

# Awake!

OCTOBER 2006

## Television

How Does It  
Influence  
Your Life?



ALSO: CAN YOU HELP  
THE DEAD? PAGE 10 |

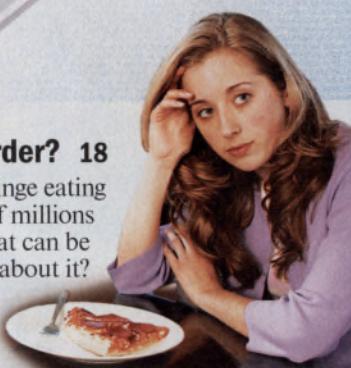
# Television

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Television is probably the most powerful influence on many people's thoughts and actions. How does it affect you?

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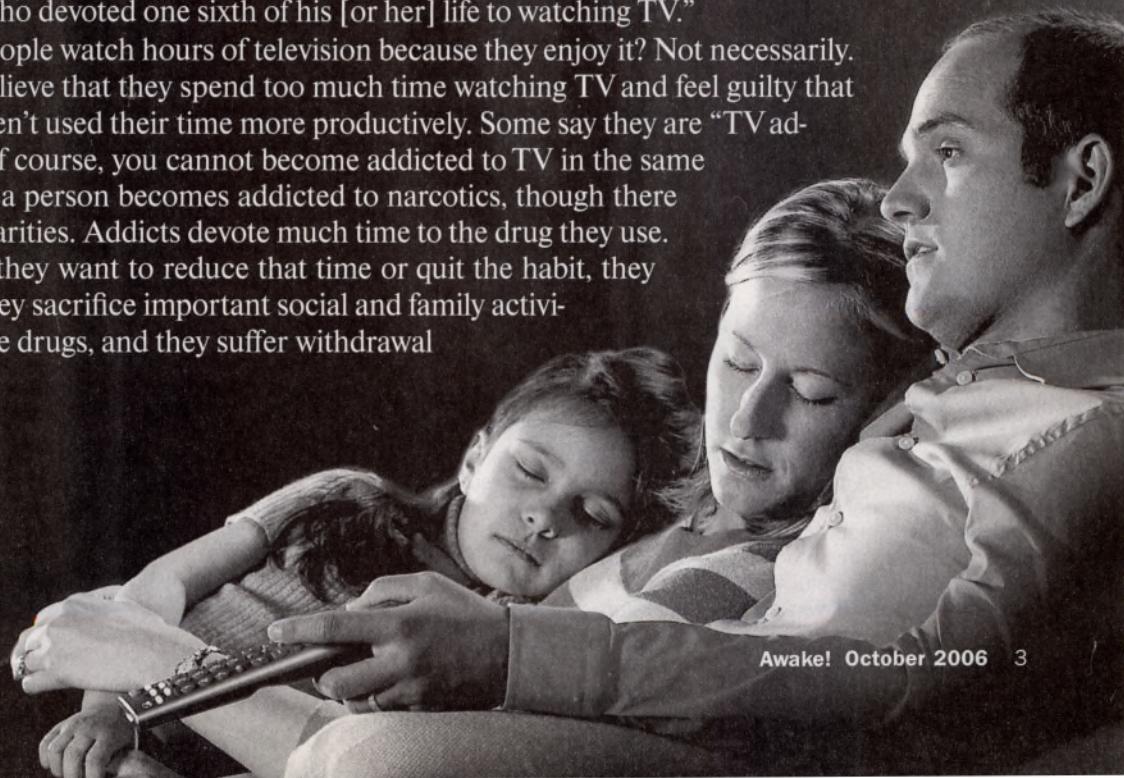
# TV A THIEF OF TIME?

If someone offered you a million dollars to give up television for the rest of your life, would you do so? Some years ago 1 in 4 Americans surveyed said that they would not. Another survey asked men what they wanted most. The majority said that they desired peace and happiness. But this came second on their wish list. What they wanted first in life was a big-screen television!

Television is immensely popular throughout the world. Back in 1931, when television was in its infancy, the chairman of the Radio Corporation of America said: "The potential audience of television in its ultimate development may reasonably be expected to be limited only by the population of the earth itself." Those words may have sounded far-fetched at the time, but they do not today. The number of televisions worldwide is estimated to stand at 1.5 billion, with many more viewers. Love it or hate it, television plays a major role in people's lives.

The time that many people devote to television is astonishing. Recently, a global study showed that, on average, people watch TV for just over three hours each day. North Americans watch four and a half hours daily, while the Japanese top the list at five hours per day. Those hours add up. If we watch four hours daily, by age 60 we will have spent ten years in front of the screen. Yet, none of us would want inscribed on our tombstone: "Here lies our beloved friend, who devoted one sixth of his [or her] life to watching TV."

Do people watch hours of television because they enjoy it? Not necessarily. Many believe that they spend too much time watching TV and feel guilty that they haven't used their time more productively. Some say they are "TV addicts." Of course, you cannot become addicted to TV in the same way that a person becomes addicted to narcotics, though there are similarities. Addicts devote much time to the drug they use. Though they want to reduce that time or quit the habit, they can't. They sacrifice important social and family activities to use drugs, and they suffer withdrawal



symptoms when they abstain. All these symptoms can occur in people who watch a lot of television.

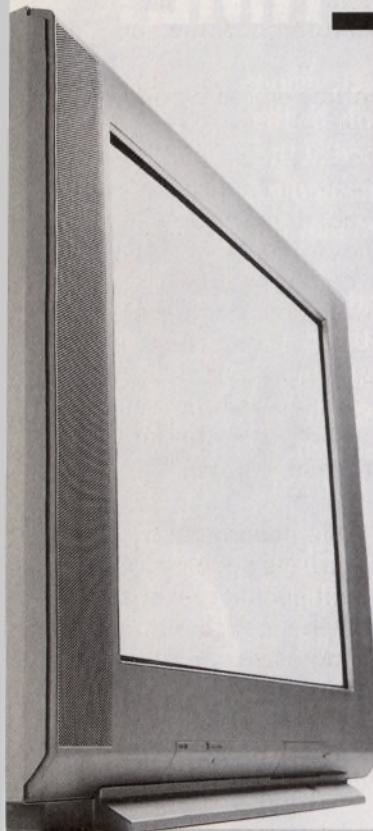
"The eating of too much honey is not good," wrote wise King Solomon. (Proverbs 25:27) The same principle applies to TV viewing. Though television offers much that is worthwhile, heavy viewing can cut into

family time, hinder reading and academic performance in children, and contribute to obesity. If you invest a great deal of time in watching TV, it is smart to think about what you are getting in return. Our time is too precious to waste. It is also smart to think about what we watch. We will consider that subject in the next article.

# TV THE "SUBTLE INSTRUCTOR"

**T**ELEVISION can be a powerful teaching tool. By means of it, we learn about lands and peoples we may never visit. We "travel" to tropical jungles and polar ice caps, to mountain peaks and ocean depths. We peer into the intriguing worlds of both atoms and stars. We watch news as it happens on the other side of the globe. We gain insight into politics, history, current events, and culture. Television captures the lives of people in both tragedy and triumph. It entertains, instructs, and even inspires.

Much of the programming, however, is neither wholesome nor educational. Probably the most impassioned criticism comes from people who decry TV's abundant and graphic portrayal of violence and sex. One study in the United States, for example, found that nearly 2 out of 3 TV programs contain scenes of violence, averaging six per hour. By the time a youth reaches adulthood, he will have watched thousands of dramatized acts of violence and murder. Sexual content too is in abundant supply. Two thirds of all TV programs include talk about sex, and 35 percent include sexual behaviors, which are usually



## Awake!®

**THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED** for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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**“Television is an invention that permits you to be entertained in your living room by people you wouldn’t have in your home.”**

—David Frost, British broadcaster

presented as risk free and spontaneous and involve unmarried couples.\*

Programs that feature sex and violence are in high demand worldwide. American-made action movies, which eventually air on TV, make an easy transition to foreign markets. They don't necessarily require good acting or clever scripts, and they are easily understood. They rely on fights, killings, special effects, and sex to hold the attention of the viewer. Holding that attention over time, however, requires change. Viewers quickly tire of the same thing; the sensational becomes commonplace. To sustain viewer interest, producers reach to greater extremes to shock and excite by increasing the acts of violence and by making the content more graphic, more sexual, more sadistic.

### The Debate About TV's Impact

How are viewers affected by a steady diet of TV violence and sex? Critics charge that TV violence causes people to act aggressively and to be less sympathetic toward victims of real-life violence. They also assert that the portrayal of sex promotes promiscuity and undermines moral standards.

Does TV viewing really contribute to all those reactions? This question has been passionately debated for decades; hundreds of studies and thousands of books and articles have addressed the matter. At the heart of the debate is the difficulty of proving that

## WHAT ABOUT SEX AND VIOLENCE IN THE BIBLE?

What is the difference between the violence and sex shown on TV and that described in the Bible? The references to sex and violence in the Bible are written to instruct, not to entertain. (Romans 15:4) God's Word records historical fact. It helps us to understand God's viewpoint on matters and to learn from the mistakes of others.

In most countries where commercials are featured, the portrayal of sex and violence on TV is not about instruction—it is about money. Advertisers want to attract as many people as possible, and sex and violence keep viewers riveted to their sets. The result: They will watch the commercials and buy what is advertised. Newscasters apply the principle: "If it bleeds, it leads." Simply put, lurid stories—of crime, disaster, and war—get priority over news items that are less gripping.

Though the Bible documents violent acts, it encourages people to live peaceful lives—not seeking revenge but settling problems peaceably. It consistently promotes sexual morality. This is not the message that comes through in much of what is broadcast on television.—Isaiah 2:2-4; 1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Ephesians 4:32.

\* Statistics for the United States are similar to those elsewhere, since American television programs and movies are broadcast throughout the world.

**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Croatian, Czech,\* Danish,\* Dutch,\* English,<sup>#+○</sup> Estonian, Finnish,<sup>#+</sup> French,<sup>#+</sup> Georgian, German,<sup>#+</sup> Greek, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,<sup>#+</sup> Japanese,<sup>#</sup> Korean,<sup>#+</sup> Latvian, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Myanmar, Norwegian,\* Polish, Portuguese,<sup>#+</sup> Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Sesotho, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,<sup>#+</sup> Swahili, Swedish,\* Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Xhosa, Zulu

\* Audiocassettes also available.

+ CD also available.

○ MP3 CD-ROM also available.

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**Would you welcome more information?** Write Jehovah's Witnesses at the appropriate address: **America, United States of Wallkill, NY 12589.** **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **New Zealand:** P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

one thing causes another—for example, that early exposure to TV violence causes physical aggressiveness later in life. Proving a cause-effect relationship is sometimes challenging. To illustrate: Suppose you take a medication for the first time, and within hours you break out in hives. In such a situation, it is easy to conclude that the medication caused your allergic reaction. Sometimes, though, an allergy develops gradually. When that is the case, linking the allergic reaction to a specific medication may prove much more difficult, since allergies have many causes.

Similarly, it has been difficult to prove that the violence shown on television causes crime and antisocial behavior. Many studies do suggest that there is such a link. Furthermore, some criminals have said that their attitudes and violent behavior were fashioned by what they saw on TV. On the other hand, people are exposed to many influences in life. Violent video games, the social values of friends and family, general living conditions—all these may also contribute to aggressive behavior.

It is hardly surprising, then, that there are opposing points of view. A Canadian psychologist wrote: "The scientific evidence simply does not show that watching violence either produces violence in people or desensitizes them to it." However, the American Psychological Association Committee on Media and Society said: "There is absolutely no doubt that higher levels of viewing violence on television are correlated with increased acceptance of aggressive attitudes and increased aggressive behavior."

### Thinking About TV

Remember, the experts are debating about *proof*—whether it can be proved that watching aggression causes aggression. Few people, though, would argue that television has no influence on our thinking and behavior. Think about it. A single photograph may move us to anger, tears, joy. Music too stirs

our emotions profoundly. Words, even on the printed page, make us think, feel, and act. What power there is when moving pictures, music, and spoken words are skillfully woven together! No wonder television is so seductive! And it is so accessible. Says one writer: "Not since man first learned to put his ideas down in writing . . . has any new technique for transmitting ideas had such an impact on civilization."

Businesses spend billions of advertising dollars every year because they know that viewers are influenced by what they see and hear. They don't spend that money because they think advertising might work; they *know* it works. It sells their products. In 2004, The Coca-Cola Company spent 2.2 billion dollars advertising its products worldwide in print, on the radio, and on television. Was the investment worthwhile? The company made nearly 22 billion dollars in profits for that year. Advertisers realize that one ad may not affect behavior. Instead, they rely on the cumulative impact of years of indoctrination.

If 30-second advertisements influence our attitudes and behavior, we may be certain that hours of TV viewing also affect us. "Beneath the most routine or trivial entertainment," says the author of *Television—An International History*, "the medium operates as a subtle instructor." Says the book *A Pictorial History of Television*: "Television is changing the way we *think*." The question we need to ask ourselves is this, 'Does what I watch affect my thinking in the way I want it to?'

For those who serve God, that question has special relevance. Much of what is shown on television runs contrary to the lofty principles and moral standards taught in the Bible. Lifestyles and practices that the Scriptures condemn are presented as acceptable, normal, and even trendy. At the same time, Christian values and those who appear to practice them are frequently ignored, ridiculed, or derided on television. One author lamented:

## TELEVISION AND THE YOUNG

"Based on the cumulative evidence of studies conducted over several decades, the scientific and public health communities overwhelmingly conclude that viewing violence poses a harmful risk to children."

**—The Henry J. Kaiser Family Foundation.**

"[We agree with] the American Academy of Pediatrics that there should be 'no [television watching] for children ages two and under.' These children, who are undergoing tremendous brain development, need active play and real people interactions to promote their developmental, physical, and social skills." **—The National Institute on Media and the Family.**

"It is not enough for the deviant to be normalized. The normal must be found to be deviant." All too frequently the "subtle instructor" whispers: "Good is bad and bad is good." —Isaiah 5:20.

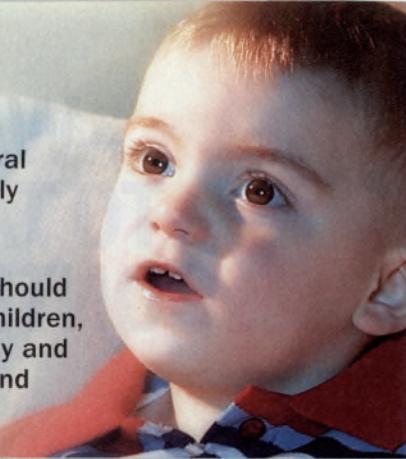
We must be careful about what we watch, for it will affect our thinking. The Bible says: "He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly." (Proverbs 13:20) Bible scholar Adam Clarke notes: "To walk with a person implies *love* and *attachment*; and it is impossible not to *imitate those we love*. So we say, 'Show me his company, and I'll tell you the man.' Let

me know the company he keeps, and I shall easily guess his moral character." As we have seen, most people spend a great deal of time in the company of television characters who are far from wise, characters a sincere Christian would otherwise never dream of inviting into his home.

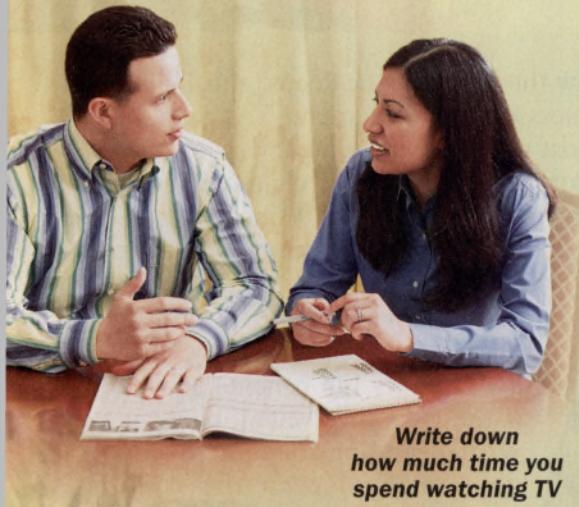
If your doctor prescribed a powerful drug, you would probably carefully consider the benefits as well as the risks involved. Taking the wrong medication—or taking too much of even the right medication—can damage your health. The same might be said about TV watching. It is wise, therefore, to think seriously about what we watch.

The inspired apostle Paul encouraged Christians to consider things that are true, of serious concern, righteous, chaste, lovable, well spoken of, virtuous, and praiseworthy. (Philippians 4:6-8) Will you heed that advice? You will be happy if you do.

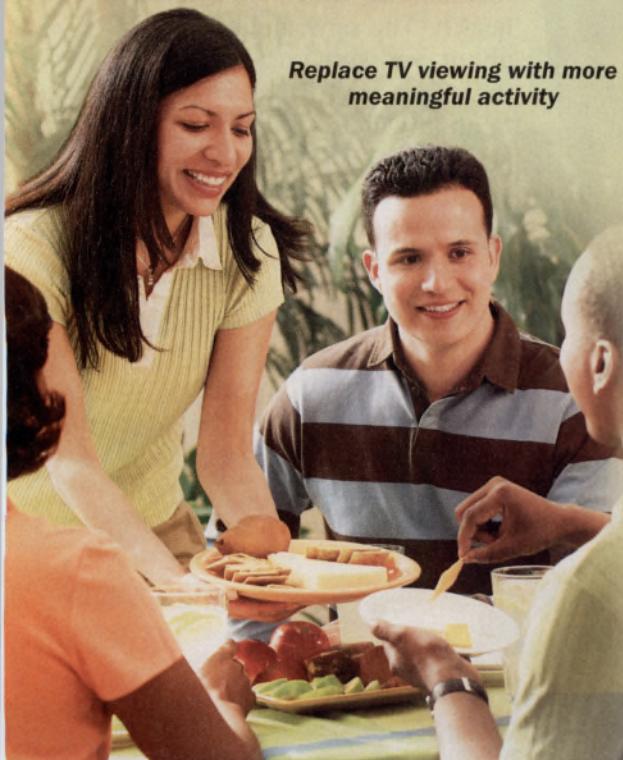
**Does what I watch  
affect my thinking  
in the way I want it to?**



# WAYS TO TAKE CONTROL



**Write down  
how much time you  
spend watching TV**



**Replace TV viewing with more  
meaningful activity**

**O**NCE we turned it on, we watched whatever was on, one thing after another," said Claudine. "We wouldn't turn it off until we were ready to go to bed." Some say: "I just can't keep my eyes off it," and others, "I don't want to watch TV as much as I do, but I can't help it." Do you watch too much television? Are you concerned about the effect TV may be having on your family? Here are some suggestions that may help you to keep your viewing under control.

## 1. FIND OUT HOW MUCH YOU WATCH.

"The shrewd one considers his steps," says Proverbs 14:15. It is wise to analyze your viewing habits to see if changes should be made. Keep a diary for a week or so, writing down how much time you spend watching TV. You may also want to list the programs that you watched, what you learned, and how much you enjoyed those programs. The main thing, though, is to calculate how much time you spend in front of the TV. You may be surprised at what you find. Just knowing how much of your life is devoted to television may move you to make changes.

## 2. REDUCE YOUR VIEWING TIME.

Try to do without TV for one day a week, a whole week, or a month. Instead, you may want to set limits on the time you watch each day. If you cut TV viewing by a half hour each day, you will have an extra 15 hours every month. Use that time in meaningful activities, such as pursuing spiritual interests, reading a good book, or spending time with family and friends. Studies have shown that people who watch a little TV enjoy it more than people who watch a lot of it.

One way to reduce TV viewing is to move the television out of the bedroom. Children who have a TV in their room spend nearly one and a half hours more watching TV than children who do not. Further, when a TV is in a youngster's room, parents do not know what the child is watching. Parents and couples will find that they will have more time for each other if they move the TV out of their bedroom too. Some, by choice, have decided not to have a TV in the home at all.

### **3. SCHEDULE WHAT YOU WATCH.**

There are, of course, many good programs to see. Rather than surfing through the channels or watching whatever comes on, check the listings in advance to select the programs you want to watch. Turn the TV on when the program you have chosen begins, and turn the TV off when it is over. Or instead of watching a program when it is aired, you may wish to record it for later viewing. That will make it possible to watch at a more convenient time and to fast-forward through commercials.

**4. BE SELECTIVE.** The Bible foretold that our time would be characterized by people who are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, having no natural affection, not open to any agreement, slanderers, without self-control, fierce, without love of goodness, betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, [and] lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” You will probably agree that many television characters are just like that. “From these,” the Bible admonishes, “turn away.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5) “Do not be misled,” we are warned, “bad associations spoil useful habits.”

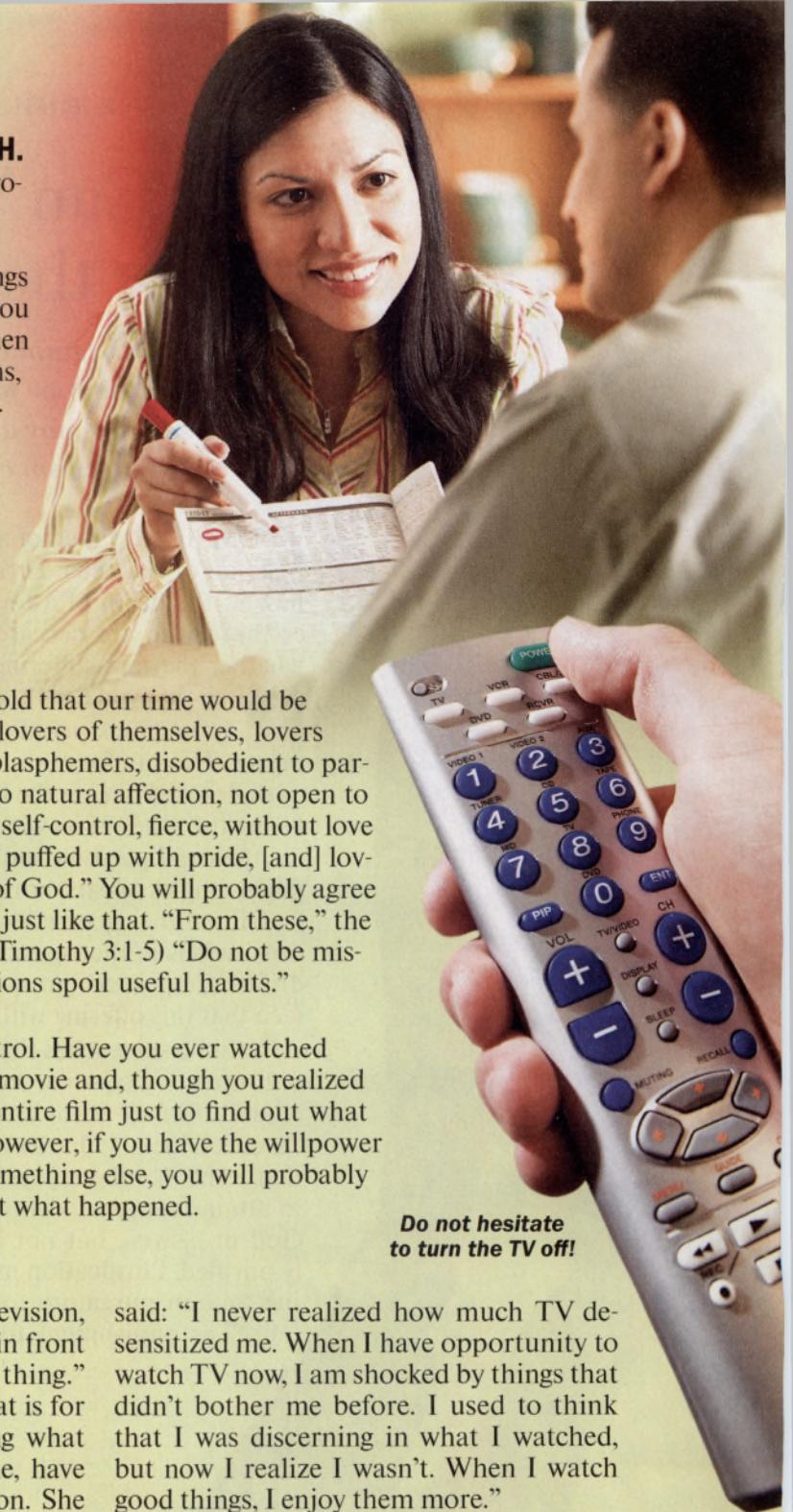
—1 Corinthians 15:33.

Being selective involves self-control. Have you ever watched the first few minutes of a drama or movie and, though you realized it was unacceptable, watched the entire film just to find out what would happen next? Many have. However, if you have the willpower to turn off the TV so you can do something else, you will probably find that you don’t really care about what happened.

Long before the invention of television, the psalmist wrote: “I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing.” (Psalm 101:3) What a good goal that is for us to keep in mind when choosing what we will watch! Some, like Claudine, have decided to get rid of their television. She

said: “I never realized how much TV desensitized me. When I have opportunity to watch TV now, I am shocked by things that didn’t bother me before. I used to think that I was discerning in what I watched, but now I realize I wasn’t. When I watch good things, I enjoy them more.”

*Do not hesitate  
to turn the TV off!*



## Can You Help the Dead?

*"From the beginning the Church has . . . offered prayers in suffrage for [the dead] . . . so that, thus purified, they may attain the beatific vision of God."*

—“Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

COMMON to men of all races is a concern for the condition of the dead. Perhaps you have felt grief and emptiness at the death of a loved one. You might wonder whether those who are deceased continue a conscious existence, whether they are suffering or at peace, and whether there is anything that you can do to help them.

Many religious people believe that they can help the departed. Hindus, for example, hold that by cremating the body of their loved one on the banks of the Ganges River and scattering the ashes in its waters, they can guarantee eternal bliss for the dead person's soul. In the Orient, Buddhists burn paper effigies of cars, homes, clothes, and money, in the belief that the deceased will then be able to use such possessions in the next world. In Africa, alcoholic drinks are poured out at the graveside, with the idea that this offering will benefit the dead one.

Catholicism teaches that if a person dies without repenting of some “mortal sin,” he has excluded himself from God’s favor. This state “is called ‘hell.’” On the other hand, it teaches that someone who enjoys God’s favor can hope to attain “supreme, definitive happiness” with God in heaven, but not before being perfectly purified. Purification may require his spending time in purgatory to endure a “cleansing fire” as punishment for errors that can be

forgiven. While in purgatory, though, a person can be helped by suffrages—intercessory prayers offered through the office of the church—and also by Masses held for him. Such services are usually paid for by friends and relatives of the deceased.

It is natural to want to do all you can to alleviate any suffering your loved ones might undergo. If helping them were possible, would not God explain clearly how to go about doing it? Let us see what the Bible teaches about helping the dead.

### The Condition of the Dead

All the practices mentioned above are based on belief in the immortality of the soul, that is, that part of a person continues living after his physical body dies. Is that what the Bible teaches? “The living are conscious that they will die,” it says, “but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages, because the remembrance of them has been forgotten. Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no portion anymore to time indefinite in anything that has to be done under the sun. All that your hand finds to do, do with your very power, for there is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going.” (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10) *Sheol* is simply the Hebrew word for the common grave of mankind.

Regarding death’s effect on a person’s consciousness, the inspired psalmist wrote: “His spirit goes out, he goes back to his ground; in that day his thoughts do perish.”—Psalm 146:4.

The Bible’s statements are authoritative and reasonable. What do you think? Would a loving father make his children suffer be-

cause of sinful tendencies that are a part of their nature? (Genesis 8:21) Of course not. So why would our heavenly Father do anything similar? When some in ancient Israel adopted the pagan ritual of burning their children in sacrifice to false gods, Jehovah condemned such a hateful practice, defining it as ‘a thing that he had not commanded and that had not come up into his heart.’—Jeremiah 7:31.

Man’s sins result in death, not torment in an afterlife. “The wages sin pays is death,” according to the Scriptures, and “he who has died has been acquitted from his sin.”—Romans 5:12; 6:7, 23.

The dead are not suffering. Rather, it is as though they were in a deep sleep, without consciousness—pleasurable or otherwise. There can be no question about it, then, that all the efforts people make to help the dead run contrary to Bible teachings.

### What Hope for the Dead?

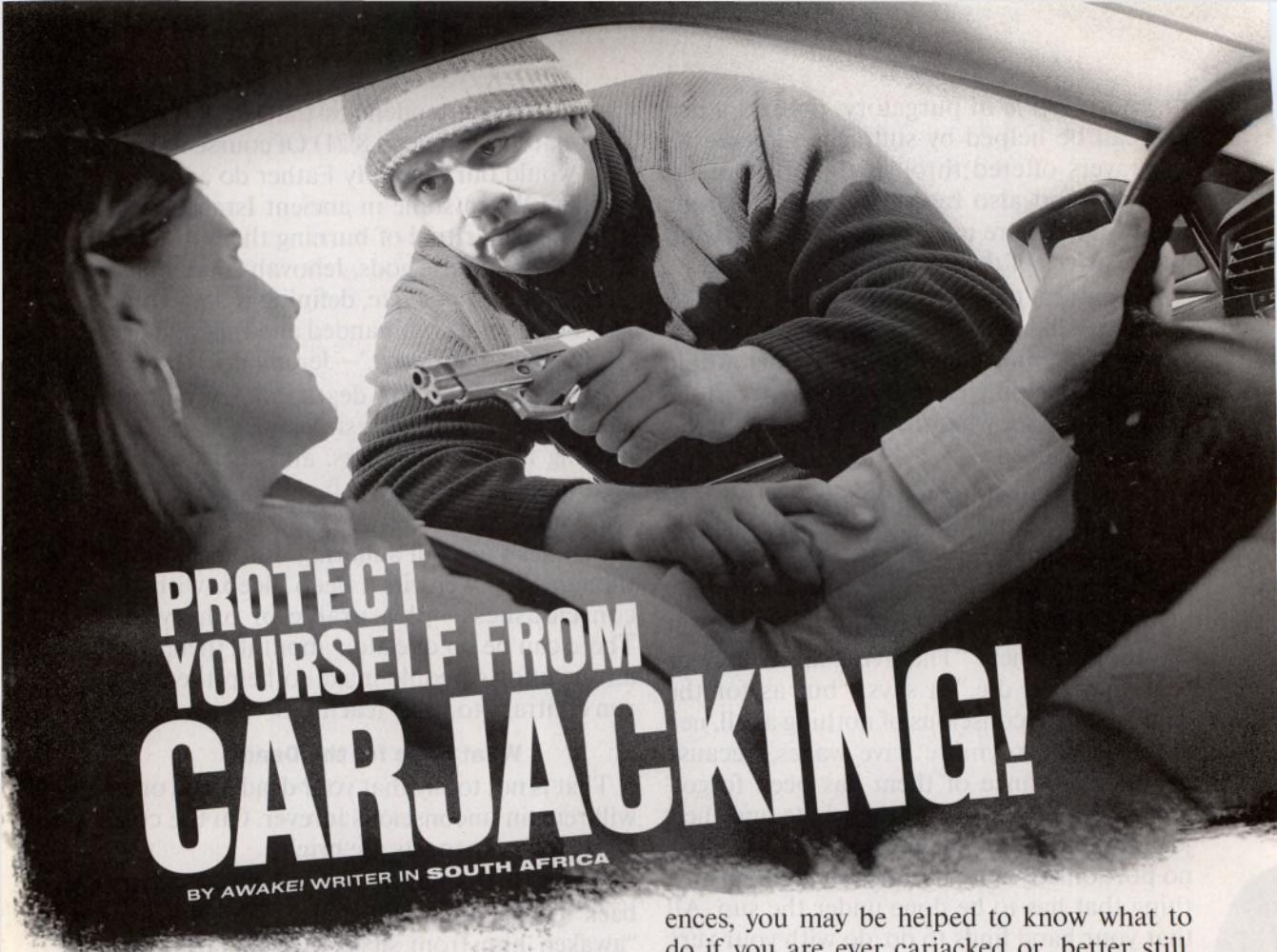
That is not to say that your dead loved ones will remain unconscious forever. On the contrary, their prospects are bright.

Before bringing his dear friend Lazarus back to life, Jesus said that he was going to “awaken him from sleep.” (John 11:11) On another occasion he explained that “all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out.” (John 5:28, 29) The resurrected will already have been acquitted of their previous sins and will thus not have to suffer for what they did while they were alive before. They will have the opportunity to learn to enjoy life under perfect conditions. What a prospect!

If that prospect appeals to you, do not hesitate to verify the trustworthiness of these promises. Jehovah’s Witnesses will be delighted to help you.

### HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Are the dead conscious?—Psalm 146:4; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10.
- Would God allow the dead to suffer in a burning hell?—Jeremiah 7:31.
- Is there hope for the dead?—John 5:28, 29.



# PROTECT YOURSELF FROM CARJACKING!

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SOUTH AFRICA

CARJACKING, also called car hijacking, is a growing problem in cities around the world, from Karachi to Lisbon and from Nairobi to Rio de Janeiro. Between 1993 and 2002, according to the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, about 38,000 carjackings occurred annually in the United States.

South Africa, with a population one sixth the size of the United States, has an even higher rate of carjackings—more than 14,000 a year. After you have considered some examples, you will understand why many view being carjacked as one of the most feared crimes of all. The following are true experiences of individuals who live in South Africa's largest city, Johannesburg. By reading their experi-

ences, you may be helped to know what to do if you are ever carjacked or, better still, how to minimize the risk of ever becoming a victim.

## True-Life Experiences

■ “My friend Susan and I had been sharing in the evangelizing work together for a year. One Wednesday, before driving to our next Bible study, we stopped for tea under a tree on a residential road. Susan got out of the car to get the basket from the back. Just as she handed me my cup, two men appeared out of nowhere, one holding a gun to Susan’s neck. Shocked, I tried to get out of the car, but the other man pushed me back inside. There we were, two women forced into a car with two men driving us—I really felt that they would most probably rape or kill us.”

—Anika, a young wife.



■ “I was driving my car at 7:00 a.m. on my way to work. I stopped at an intersection that is frequented by unemployed people seeking work. I did not pay any attention until someone pushed a gun into my neck through my open car window and said, ‘Get out, or I’ll shoot.’ That very minute a traffic helicopter appeared overhead. Thinking it was the police, the carjacker pulled the trigger and ran. He shot me in the neck, severing my spinal cord. This left me paralyzed from the neck down. I cannot use my hands and legs, and I have no feeling in them.”—*Barry, father of a teenage son.*

■ “My wife, Lindsay, and I were about to go for lunch. I was waiting for her in my car. The car doors were locked, but the windows were slightly open because of the heat. I was looking ahead from the driver’s seat when two men came around the corner very casually. When they were about eight paces from the front of the car, they split up, one going to the left of the car and the other to the right. Suddenly, they were at the car doors pointing guns at me from both sides and shouting orders. After I started the car in obedience to their command, they screamed at me to get out and get in the back seat. The one drove the car while the other forced me to keep my head down. ‘What reason can you give me for not killing you?’ he asked. ‘I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses,’ I replied. He kept talking about killing me, and I kept praying and thinking of my dear wife, wondering how she would react on seeing that her husband and car had disappeared.”—*Alan, a traveling overseer and a parent.*

These experiences show how quickly and unexpectedly carjackings can happen. They also illustrate common situations exploited by carjackers. In many places, it is no longer safe to wait or relax in a car parked on a residential road. Other dangerous places are intersections and the driveway to your home.

### **Dealing With the Aftermath**

Thankfully, the experience of Susan and Anika had a happy ending. As they were being driven away by the carjackers, the two women began to explain the Bible study work they were doing. This seemed to prick the men’s consciences. “They apologized for what they were doing,” explains Anika, “but said that because of the times we live in, they are forced to steal and carjack to make a living. We explained why God allows poverty and suffering.” The Bible’s message touched the hearts of the two carjackers, and they decided to give back the money and wristwatches they had taken, assuring Susan and Anika that they would cause them no harm. “Then one of them started to give us instructions on how to prevent a future carjacking,” recalls Susan. “They made us promise,” adds Anika, “that we would never again stop next to the road to have tea.” Then, just as the carjackers had told them, they stopped the vehicle, got out, gratefully accepted some Bible literature, and let Susan and Anika drive away safely.

Alan, the traveling overseer, was ordered out of his vehicle when the carjackers arrived at an isolated place. Though he lost valuable possessions, he was grateful that he survived

### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

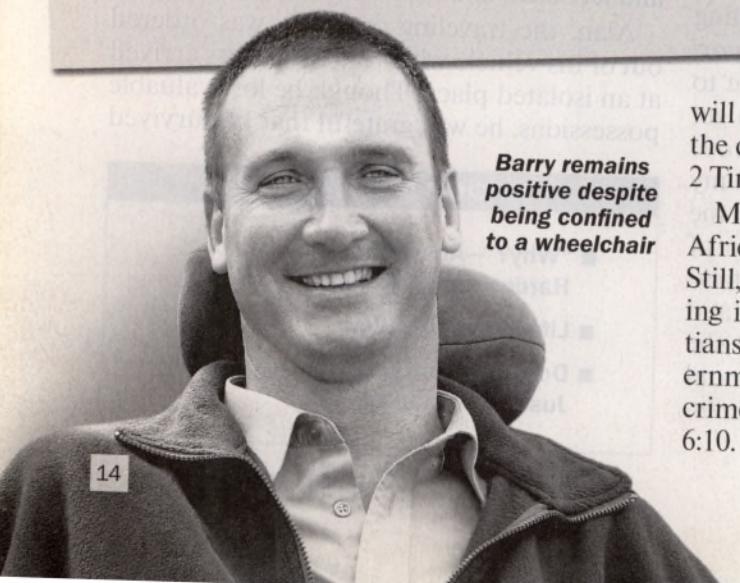
- “Why?”—Answering the Hardest of Questions
- Life in Death Valley
- Does Romantic Love Justify Premarital Sex?



**TIPS TO MINIMIZE  
THE RISK OF BEING**

## CARJACKED

- If you are driving in an area where carjackings have occurred, keep your car doors locked and your windows closed.
- When slowing down to stop at an intersection, be alert for suspicious-looking people loitering on either side of the road.
- Keeping a reasonable distance between you and the car in front of you will allow for easier maneuverability to escape from danger.
- If a car bumps into the rear of your car, be cautious about getting out to inspect the damage. It might be a ruse. If an incident like this happens in a high-risk area, it would be safer to drive on to the nearest police station.
- Be alert for strangers loitering near the entrance of your home. If you note such a situation, it would be safer to drive on and return home later, or you may decide to drive to the nearest police station.
- If you have to wait in a parked car in a high-risk area or in an area where there are few people around, be alert to what is happening in front of you and behind you. If you suspect danger, start the car and drive around the block.



**Barry remains positive despite being confined to a wheelchair**

physically unharmed. "I think I came off lightly," recalls Alan, "because I was cooperative and nonaggressive, and I did not panic. But certainly, I could have been more observant. I have learned from this incident that there is no time to relax one's guard now that we are living so deep into the last days of Satan's wicked system." The next day, Alan and Lindsay went back to the same territory to continue preaching with the congregation they were assigned to serve. Explains Alan: "We prayed, and our eyes were everywhere for the whole day. It was not easy, but Jehovah gave us 'power beyond what is normal.'" —2 Corinthians 4:1, 7.

The worst-affected victim, Barry, has been confined to a wheelchair for the past 11 years. commendably, Barry has remained positive and has not allowed the experience to make him bitter. His faith in Jehovah God's promise of a righteous new world has not wavered. (2 Peter 3:13) Barry continues to attend Christian meetings regularly and uses every opportunity to share his faith with others. He says: "Serving Jehovah has always been a joy. Even though I sit in a wheelchair and can do little for myself, I often reflect on what Jehovah has done for me, and it helps me to endure. Soon this wicked system will come to its end, and how great will be the day when I can walk again!"—Isaiah 35:6; 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

Measures taken by the authorities in South Africa have led to a reduction in carjackings. Still, they continue to occur and are increasing in other parts of the world. True Christians look to God's Kingdom as the only government that will bring an end to all such crime and violence.—Psalm 37:9-11; Matthew 6:10.

# TOWER BRIDGE

## GATEWAY TO LONDON

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN BRITAIN

FOREIGNERS who have never traveled to England recognize it. Annually thousands of tourists visit it. Every day, London residents cross it, perhaps without a glance or a thought of its origins. Tower Bridge is one of London's best-known landmarks.

Not to be confused with its neighbor London Bridge, Tower Bridge is associated with the nearby Tower of London. Back in 1872, England's Parliament considered a bill to authorize the building of a bridge over the Thames. Despite objections from the Tower's governor, Parliament decided to pursue this idea of another crossing, provided its design harmonized with the style of the Tower. The present-day Tower Bridge developed from this official proposal.

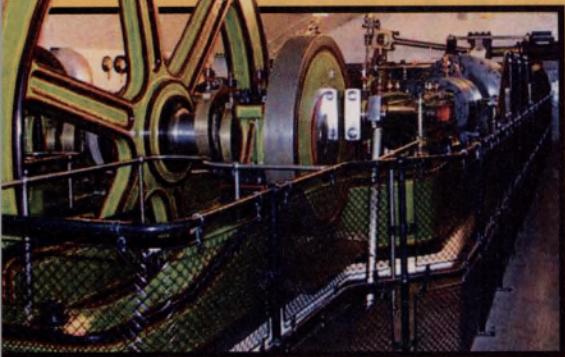
During the 18th and 19th centuries, nu-

merous bridges connected the banks of the Thames, the most famous being Old London Bridge. By 1750 that bridge straddled the river on shaky foundations and was a bottleneck for crossing traffic. Beneath it ships from around the world jostled for position in the crowded port. Back then, the shipping was so thick that it was said one could walk for many a mile across the adjoining decks of docked vessels.

At the instigation of the Corporation of London, city architect Horace Jones proposed a Gothic-style drawbridge to be built downstream from London Bridge. It would provide free passage for ships heading westward up the Thames to the docks. This design incorporated what many considered to be a novel feature.



**One of two steam-driven pumps that once powered the engines**



### **Distinctive Design**

Jones had traveled widely, and the small drawbridges that spanned canals in the Netherlands gave him the idea of a counter-balancing bascule bridge. Designed with fashionable methods of construction using steel frame with masonry cladding, the now famous shape of Tower Bridge grew from his team's drawing board.

Tower Bridge has two main towers connected at a high level by two walkways 110 feet above the roadway and some 139 feet above the river's average high-water mark. The roadways leading from each riverbank terminate in a counterweighted bascule, or seesaw. These giant leaves of the bridge weigh some 1,200 tons each and swing apart and upward to an

angle of 86 degrees. Ships up to a tonnage of 10,000 can pass safely underneath.

### **Power for the Bascules**

It was hydraulic power that lifted the bridge's bascules, moved the passenger elevators from road level to the walkways, and even worked the signaling. Yes, water was used in the operation of this bridge! And it provided power in abundance—twice as much as was needed.

Installed under the bridge's southern approach, four coal-fired boilers, which generated steam at a pressure of between 75 and 80 pounds per square inch, drove two massive pumps. These, in turn, delivered water at 850 pounds of pressure per square inch. To maintain the energy needed to lift the bascules, six large accumulators stored the pressurized water. These fed a total of eight engines that operated the bascules. Once the power was switched on, the counterweighted bascules swung upward on their 21-inch supports. It took only a minute to raise them to their full height.

### **A Visit to the Modern Tower Bridge**

Nowadays electricity has replaced steam power. But, as in former years, when Tower Bridge opens, road traffic comes to a standstill. Pedestri-



ans, tourists, and other visitors marvel at the workings of the bridge.

A warning alarm sounds, barriers come down to close off the roadways, the last vehicle completes its crossing, and the bridge controllers signal all is clear. Noiselessly the bascules' four connecting bolts open and the bascule leaves swing skyward. Then attention turns to the river. Whether it is a tugboat, a pleasure-cruiser, or a sailing ship, all eyes follow the craft's passage. Minutes later the signals change. Down swing the bascules, and up go the road barriers. Cyclists dart in front of waiting vehicles to cross first. Seconds later, Tower Bridge is still until its next wake-up call.

The interested visitor does more than just watch this oft-repeated train of events. He, along with others, takes the elevator ride up the north tower to admire the details of the bridge's history, carefully displayed with an animatronic model in the "Tower Bridge Experience" exhibition. The engineering feats and the lavish opening ceremony are depicted on artists' canvass-

es, and grainy, sepia-colored photographs and display panels bring the marvel of Tower Bridge to light.

The high-level walkways allow a visitor to enjoy splendid views of London's skyline. Westward, St. Paul's Cathedral and the bank buildings of the financial district come into view and, in the distance, the Post Office tower. Eastward, one would expect to see the docks, but these have migrated far downstream from the modern metropolis. Instead, Docklands, an area of urban renewal, is startling with its innovative building design. Spectacular, enthralling, interesting—yes, all of these terms aptly describe the view from this famous London landmark.

When you visit London, why not take an in-depth look at this historic construction? Your visit will leave you with a lasting impression of a remarkable engineering feat.

*The two bascules of the bridge are raised to their full height in less than a minute*

## Do I have an eating disorder?

*"Sometimes when I sit down to eat, I get nervous and I start to shake. I'm afraid that I'll gain weight. I tell myself, 'I have to lose five more pounds.'"*

**—Melissa.\***

*"I want to be attractive, and I'm terrified of getting fat. But I don't want anyone to know that I throw up my food after I eat. It's very embarrassing."*

**—Amber.**

*"I tell myself: '... Today, I'm going to do better... And then later in the day at some inevitable point, I binge. Guilt follows, and I want to die.'*

**—Jennifer.**



**Y**OU want to look good, and that's normal. You want to be comforted when you're anxious or depressed. There's nothing wrong with that either. But if you're like any of the girls quoted here, you could have a problem. If you do, you're not alone. The fact is, millions of youths—most of them girls—have an eating disorder.<sup>#</sup>

Let's take a closer look at anorexia, bulimia, and binge eating. Each of these disorders has distinct symptoms, but all of them involve an abnormal attitude toward food. If you see yourself in any of the descriptions that follow, be assured that help is available. You *can* get better!

### An Overview

**■ ANOREXIA.** No matter how slim she may be, when a girl with anorexia looks in the mirror, she sees an obese person. To lose weight, she will resort to extreme measures. "I became compulsive about counting calories," says one sufferer. "I carefully planned what I would eat for the week, skipping meals and exercising excessively whenever I thought I'd consumed too many calories. I took up to six laxatives a day."

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

<sup>#</sup> Since the majority of those with eating disorders are female, we will refer to sufferers in that gender. However, many of the principles discussed here also apply to males.

Before long, symptoms of anorexia start to show. Weight loss is a common sign, but the sufferer may also experience hair loss, dry skin, fatigue, and loss of bone density. Menstrual periods can become irregular or even cease for several consecutive months.

Perhaps these symptoms sound harmless, but make no mistake—*Anorexia is life threatening*. One study found that in time, up to 10 percent of sufferers die from their disorder, usually as a result of organ failure or other problems related to improper nutrition.

■ **BULIMIA.** Instead of avoiding food, the girl with bulimia binges, consuming as many as 15,000 calories in just two hours! Then she purges what she has eaten, usually by making herself vomit or by taking laxatives or diuretics.

Bingeing is most often carried on in secret. “After school, if I came home before anyone else, I usually binged,” says one girl. “I was careful to hide the evidence.” After the binge, however, guilt set in. “I would feel terrible about myself,” she says, “but I knew that I could easily erase my actions. I’d go upstairs, vomit, and feel not only relieved but also empowered.”

Despite any seeming benefit, purging is dangerous. Laxative misuse weakens the intestinal lining and can lead to inflammation or infection. Frequent vomiting can result in dehydration, tooth decay, damage to the esophagus, and even heart failure.

■ **BINGE EATING.** Like the bulimic, a binge eater will consume a large amount of food. The difference is that she will not purge. As a result, the binge eater may be overweight. Some will, however, starve themselves after a binge or engage in rigorous exercise. Sometimes when weight is maintained in this way, family and friends remain oblivious to the binger’s plight.

Like anorexics and bulimics, binge eaters have an unhealthy attitude toward food. One girl says of herself and other sufferers: “Food is our personal, secret friend—may be our *only* friend.” Another says: “While bingeing, nothing else seems to matter. Food seems all important—it’s comforting—and then the binge is followed by feelings of guilt and depression.”

Even without purging, bingeing is dangerous. It can lead to diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and a number of other maladies. It can also take a heavy emotional toll.

## “I think you have a problem . . .”

If a family member or friend says those words, fight the urge to be defensive. Suppose a friend noticed that the hem on the back of your dress was unraveling. Wouldn’t you appreciate her speaking up before it came apart? The Bible states: “There exists a friend sticking closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24) When someone comes to you with concern over a problem you may have, that one is proving to be just that sort of friend!

## “I had to be thin”

*I started losing weight. Then I had my wisdom teeth out, and I couldn’t eat. That plunged me into anorexia. I became obsessed with my looks, my figure. I was never thin enough. My lowest weight was alarming. I did so much damage to my body! Now I can’t grow my nails. I messed up my internal clock. I have had four miscarriages. I’m in early menopause, and my metabolism barely works. I also have colitis. All of this because I had to be thin.*”—Nicole.



# If a relapse occurs

You might gain the victory over your eating disorder, only to relapse weeks or even months later. If this occurs, do not give up. The Bible acknowledges that "the righteous one may fall even seven times." (Proverbs 24:16) A setback does not make you a failure. It only emphasizes the need to strengthen your resolve, to recognize the warning signs that a relapse is imminent, and to open up, perhaps once again, to supportive individuals who can help you.

## Read more about it

If you suffer from an eating disorder, you would do well to read up on the subject. *The more you know about the problem, the easier it will be to fight it.* Likely, you will benefit by reviewing the helpful information that appeared in *Awake!* of January 22, 1999, pages 3-12, and April 22, 1999, pages 13-15.



### Could It Happen to You?

Of course, most people who want to lose weight or get into shape do not have an eating disorder. Still, after considering the above, you might wonder if you are heading in that direction. Ask yourself:

- Am I ashamed or embarrassed about my habits or rituals related to food?
  - Do I hide my eating habits from others?
  - Has food become the biggest part of my life?
  - Do I weigh myself more than once a day?
  - Am I willing to take risks to lose weight?
  - Have I experimented with self-induced vomiting, laxatives, or diuretics?
  - Have my eating habits affected my social life? For example, do I prefer to be alone rather than with others so that I can binge or purge in secret?
- If your answers to these questions indicate that you have a problem, ask yourself:
- Am I really happy living this way?

What can you do about the situation?

### Take Action Now!

The first step is to admit to yourself that you have a problem. "After thinking about it," Danielle says, "I realized that I had the same feelings and habits as girls with anorexia. It was scary to come face-to-face with the fact that I did the same things that they did."

Next, pray to Jehovah about your plight.\* Implore him for insight as to what is behind your disorder so that you can conquer it. You can pray as did David: "Search through me, O God, and know my heart. Examine me, and know my disquieting thoughts, and see whether there is in me any painful way, and lead me in the way of time indefinite."—Psalm 139:23, 24.

\* When distressed, you can be assured of Jehovah's personal care by meditating upon such scriptures as the following: Exodus 3:7; Psalm 9:9; 34:18; 51:17; 55:22; Isaiah 57:15; 2 Corinthians 4:7; Philippians 4:6, 7; 1 Peter 5:7; 1 John 5:14.

### TO THINK ABOUT

- Do you think you might have an eating disorder? If so, whom can you go to for help?
- How could you help a friend who has an eating disorder?

More articles from the "Young People Ask . . ." series can be found at the Web site  
[www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)

On the other hand, you might find that you are reluctant to leave your eating disorder behind. You may have become dependent on it, much like an addiction. This is another matter to take to Jehovah in prayer. That is what Danielle had to do. "At first," she admits, "I didn't really want to recover. So I had to pray for the desire to get better."

Third, talk to a parent or other adult who is in a position to help you. Caring adults will not shame you. Rather, they will strive to imitate Jehovah, of whom the Bible states: "He has neither despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted one; and he has not concealed his face from him, and when he cried to him for help he heard."—Psalm 22:24.

Admittedly, the road to recovery is not easy. In some cases professional assistance is needed.\* The important thing is to take action. That's what one bulimic girl resolved to do. "One day," she says, "I began to realize that purging was actually controlling me. Yet I wasn't sure I could stop. Finally, I did the hardest thing I've ever had to do. I asked for help."

You can do the same!

\* Christians should be sure that any treatment they pursue does not conflict with Bible principles.



**You might  
have to pray  
for the desire  
to get better**

## A NOTE TO PARENTS

If your daughter has fallen victim to an eating disorder, what can you do? First, carefully review the information in this article and in the other references provided on page 20. Try to understand why she has resorted to this behavior.

It has been noted that many with eating disorders have a low self-image and are perfectionist in nature, setting unreasonably high expectations for themselves. Make sure you do not contribute to these traits. Build up your daughter. (Isaiah 50:4) And to counteract perfectionism, "let your reasonableness become known."—Philippians 4:5.

Also take a close look at your own attitude toward food and weight. Have you unwittingly overemphasized these matters, either by word or by example? Remember, youths

are extremely conscious of their appearance. Even teasing about "baby fat" or the normal growth spurt of adolescence can sow seeds of trouble in the mind of an impressionable youth.

Once you have prayerfully thought the matter through, have a heartfelt talk with your daughter.

- **Plan carefully what to say and when to say it.**
- **Express clearly your concern and your desire to help.**
- **Do not be surprised if the first response is defensive.**
- **Be a patient listener.**

Most important, become part of your daughter's efforts to get better. *Make recovery a family affair!*



Poland

▲ Clive Shirley/Panos Pictures

▼ By courtesy of the University of Liverpool Library

**T**HE event resembles any large, traditional wedding. Food and drink are plentiful, and the house is filled with music. Relatives press forward to congratulate the shy groom and his radiant bride. But this is not a wedding—only an engagement party the night before, which has drawn more than 600 well-wishers. Here the groom's family present their son's future in-laws with a bride-price. Tomorrow the groom and his family will escort the new bride to his home, where another celebration will accompany the actual wedding.

All the relatives of the new couple speak Romany—a language that would be considered foreign wherever they lived. This language in its various dialects, along with many ancient traditions and marriage customs, is the common heritage of a people who are spread across the globe but who claim no

#### Roma in England, 1911



# The Roma

## A THOUSAND YEARS OF JOY AND SORROW

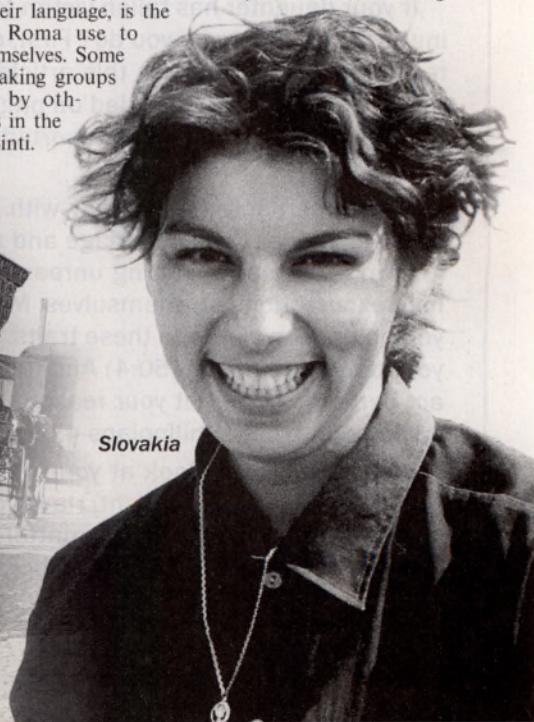
national territory and have no national government of their own. They are Roma.\*

### Who Are the Roma?

Retracing the Roma's linguistic, cultural, and genetic paths leads us back about 1,000 years to northern India. Their language, apart from some admixture picked up during more recent times, is clearly of Indian origin. Why they left India is less clear. Some scholars believe that their ancestors may have been craftsmen and entertainers attached to bands of soldiers who left their homeland in the aftermath of military conflicts. In any case, the Roma arrived in Europe by way of Persia and Turkey before the year 1300 C.E.

\* In different parts of the world, the Roma have been called Gypsies, Gitanos, Zigeuner, Tsigani, Cigány. These terms are considered pejorative. *Rom* (plural *roma*), meaning "man" in their language, is the term most Roma use to refer to themselves. Some Romany-speaking groups are known by other names, as in the case of the Sinti.

Slovakia



In popular perception in Europe, the Roma have long occupied two extremes. On the one hand, they have been romanticized in some novels and films as a hospitable, care-free, wandering people who through song and dance give unfettered expression to the joys and sorrows of life. On the other hand, they have been vilified as untrustworthy, mysterious, and wary—eternal outsiders, isolated and insulated from the society around them. To help us to understand how such stereotypes have come to be, let us revisit the intriguing past of the Roma.

### A Time of Discrimination

In the Middle Ages, the world of most Europeans was their own village or town. Imagine what must have gone through their minds when they first laid eyes on arriving Roma families. Many things about them must have been intriguing. Besides their swarthy complexion, dark eyes, and black hair, the newcomers' clothing, manner, and language were totally different from their own, and the Roma often tended to keep to themselves—a habit perhaps traceable to their time back in the stratified society of India. Within decades, Europeans' initial curiosity gave way to mistrust.

The Roma were literally marginalized—forced to set up camp only on the fringes of villages and prohibited from entering even to buy provisions or draw water. "They

Macedonia



AFP/Getty Images

steal children," it was rumored, "and even eat them!" Roma were sometimes obliged by law to cook in the open so that anyone who wished to could examine the contents of their cooking pots. This examination was often performed by spilling the meal for that day onto the ground. Not surprisingly, some Roma stole food to survive.

The Roma dealt with the discrimination by sticking together closely. For centuries they have found support and joy in family life. Traditionally, Roma parents care deeply for their children, and children care deeply for parents, looking after them through old age. Many Roma also hold tightly to traditional standards of conduct and decency.

During the Nazi era in Europe, Hitler killed an estimated 400,000 or more Roma in his death camps, along with Jews, Jehovah's Witnesses, and others. In 1940, even before Hitler's campaign of extermination had become widely known, movie actor Charlie Chaplin—himself of Roma descent—made *The Great Dictator*, a movie satirizing Hitler and the Nazi movement. Other well-known artists claiming Roma ancestry include actor Yul Brynner, actress Rita Hayworth (below), painter Pablo Picasso (below), jazz musician Django Reinhardt, and Macedonian singer Esma Redžepova. Roma have also become engineers, doctors, professors, and members of national parliaments.



Photo by Tony Vaccano/Getty Images

## **Life on the Road**

Rarely welcome, the Roma kept on the move. This nomadic life fostered various skills, such as metalworking, trading, and entertaining. By performing these needed services, they could at least feed their families. Some Roma women capitalized on their reputation for having psychic powers, often pretending to have them for commercial purposes. Life on the road also minimized the risk of cultural or moral pollution through too much contact with *gadje*—Romany for “non-Roma.”\*

Meanwhile, prejudice led to persecution. Roma were expelled from some parts of Europe. In other areas, for centuries Roma were enslaved. The end of that slavery in the 1860's further propelled the Roma diaspora, sending large numbers of them into Western Europe and the Americas. Wherever they went,

\* Although some Roma cling tenaciously to many traditions, they have often adopted the majority religion of the territory in which they reside.

they took their language, customs, and talents with them.

Even in their downtrodden state, Roma sometimes found a measure of satisfaction through their performing arts. In Spain the mingling of Roma and other cultures produced flamenco music and dancing, while in Eastern Europe, Roma musicians took up local folk songs, adding their own distinctive style. The passionate strains of Roma musical performances influenced even classical composers, including Beethoven, Brahms, Dvořák, Haydn, Liszt, Mozart, Rachmaninoff, Ravel, Rossini, Saint-Saëns, and Sarasate.

## **Roma in the Modern World**

Today between two million and five million Roma—some say many more—live in practically every corner of the earth. Most live in Europe. A large number no longer constantly travel, and some are financially well off. But in many places Roma must still be counted among the poor and disadvantaged and often live in squalid conditions.

### ***Today the Roma live in practically every corner of the earth***

Romania



Spain



Macedonia



Czech Republic

Romania: © Karen Robinson/Panos Pictures; Macedonia: © Mikkel Ostergaard/Panos Pictures; Czech Republic: © Julie Denesha/Panos Pictures

During the Communist era in Eastern Europe, political theory dictated that all citizens should be equal. Governments tried with varying degrees of success to rein in the Roma's nomadic way of life by giving them jobs and settling them in government-built housing. This at times provided some improvement in health and living standards. But it did not erase the lingering negative feelings and opinions that Roma and non-Roma had held toward one another for centuries.

Political changes in Eastern Europe in the 1990's promised new opportunities. But the changes also opened old wounds when reduction of social-assistance programs as well as less vigorous enforcement of antidiscrimination laws returned many Roma to a more difficult situation socially and economically.



### Finding Hope and a Better Life

Such were the circumstances when raven-haired Andrea attended school in Eastern Europe. She was the only student of Roma descent in her class. Though strong of spirit, she tries unsuccessfully to hold back her tears as she recalls the taunts and rejection. "I would regularly be picked last when we chose teams for games," Andrea remembers. "I wanted to run away to India where I could blend in. In fact, someone once yelled at a friend of mine, 'Go back to India!' He replied, 'I would if I had the money.' No place felt like home. We were unwelcome everywhere." A gifted dancer, Andrea dreamed of fame and, through it, acceptance. But during her teens, she found something far better.

"One day a young woman named Piroska, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, called at our home," Andrea relates. "She showed me from the Bible that God loves us individually and not just as a mass of humanity. She explained that I could have a good relationship with God if I wanted to. This made me feel that I was really important to someone. Knowing that in God's view all people are the same gave me more confidence in myself."

"Piroska took me to the Witnesses' meetings, where I met Roma and non-Roma and could sense the unity among them. I made real friends there with Witnesses of both backgrounds. After studying the Bible with Piroska for about a year and a half, I also became one of Jehovah's Witnesses." Today Andrea and her husband are

*Andrea dreamed of fame and acceptance through dance*



full-time evangelizers, teaching others about God's warm love for people of all nations.

#### **"Accepted as an Equal"**

Looking back to his youth, a Rom named Hajro relates: "Bad association with other boys who did not respect the law regularly got me in trouble. Once, the police detained me for stealing something while in the company of those boys. When the police took me home, I was more afraid of my mother's reaction than I had been of them because, as is true in many Roma families, I was taught that it is wrong to steal from anyone."

When Hajro got older, he and his family also

met Jehovah's Witnesses. The Bible's promise that God's Kingdom will rid human society of problems, including prejudice and discrimination, resonated deeply in Hajro's heart. "Roma have never had a national government of their own to care for them," he says. "That is why I feel that Roma are in a good position to appreciate how God's Kingdom will benefit all peoples. Even now I see those benefits. From the moment I stepped into the Kingdom Hall, I felt the way the apostle Peter did when he said: 'For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.'

## **Roma Witnesses**

Many Roma have become Jehovah's Witnesses. Some serve as congregation elders and full-time pioneer ministers. Local government officials and other non-Roma regard them as exemplary. A Roma Witness in Slovakia relates: "One day a non-Roma neighbor knocked on our apartment door. 'My marriage is in crisis, but I know that you can help us,' he ex-

plained. 'Why us?' we asked. He replied, 'If the God you worship can help you Roma to improve the quality of your life, perhaps he can help us too.' We gave him a copy of a Bible-based book on family life published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

"Later his wife knocked with the same request, not knowing that her husband had already been there.

'No one else in this apartment building can help us,' she said. We gave her a copy of the same book. Each asked us not to tell the other of the visit. One and a half months later, we began to study the Bible with the couple. Living by Bible truth has elevated us so much in people's eyes that they turn to us for spiritual help."

Narbonne, France



Granada, Spain

**"Roma are in a good position to appreciate how God's Kingdom will benefit all peoples."**—Hajro



(Acts 10:34, 35) I was accepted as an equal by everyone. I could hardly believe my ears when non-Roma called me *phrala*—‘brother,’ in Romany!

“At first, some of my family members vigorously opposed me. They could not understand the changes I was making in order to live by Bible principles. But now our relatives and the Roma community have seen that standing firm for God’s standards has made me happy and has produced many good results. Most of them would like to improve their lives too.” Hajro presently serves as a Christian elder and full-time evangeliz-

er. His non-Roma wife, Meghan, also teaches Roma and others how the Bible can help them to have a happy life—now and in the future. “I have been completely accepted in my husband’s family and community,” she says. “They like it that a non-Rom has taken such an interest in them.”

ANSWERS TO PAGE 31

1. Cherubim. “The way to the tree of life.”—Genesis 3:24.  
2. Archangel Michael.—Jude 9. 3. Angels. Many millions—Daniel 7:10. 4. Seraphim. “Holy, holy is Jehovah.”—Isaiah 6:3. 5. 44 C.E. 6. 1761 B.C.E.

## Why I Don't Celebrate Halloween

LAST YEAR, while his neighbors were busy preparing for Halloween—in some countries, a popular annual holiday with strong spiritistic overtones—14-year-old Michael in Canada had other things on his mind. In an essay that he wrote for school, Michael stated:

Tonight is the night before Halloween. As I look outside my window, I see that all my neighbors’ lawns are decorated with tombstones and skeletons and that jack-o'-lanterns light their windows.\* Parents are making adjustments to their children’s costumes; children are dreaming about how much candy they’ll get tomorrow.

My family is different. Our lawn isn’t decorated, and our windows aren’t lit up. People ask me why I don’t celebrate Halloween. Basically, Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t celebrate it because of its origins.<sup>#</sup>

\* A jack-o'-lantern is a hollowed-out pumpkin that has cuttings making it resemble a face, with a nose, a mouth, and eyes. A candle or other type of light is placed inside.

# For more information, see *Awake!* of October 8, 2001, pages 5-10.

Surprisingly, I like Halloween time. “Why?” you may ask. Because it makes me think. It makes me think about the reason I choose not to do certain things. Each person has to answer for himself whether the origins of a custom matter. I think that the origins do matter. For example, most people would get upset if their neighbors got dressed up as Nazis. Why? Because of the origins of Nazi uniforms and what they stand for—principles that most people find offensive. I find the principles offensive that the devil, wicked spirits, and witches represent, and I don’t want to be associated with them. It’s good to think about the choices we make and our reasons for making them and to make choices based on principle rather than on what is popular. That’s why I like this time of year. I am proud to be different and to stand by what I believe in.’





**New Format for Awake!** Last night I finished reading the January 2006 issue of *Awake!* I really like this new format! *Awake!* is now more of a study magazine, with a design that compels the reader to think. From cover to cover, I can see Jehovah's hand in furthering our spiritual growth.

B. N., Canada

I am 16 years old. The new features in *Awake!* will aid us greatly in studying the Bible. Some articles have a series of questions to help the reader ponder over what he has read. I enjoy using *Awake!* for my school assignments. I hope you continue to provide such wonderful and useful information for us.

S. N., Namibia

**Sustained by My Faith—Living With ALS** (January 2006) After reading the experience of Jason Stuart, all my problems seemed to become insignificant. I came to realize that Jehovah values the service we render to him according to our circumstances. I admire Jason's wife for her self-sacrifice and her trust in Jehovah. This experience will always remain in my heart and will help me to face problems that arise in the future.

C.R.S., Peru

I cried after reading Jason's story, not only because I was touched when I read of his ordeals but also because, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I am so proud to have such a spiritual brother.

From the article, I see the importance of preparing for trials, since "time and unforeseen occurrence" can befall any one of us.—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

T. A., Hungary

I lost my mother in death to ALS. Jason's experience therefore touched my heart. His example encouraged me to continue putting forth my best in my ministry. I pray that Jehovah will continue to strengthen this brother and his wife.

L.Z.G., Paraguay



The fact that Jason spent his time immersed in personal study when he was well, and thus had a spiritual reserve to draw upon when he needed it, made me think. It strengthened my determination to be more zealous in my personal study of the Bible.

Y. M., Japan

**Young People Ask—Why Do I Hurt Myself?** (January 2006) As a youth I struggled with drugs and alcohol, but the most difficult problem I have had to deal with is hurting myself. It has been a constant battle, but articles such as this one have given me the strength to endure. Words cannot express my appreciation.

E. C., United States

Self-harm has been part of my life since my teen years. I am now 56 years old. I stopped my habit of self-injury four years ago, but sometimes my problems are so great that I long to do it again. This article has reached the very core of my heart. It will enable people like me to make our lives livable again.

Name withheld, Netherlands

I am 17 years old and would like to thank you for this article. Self-injury

is my problem. Recently, I cut myself again. Afterward, I approached my mother and asked her to pray with me. Despite this problem, I have learned that Jehovah has affection for me. Your article is a great help, and I am thankful to God for it!

**N. M., Czech Republic**

"This cannot possibly be!" That was my reaction upon seeing this article. I am 18 years old. I have been a self-injurer. Pain helps me to suppress my emotions. Quite often I feel like torturing myself, and I don't know how to battle those feelings. It was a big surprise to see this article. Tears welled up, and I thanked Jehovah in prayer. Only in Jehovah's organization is it possible to find such comfort!

**A. P., Russia**

At the age of 14, I began to ease my emotional pain by means of self-injury. Once, I even had to go to the hospital because of it. Keeping a diary has greatly helped me to keep my symptoms in check. Also, when I feel tempted to self-injure, I call an understanding friend. Prayer has been especially helpful. And when I feel unworthy to pray, friends and Christian elders have prayed with me. It is a difficult battle, but I have learned how to cope with it and accept all available help so that I do not have to hurt myself.

**N. W., Germany**

The picture on the first page of this article showed a girl pulling her hair, and the article mentions "Sara," who pulled out her hair to inflict punishment on herself. My daughter has a disorder known as trichotillomania, a condition that is characterized by pulling out one's hair. This condition is related to obsessive-compulsive

disorder. It is triggered by a compulsion, not by the desire to hurt oneself. Hair pulling is not a stepping-stone to cutting.

**M. H., United States**

**"Awake!" responds:** The term trichotillomania, coined in the late 19th century, refers to a behavioral disorder that is characterized by the irresistible urge to pull out one's hair. As our picture attempted to illustrate tastefully, hair pulling has been used by some as a means of self-injury. However, this does not mean that everyone who engages in compulsive hair pulling is the type of self-injurer described in our article. As the above reader points out, sometimes the habit is more closely related to obsessive-compulsive disorder.

In any event, some experts explain that the motivation for trichotillomania must be taken into consideration so that treatment can be tailored to the needs of the individual sufferer. Thus, it may be wise for those who have this problem to consult a medical professional to obtain a personal diagnosis and a plan for treatment.

**How Would You Answer?** (January 2006) I am so excited about this new feature! We teach our grandchildren, and this will be a great supplement to their daily Bible reading and *Awake!* articles that they read as part of their school assignments. Thank you for caring so much for the young ones.

**B. E., United States**

This feature is challenging, but when I figure out an answer I'm really happy! Last night I spent the whole evening reading this page; it was so interesting! When I grow up, I would like to help make this magazine so that others can learn about Jehovah!

**D. H., United States**

I am eight years old. Our family used this page in our family study. We enjoy the research that we have to do. The "Who Am I?" part can be hard, but we like the challenge. Keep up the good work.

**C. W., United States**



### Twelve Years in Prison—Why?

Three of Jehovah's Witnesses have been imprisoned in Sawa, Eritrea, East Africa, for the past 12 years. No charges have been filed against them, and they have never been given a trial. They are denied visitors, including family members. The reason? Their refusal to participate in military service. Eritrean law makes no provision for conscientious objection. When young men are arrested, they are detained at a military camp, where they are often severely beaten and undergo various forms of torture.

### Internet a Threat to Wildlife?

"Is the Internet hastening the demise of the African elephant?" asks *The New York Times*. Some animal welfare advocates believe that it is and that scores of other species are at risk as well. Illegal online trade is said to have increased as the Web itself has grown. Searches on English-language Web sites during a three-month period found "more than 6,000 illegal or potentially illegal wildlife items for sale," including turtle shells, elephant-bone sculptures, and even live black leopards.

### Ecological Central Heating

"Central heating fueled by olive pits has arrived," reports the Spanish newspaper *El País*. This energy source provides heat and hot water for at least 300 homes in Madrid. As a fuel, olive pits are cheap, costing 60 percent less than oil and 20 percent less than coal. They do not pollute the environment, since the amount of carbon dioxide released during combustion is the same as that released during natural decomposition. Another advantage is availability. Olive pits are a residue obtained after extracting oil from olives, and Spain is reputed to be the world's number one olive oil producer.



■ "The connection between media violence and real-life [adolescent] aggression is nearly as strong as the link between smoking and lung cancer."—*THE MEDICAL JOURNAL OF AUSTRALIA*.

■ Evidence has been found suggesting that fruit bats, which are eaten in some parts of Africa, "may be a natural incubator for the Ebola virus."

—MACLEANS, CANADA.

■ Data from the office of the attorney general in Mexico reveal that over the last eight years, at least 130,000 children in that country have been kidnapped for sale, for sexual or labor exploitation, or for the removal and sale of their organs.

—MILENIO, MEXICO.

### Four-Thousand-Year-Old Noodles

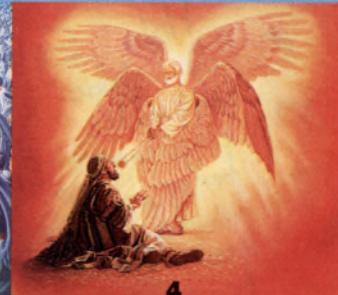
Scientists say they have unearthed what they are calling "the world's oldest known noodles," reports *The New York Times*. The noodles are thin, yellow, 20 inches long, and are made from a millet native to China. They were found in a sealed earthenware bowl beneath a ten-foot-thick layer of sediment near the Huang River in northwestern China. The site was probably destroyed by an earthquake and "catastrophic flooding" some 4,000 years ago, according to the journal *Nature*. As to the debate over whether pasta originated in Italy, the Middle East, or the Orient, one of the discoverers, according to the *Times*, Houyuan Lu of the Chinese Academy of Sciences claims: "This study has established that the earliest noodle production occurred in China."

### IDENTIFY THE SPIRIT CREATURES

Draw a line connecting the type of angel to the corresponding picture, and then answer the question.


**1**

**2**

**3**

**4**

#### **Archangel**

What name is the archangel known by?

#### **Cherubs**

What did cherubs guard in Eden?

#### **Seraphs**

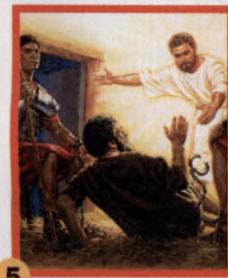
What did Isaiah hear seraphs saying?

#### **Angels**

At least, how many angels are there?

### WHEN IN HISTORY?

Draw a line connecting each event to the year it happened.



**5**  
Acts 12:5-11



**6**  
Genesis 32:22-30



**7**  
Daniel 6:22

1728 B.C.E.  
1761 B.C.E.

About 538 B.C.E.  
About 455 B.C.E.

33 C.E.  
44 C.E.

Middle circle: ©Alan Copson/Agency Jon Arnold Images/age fotostock

(Answers on page 27)

#### **WHO AM I?**

**8.** I ignored the warnings of an angel and the complaints of an ass.

#### **WHO AM I?**

**9.** I delivered a message to Daniel, to Zechariah, and to the mother of Immanuel.

**Children's Picture Search**

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

### FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

**Page 4** How is watching television like eating honey? (Proverbs 25:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 7** Why should we be careful about what we watch on television? (Proverbs 13:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 11** What happens to a person's thoughts at death? (Psalm 146:\_\_\_\_)

**Page 21** How does Jehovah view youths who have an eating disorder? (Psalm 22:\_\_\_\_)

# Help for a Troubled Youth

SIBIA, a 13-year-old schoolgirl in Mexico, noticed that a classmate would often come to school crying. She tried to comfort her. One day Sibia's classmate confided that her father was an alcoholic and beat her mother.

Sibia relates: "She told me that she did not want to live, that she had even tried to commit suicide. She said that no one loved her and that she felt all alone. I answered that there was Someone who loved her very much, the most important Person in the universe. Then I explained Jehovah's purpose for mankind."

Later Sibia gave her classmate the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* and began studying it with her every day during school recess. Gradually the girl changed from being withdrawn and would talk and laugh with others. In a letter to Sibia, the girl wrote: "Thank you for your friendship and understanding. You are like the sister I always wanted to have. Now I know that someone cares about me—Jehovah."

