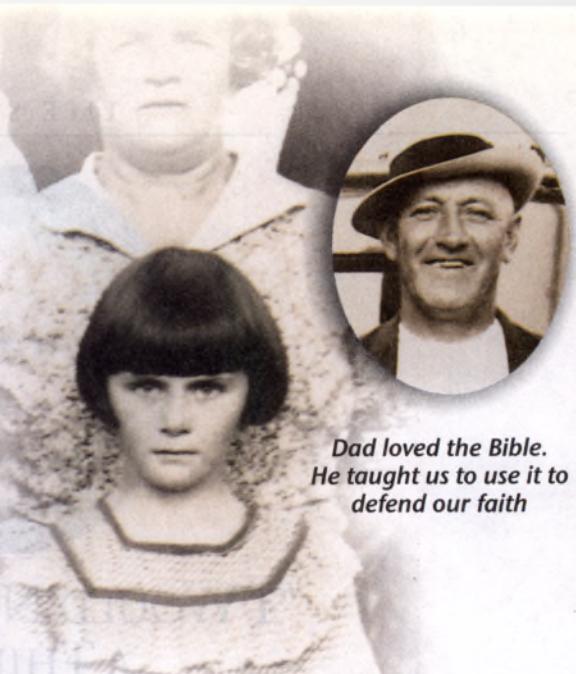
Dad loved the Bible, and he had a delightful way of dramatizing Bible stories. Through these, he impressed upon our young hearts vital lessons that I still remember with great fondness. One that comes to mind is that Jehovah blesses those who are obedient to him.

Dad also taught us to use the Bible to defend our faith. We used to make a game of it. Dad might say, "I believe that when I die I'm going to heaven. Now you prove to me that I'm not." Ruby and I would scour the concordance to find scriptures we could use to refute that teaching. After we read the scriptures we had found, Dad would say, "That's interesting, but I'm still not convinced." So back to the concordance we would go. This often went on for hours until Dad was satisfied with the answers we gave him. As a result, Ruby and I became well-equipped to explain our beliefs and defend our faith.

Overcoming the Fear of Man

Despite the fine training I received at home and at congregation meetings, I must admit that there were aspects of being a Christian that I found challenging. Like many young people, I didn't enjoy being different from others, especially my classmates. An early test of my faith involved what we called information marches.

The idea was for a group of brothers and sisters to walk slowly down the main streets of town carrying signs with slogans on them. Everyone knew everyone else in our town of 3,000 or so. During one information march, I was walking at the end of the line carrying a sign that read "Religion Is a Snare and a Racket." Some of my schoolmates caught sight of me, and they wasted no time getting in line behind me, singing "God Save the King." How did I cope? I fervently prayed for the strength to keep going. When at last the march was finished, I hurried



*Dad loved the Bible.
He taught us to use it to
defend our faith*

to the Kingdom Hall to turn in my sign and go home. However, the one in charge told me that another march was about to start and that they needed one more person to carry a sign. So out I went again, praying harder than ever. By this time, however, my classmates had got tired and had gone home. My prayers for strength became prayers of thanksgiving!—Proverbs 3:5.

Full-time servants were always welcome in our home. They were a happy group and a joy to entertain. As far back as I can remember, our parents always held out the full-time ministry to us children as the best career possible.

Responding to their encouragement, in 1945, I began my career in the full-time ministry. I later joined my sister Ella, who was pioneering in London, Ontario. There, I was introduced to a feature of service I thought I would never be able to do. The brothers used to go from table to table in the local bars offering patrons copies of *The Watchtower* and *Consolation* (now *Awake!*). Fortunately, the work was done on Saturday afternoons, so I had all week to pray for the courage to go!

No, the work wasn't easy for me, but it was rewarding.

On the other hand, I also learned how to deliver special issues of *Consolation* dealing with the persecution of our brothers in Nazi concentration camps, especially contacting important Canadian businessmen, including presidents of large corporations. Over the years, I have found that Jehovah always supports us as long as we rely on him for strength. As Dad used to say, Jehovah blesses those who are obedient to Him.

Answering the Call to Serve in Quebec

On July 4, 1940, the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Canada. Later, the ban was lifted, but we were still being persecuted in the Roman Catholic province of Quebec. A special campaign using the strongly worded tract *Quebec's Burning Hate for God and Christ and Freedom Is the Shame of All Canada* was undertaken to draw attention to the mistreatment of our brothers there. Nathan H. Knorr, a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, met with hundreds of pioneers in the city of Montreal to explain the implications of what we were about to do. Brother Knorr told us that if we agreed to engage in the campaign, we could expect to be arrested and put in jail. How true that proved to be! Over time, I was arrested 15 times. When we went out in field service, we made sure to carry our toothbrush and comb with us in case we had to spend the night in jail.

At first we carried out most of the work at night so as to draw as little attention to ourselves as possible. I used to carry an extra supply of tracts in a bag that I hung around my neck under my coat. The bag full of tracts was quite bulky, making me look pregnant. That worked to my advantage when I got on a crowded streetcar to travel to the ter-

ritory. More than one gallant gentleman stood up and offered the "pregnant" lady his seat.

As time went on, we began engaging in the distribution work in the daytime. We left tracts at three or four doors, and then we went on to another territory. Usually, that worked well. However, if a parish priest learned that we were in the area, we could expect trouble. On one occasion, a priest incited a mob of 50 or 60 adults and children to throw tomatoes and eggs at us. We took refuge in the home of a Christian sister, where we had to spend the night sleeping on the floor.

There was a great need for pioneers to preach to the French-speaking people in Quebec, so in December 1958, my sister Ruby and I began studying the French language. Thereafter we were assigned to a number of French-speaking areas in the province. Each assignment brought with it a unique experience. In one place, we went from door to door eight hours a day for two years without getting anyone to answer! The people simply came to the door and pulled the blinds down. But we didn't give up. Today, there are two thriving congregations in that town.

Sustained by Jehovah in Every Way

Special pioneer work opened up to us in 1965. In one special pioneer assignment, we came to understand the full import of Paul's words recorded at 1 Timothy 6:8: "Having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." We had to follow a strict budget in order to care for our expenses. So we set aside money for heat, rent, electricity, and food. With that taken care of, we had 25 cents for the rest of the month to spend as we wanted.

With limited funds, we could afford to have the heat on in our home for only a few



Left to right: Ruby, me, Bob, Ella, Mom, and Dad in 1947

hours at night. So our bedroom never got above 60 degrees Fahrenheit and was often much colder. Well, one day a son of one of Ruby's Bible students visited us. He must have gone home and told his mother that we were freezing to death, for thereafter she sent us ten dollars every month to buy oil so that we could leave the heater on all the time. We didn't feel deprived in any way. We were not rich, but we always had the necessities. We felt that anything left over was a blessing. How true the words at Psalm 37:25: "I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread"!

Despite the opposition we faced, I had the pleasure of seeing a number of people with whom I conducted Bible studies come to a

Front row, left to right: Me, Ruby, and Ella at a District Convention, 1998



knowledge of the truth. Some took up the full-time ministry as a career, which brought me special joy.

Successfully Facing New Challenges

Cornwall, Ontario, became our new assignment in 1970. About a year after we arrived in Cornwall, Mom became ill. Dad had passed away in 1957, and my two sisters and I took turns taking care of Mom until she died in 1972. Our special pioneer partners, Ella Lisitza and Ann Kowalenko were a stabilizing influence and loving support during this time. They took care of our Bible studies and other responsibilities during our absences. How true are the words of Proverbs 18:24: "There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother"!

Life certainly is full of challenges. With Jehovah's loving arm of support, I have been able to face them. I am still joyfully pursuing a life of full-time service. Bob, who died in 1993, spent over 20 years in the pioneer work, which included 10 precious years pioneering along with his wife, Doll. My older sister Ella, who passed away in death in October 1998, pioneered for over 30 years and always maintained the pioneer spirit. In 1991 my other sister, Ruby, was diagnosed with cancer. Yet, she used her limited strength to preach the good news. She also had her sense of humor right up until the morning she died, September 26,

1999. While I no longer have my sisters, I do have a spiritual family of brothers and sisters to help me keep my sense of humor.

When I look back over my life, what would I change? I have never married, but I have been blessed with loving parents, a brother, and sisters who put the truth first in their lives. I'm looking forward to seeing them all soon in the resurrection. I can feel my dad squeezing me now and see my mom's tears as we

give each other a big hug. Ella, Ruby, and Bob will be jumping with joy.

In the meantime, I have every intention of continuing to use what health and energy I have left to praise and honor Jehovah. The full-time pioneer service is a wonderful, rewarding life. It is even as the psalmist said of those who walk in Jehovah's ways: "Happy you will be and it will be well with you." —Psalm 128:1, 2.

How Should We View Trials?

TESTS! Trials! Everyone has to face them. They may be caused by personality conflicts, economic difficulties, ill health, temptations, peer pressure to do wrong, persecution, challenges to our stand on neutrality or against idolatry, and many other things. Whatever form trials take, they often cause great anxiety. How can we handle them successfully? Is there any way that they benefit us?

The Best Support

King David of old lived a life full of trials, yet he died faithful. How was he able to endure? He pointed to the source of his strength when he said: "Jehovah is my Shepherd. I shall lack nothing." Then he went on to say: "Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad, for you are with me; your rod and your staff are the things that comfort me." (Psalm 23:1, 4) Yes, Jehovah is a source of boundless support. He shepherded David through some very dark times, and he is prepared to do the same for us when necessary.

How can we gain Jehovah's support? The Bible points the way when it says: "Taste and see that Jehovah is good." (Psalm 34:8) That is a warm invitation, but what does it mean? It is an encouragement to serve Jehovah and conform our lives fully to his will. Such a course means giving up some of our freedom, making sacrifices. In some cases, it can even lead to trials—persecution and suffering. Yet, those who wholeheartedly accept Jehovah's invitation need never regret doing so. Jehovah will be very good to them. He will guide them and care for them spiritually. He will sustain them through trials by means of his Word, his holy spirit, and the Christian congregation. And he will eventually reward them with everlasting life.—Psalm 23:6; 25:9; Isaiah 30:21; Romans 15:5.

Those who make the life-altering decision to serve Jehovah and who stick to that decision find that Jehovah fulfills all his promises. That was the experience of the Israelites who followed Joshua into the Promised Land. Once they had crossed the Jordan,

there were trials to be endured, battles to be fought, and hard lessons to be learned. But that generation proved to be more faithful than their fathers, who came out of Egypt and died in the wilderness. Hence, Jehovah supported the faithful ones, and concerning their state at the end of Joshua's life, the Bible record says: "Jehovah gave them rest all around, according to everything that he had sworn to their forefathers . . . Not a promise failed out of all the good promise that Jehovah had made to the house of Israel; it all came true." (Joshua 21:44, 45) That can also be our experience if we rely fully on Jehovah when under trial and at all other times.

What might weaken our confidence in Jehovah? Jesus pointed to one thing when he said: "No one can slave for two masters . . . You cannot slave for God and for Riches." (Matthew 6:24) If we trust in Jehovah, we will not look for security where most in the world seek it, in material things. Jesus counseled his followers: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other [necessary material] things will be added to you." (Matthew 6:33) A Christian who keeps a balanced view of material things and puts God's Kingdom in first place in his life makes the right choice. (Ecclesiastes 7:12) It might cost him something, of course. He might make sacrifices in a material way. But he will reap many rewards.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How Can True Saints Help You?

"Salvation Belongs to Jehovah"

The Septuagint—Useful in the Past
and the Present

And Jehovah will support him.—Isaiah 48: 17, 18.

What We Learn From Trials

Choosing to "taste and see that Jehovah is good" does not, of course, protect one from the vicissitudes of life; nor does it shelter us entirely from the attacks of Satan and his human agents. (Ecclesiastes 9:11) As a result, a Christian's sincerity and determination may be tested. Why does Jehovah leave his worshipers exposed to such trials? The apostle Peter gave one reason when he wrote: "For a little while at present, if it must be, you have been grieved by various trials, in order that the tested quality of your faith, of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire, may be found a cause for praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 1:6, 7) Yes, tests allow us to demonstrate the quality of our faith and our love for Jehovah. And they help to provide an answer to the taunts and accusations of Satan the Devil.—Proverbs 27:11; Revelation 12:10.

Tests also help us to develop other Christian qualities. As an example, consider the psalmist's words: "The humble one [Jehovah] sees; but the lofty one he knows only from a distance." (Psalm 138:6) Many of us are not humble by nature, but trials can help us to develop that necessary quality. Remember the occasion back in Moses' day when some in Israel found it irksome to eat manna week after week, month after month. Evidently, that was a trial for them, even though the manna was a miraculous provision. What was the purpose of the test? Moses told them: "[Jehovah] fed you with manna in the wilderness . . . in order to humble you and in order to put you to the test." —Deuteronomy 8:16.

Our humility could likewise be tested. How? Well, how do we react to organization-

al refinements? (Isaiah 60:17) Do we give wholehearted support to the preaching and teaching work? (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Do we eagerly accept explanations of Bible truth as provided by "the faithful and discreet slave"? (Matthew 24:45-47; Proverbs 4:18) Do we resist pressure to have the latest gadget, the latest fashion, or the newest model automobile? A humble person will be able to say yes to such questions.—1 Peter 1:14-16; 2 Peter 3:11.

Trials help to develop in us yet another vital quality—endurance. The disciple James said: "Consider it all joy, my brothers, when you meet with various trials, knowing as you do that this tested quality of your faith works out endurance." (James 1:2, 3) Successfully enduring one test after another with full reliance on Jehovah develops steadfastness, constancy, and integrity. It strengthens us to re-

sist future attacks of Satan, the angry god of this world.—1 Peter 5:8-10; 1 John 5:19; Revelation 12:12.

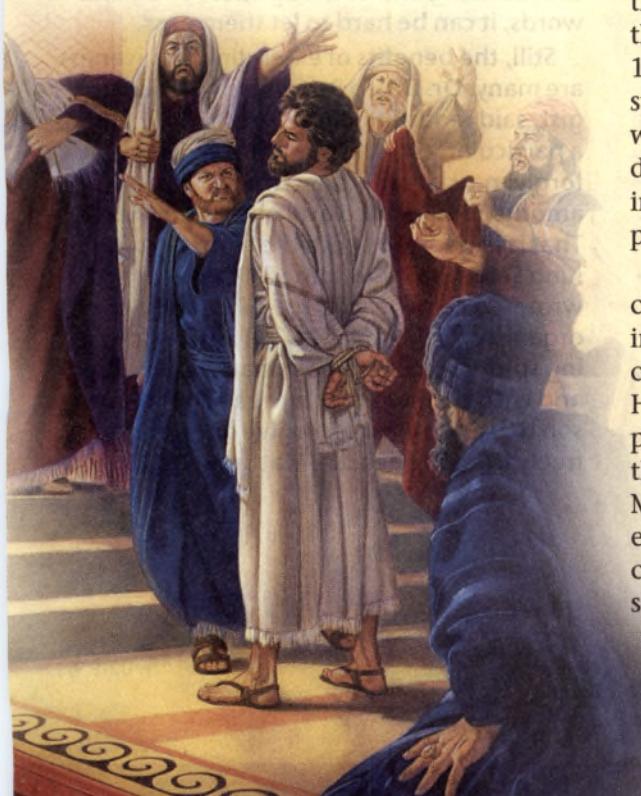
Keep a Proper View of Trials

The perfect Son of God, Jesus Christ, faced many trials while on earth and reaped great benefits from enduring them. Paul wrote that Jesus "learned obedience from the things he suffered." (Hebrews 5:8) His loyalty to the death brought praise to Jehovah's name and made it possible for Jesus to offer the value of his perfect human life as a ransom for mankind. That opened the way for those who exercised faith in Jesus to have the prospect of everlasting life. (John 3:16) Because Jesus remained faithful under trial, he is now our High Priest and enthroned King.—Hebrews 7:26-28; 12:2.

What of us? Our loyalty in the face of trials likewise brings great blessings. Of those with a heavenly hope, the Bible says: "Happy is the man that keeps on enduring trial, because on becoming approved he will receive the crown of life, which Jehovah promised to those who continue loving him." (James 1:12) Those with an earthly hope have the assurance that if they endure faithfully, they will inherit everlasting life in an earthly paradise. (Revelation 21:3-6) And what is more important, their faithful endurance brings praise to Jehovah's name.

As we follow in Jesus' footsteps, we can be confident that all the tests we meet up with in this system of things can be passed successfully. (1 Corinthians 10:13; 1 Peter 2:21) How? By our relying on Jehovah, who supplies "power beyond what is normal" to those who lean on him. (2 Corinthians 4:7) May our conviction be like that of Job, who even as he endured harsh trials affirmed with confidence: "After he has tested me out, I shall come forth as gold itself."—Job 23:10.

Jesus' loyalty under test brought praise to Jehovah's name. So can ours





'Forgive One Another Freely'

DO YOU believe that God has forgiven your sins? In the United States, it seems that most adults do. Dr. Loren Toussaint, lead author of a study conducted at the University of Michigan Institute for Social Research, reports that of 1,423 Americans polled, about 80 percent of the adults over 45 years of age said that God has forgiven them of their sins.

It is interesting, though, that only 57 percent of those polled said that they extended forgiveness to others. That statistic reminds us of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." (Matthew 6:14, 15) Yes, God's forgiveness of our sins is conditional, in part, on our readiness to forgive others.

The apostle Paul reminded Christians in Colossae of this principle. He urged them:

"Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Even as Jehovah freely forgave you, so do you also." (Colossians 3:13) True, this is not always easy to do. For example, when you are on the receiving end of thoughtless or unkind words, it can be hard to let them pass.

Still, the benefits of extending forgiveness are many. Dr. David R. Williams, a sociologist, said regarding his research: "We found a particularly strong relationship between forgiveness of others and mental health among middle-aged and older Americans." That is in harmony with the words of wise King Solomon, who some 3,000 years ago wrote: "A calm heart is the life of the fleshly organism." (Proverbs 14:30) Since a forgiving spirit promotes good relations with God and with our neighbor, we have good reason to be disposed to forgive one another freely from the heart.—Matthew 18:35.