

Awake!

AUGUST 2007

Seven Steps to Better Parenting

ALSO: CAN WORSHIPPING
GOD BE ENJOYABLE?
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Seven Steps to Better Parenting 3-9

What can parents do to improve the way they care for their family? The advice found on the following pages has stood the test of time, for it is based on the most reliable source of guidance available today.

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Step 2 Create a Loving Home

Step 3 Exercise Your Authority

Step 4 Define Family Rules and Enforce Them Promptly

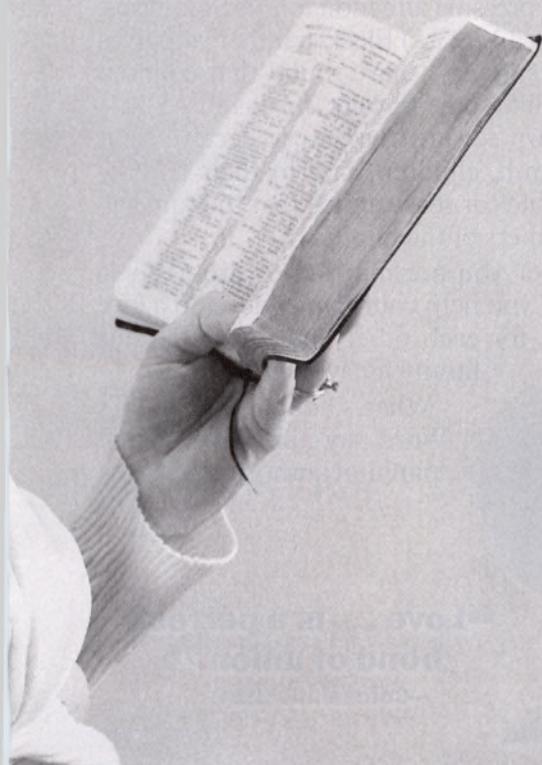
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STEP
**1 Seek
Good
Advice**

Why take this step? The first time that parents hold a newborn child in their arms, they may be buffeted by conflicting emotions. “I felt deep joy and wonder,” says Brett, a father who lives in Britain. “But I also experienced an overwhelming sense of responsibility and felt unprepared for the job.” Monica, a mother who lives in Argentina, says: “I worried about whether I could care for my little girl’s needs. I wondered, ‘Will I be able to train her to become a responsible adult?’”

Can you relate to the joys and fears of those parents? Certainly, raising a child is one of the most taxing yet fulfilling, and frustrating yet rewarding, tasks any human can attempt. As one father said, “you only get one shot at raising your child.” Given the enormous influence parents have on the health and happiness of their children, you may feel a strong need for trustworthy advice on how to be a better parent.

The challenge: Everyone seems to have advice on raising children. In the past, new parents relied on their parents’ example or on their religious convictions to guide them. But in a number of lands, the family unit is decaying and religion has lost its influence. As a result, many parents turn to professional parenting experts for advice. Some of what these experts say is based on sound principles. In other cases the counsel of such experts can be contradictory and may soon be considered out-of-date.

The solution: Seek the advice of the one Person who knows most about how to raise children—the Creator of human life, Jehovah God. (Acts 17:26-28) His Word, the Bible, contains both direct advice and practical examples that can help you become a better parent. “I will give advice with my eye upon you,” he promises.—Psalm 32:8.

What advice does God give to parents that can help them raise happy children?

“Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding.”—Proverbs 3:5

STEP **2** Create a Loving Home

Why take this step? Children need love and wither without it. In the 1950's, anthropologist M. F. Ashley Montagu wrote: "What the human organism requires most for its development is a nutriment of love; the source of virtually all health is in the experience of love, especially within the first six years of life." Modern researchers echo Montagu's conclusion that "children suffer serious crippling effects when exposed to an inadequate diet of love."

The challenge: Living in this loveless, selfish world strains family bonds. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Married couples may find that the financial and emotional demands of raising children make existing marital problems escalate. For example, differences in opinion between a married couple on how to discipline and reward the children may increase tension between two people who already find it difficult to communicate.

The solution: Plan regular time together as a family. Married couples also need to plan time alone together. (Amos 3:3) Make wise use of the time after the children have gone to bed. Do not allow TV to rob you of these valuable moments. Keep the romance in your marriage by regularly expressing affection for each other. (Proverbs 25:11; Song of Solomon 4:7-10) Rather than constantly "finding fault," look for ways each day to praise your spouse.—Psalm 103:9, 10; Proverbs 31:28.

Tell your children that you love them. Jehovah God set the example for parents by openly expressing affection for his Son, Jesus. (Matthew 3:17; 17:5) Fleck, a father who lives in Austria, says: "I have found that children are a bit like some flowers. Just as these little plants turn toward the sun to receive light and warmth, children look to their parents for love and for reassurance that they are valued members of the family."

Whether you are married or are a single parent, if you help your family develop a love for each other and for God, your family life will improve.

What, though, does God's Word say about exercising parental authority?

"Love . . . is a perfect bond of union."

—Colossians 3:14



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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**STEP
3**

Exercise Your Authority

Why take this step? Studies show that “children brought up by loving but authoritative parents—those who are supportive of their children yet maintain firm limits—excel academically, develop better social skills, feel good about themselves, and are happier overall than kids whose parents are either too lenient or excessively harsh,” says *Parents* magazine.

The challenge: All the way from babyhood through their teen years, children will challenge your right to exert authority over them. “Children are quick to learn when their parents are afraid to assert their authority and can be relied upon to give in,” writes John Rosemond, author of the book *Parent Power!* “When it comes to a question of ‘Who’s the boss?’ if parents won’t run with the ball, children will,” he says.

The solution: Do not worry that you will alienate your children or crush their spirit if you exercise your authority. Jehovah God, the Originator of family life, does not intend for children to have an equal say in how the family is governed. Rather, he appoints parents to their position of authority and commands children: “Be obedient to your parents.”—Ephesians 3:14, 15; 6:1-4.

You can exercise your authority without becoming a tyrant. How? By following Jehovah’s example. He has the power to force his

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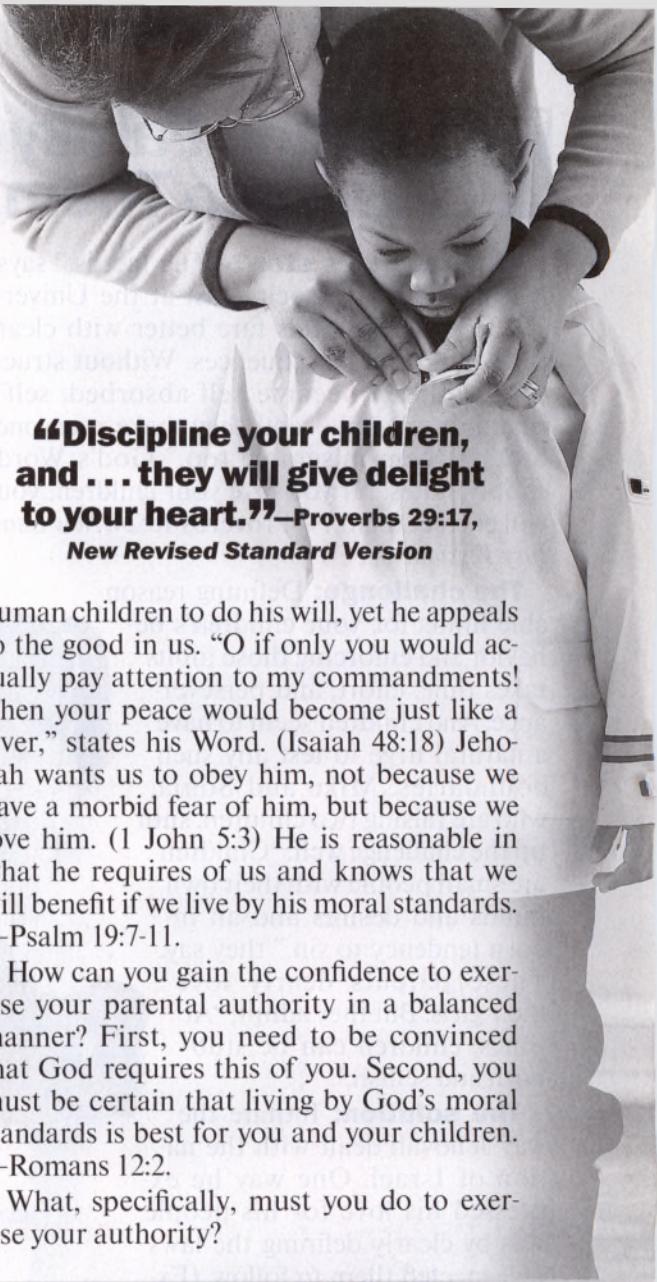
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“Discipline your children, and . . . they will give delight to your heart.”—Proverbs 29:17,

New Revised Standard Version

human children to do his will, yet he appeals to the good in us. “O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river,” states his Word. (Isaiah 48:18) Jehovah wants us to obey him, not because we have a morbid fear of him, but because we love him. (1 John 5:3) He is reasonable in what he requires of us and knows that we will benefit if we live by his moral standards.—Psalm 19:7-11.

How can you gain the confidence to exercise your parental authority in a balanced manner? First, you need to be convinced that God requires this of you. Second, you must be certain that living by God’s moral standards is best for you and your children.—Romans 12:2.

What, specifically, must you do to exercise your authority?

STEP

4 Define Family Rules and Enforce Them Promptly

Why take this step? “The fact is,” says Ronald Simons, a sociologist at the University of Georgia, “kids fare better with clear rules and firm consequences. Without structure, children become self-absorbed, selfish, and unhappy—and they make everyone around them miserable too.” God’s Word simply states: “If you love your children, you will correct them.”—Proverbs 13:24, *New Century Version*.

The challenge: Defining reasonable limits for your children’s behavior and enforcing those limits takes time, effort, and perseverance. And children seem to have a natural urge to test any such boundaries. Mike and Sonia, who are raising two children, sum up the challenge well. “Children are small people with their own minds and desires and an in-born tendency to sin,” they say. These parents dearly love their girls. But they admit, “At times, children can be stubborn and selfish.”

The solution: Imitate the way Jehovah dealt with the nation of Israel. One way he expressed his love for his people was by clearly defining the laws he expected them to follow. (Exodus 20:2-17) He outlined the consequences of disobeying those laws.—Exodus 22:1-9.

Therefore, why not make a written list of the household laws, or rules, that you feel your children must obey. Some parents suggest limiting such a list to just a few

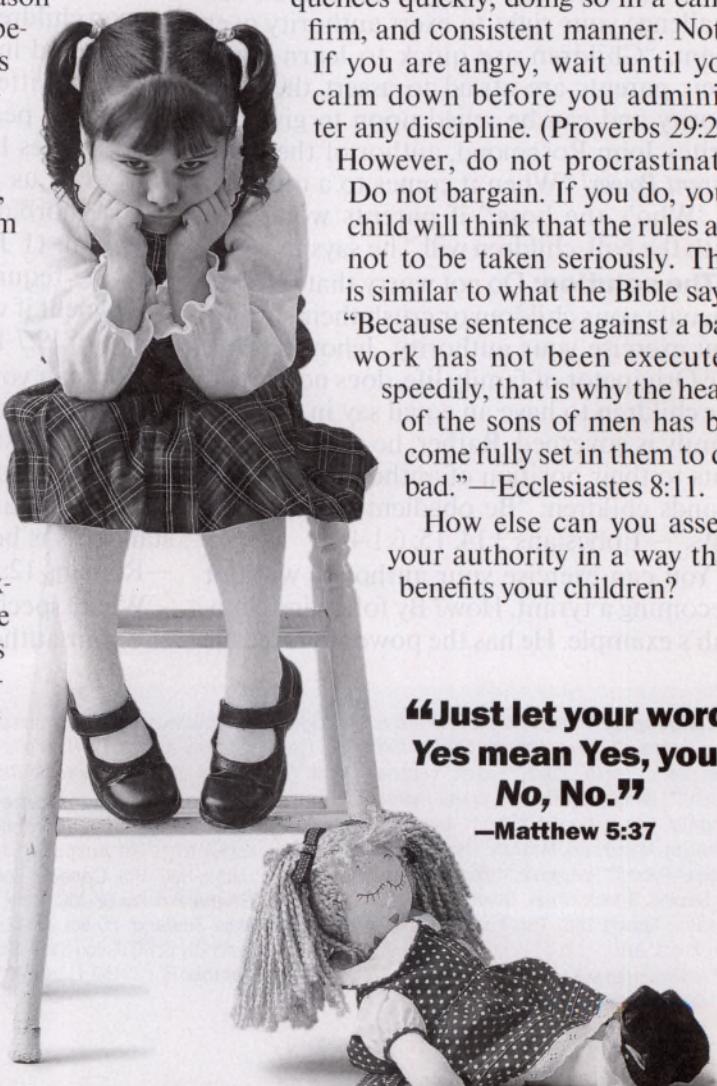
rules, maybe five or so. A short list of well-chosen house rules is less difficult to enforce and more likely to be remembered. Next to the rules, write down the consequences for breaking them. Make sure the punishments are reasonable and that you are willing to enforce them. Review the rules regularly so all—including Mom and Dad—know exactly what is expected of them.

If the rules are broken, enforce the consequences quickly, doing so in a calm, firm, and consistent manner. Note: If you are angry, wait until you calm down before you administer any discipline. (Proverbs 29:22)

However, do not procrastinate. Do not bargain. If you do, your child will think that the rules are not to be taken seriously. This is similar to what the Bible says: “Because sentence against a bad work has not been executed

speedily, that is why the heart of the sons of men has become fully set in them to do bad.”—Ecclesiastes 8:11.

How else can you assert your authority in a way that benefits your children?



**“Just let your word
Yes mean Yes, your
No, No.”**

—Matthew 5:37



STEP **5** Establish and Maintain Routines

Why take this step? Routines are a major part of adult life. Work, worship, and even recreation usually follow set routines. Parents handicap their children if they do not teach them to structure their time and to stick to a schedule. On the other hand, "studies show that having rules and structure makes a child feel safe and secure and teaches self-control and self-reliance," says Dr. Laurence Steinberg, a professor of psychology.

The challenge: Life is hectic. Many parents work long hours, so they may have little time to spend with their children on a regular basis. Establishing and maintaining routines requires self-discipline and determination to overcome a child's initial resistance to conforming to the routines.

The solution: Apply, in principle, the Bible's counsel to "let all things take place decently and by arrangement." (1 Corinthians 14:40) For example, while their children are very young, many parents wisely establish a firm, regular bedtime. However, bedtime should be made pleasant. Tatiana, who lives in Greece and is a mother of two young girls, says: "When the children are in bed, I caress them and tell them what Mommy did while they were in school. I then ask them if they would like to tell me some of the things they did that day. They are relaxed. Often they open up to me."

Kostas, Tatiana's husband, reads stories to the girls. "They comment on the story," he says, "and often the discussion drifts

to their personal concerns. It never works if I just demand that the girls tell me what's worrying them." Of course, as the children grow older, you will want to adjust the bedtime appropriately. But if you maintain the routine, your children will likely continue to use this time to talk to you.

In addition, families will wisely make it a habit to eat at least one meal a day together. To establish this habit, mealtimes may need to be a little flexible. "I sometimes come home from work late," says Charles, father of two girls. "My wife might give the girls a snack to hold them over, but she always has everyone wait until we can have our meal as a family. We discuss our day's activities, review a Bible text, talk about problems, and laugh together. I can't stress enough how important this routine has been to the happiness of our family."

To master this step, do not let the pursuit of material possessions crowd out family routines. Apply the Bible's advice to "make sure of the more important things."—Philippians 1:10.

What else can parents do to improve communication with their children?

"Let all things take place decently and by arrangement."

—1 Corinthians 14:40



“When anyone is replying to a matter before he hears it, that is foolishness on his part.”

—Proverbs 18:13

Psalm 73:12, 13) For instance, when Job was experiencing extreme trials, he said that he wished to die.—Job 14:13.

Obviously, some of Job's thoughts and feelings needed correcting. But instead of denying Job's feelings or stopping him from talking, Jehovah dignified Job by patiently allowing him to pour out his heart. Only afterward did Jehovah kindly correct him. One Christian father expressed the matter this way, “Since Jehovah allows me to pour out my heart to him in prayer, I think it is only fair that I allow my children to pour out their positive *and* negative feelings to me.”

The next time you are tempted to tell your child, “You don’t really feel that way” or “You can’t honestly think that,” remember Jesus’ famous rule: “Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them.” (Luke 6:31) For instance, imagine that you have been dealt with harshly at work or suffered some disappointment, possibly because of your own failing. You express your frustration to a close friend, saying you cannot cope with your job. What would you want your friend to do? Tell you that you don’t really feel that way and immediately point out that the problem is your own fault anyway? Or would you prefer it if your friend said: “That must have been difficult. You’ve had a hard day”?

Children as well as adults are far more likely to accept counsel if they feel that the one offering it truly understands them and the difficulties they face. “The heart of the wise one causes his mouth to show insight, and to his lips it adds persuasiveness,” says God’s Word. —Proverbs 16:23.

How can you ensure that any counsel you give is taken seriously?

STEP 6 Acknowledge Your Child’s Feelings

Why take this step? Children want and need the most important people in their lives—their parents—to know how they feel. If parents habitually contradict their children when such feelings are expressed, the children will be less likely to open up to them and may even start to doubt their ability to feel and think for themselves.

The challenge: Children are prone to express their thoughts and emotions in extreme terms. True, some of what children say is unsettling for parents to hear. For example, a frustrated child may say, “I hate my life.”* A parent’s instinctive response may be, “No you don’t!” Parents may worry that acknowledging a child’s negative feelings or thoughts amounts to condoning them.

The solution: Apply the Bible’s advice to be “swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath.” (James 1:19) Note that Jehovah God acknowledged the negative feelings of many of his faithful servants by having them recorded in the Bible. (Genesis 27:46;

* Take seriously any statements your children make about ending their life.

STEP 7 Teach by Example

Why take this step? Actions teach. Words often impart only information. For example, parents may tell their children to be respectful and speak the truth. However, if these same parents scream at each other or at their children and tell lies to excuse themselves from inconvenient obligations, they teach that this is how adults should behave. Copying parents is “one of the most powerful ways that children learn,” says author Dr. Sal Severe.

The challenge: Parents are imperfect. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Romans 3:23) As for controlling our speech, the disciple James wrote: “The tongue, not one of mankind can get it tamed.” (James 3:8) In addition, it is not uncommon for children to try a parent’s patience to the limit. “I was amazed at how easily my children were able to make me lose my temper,” says Larry, a father of two, who is normally calm and self-controlled.

The solution: Strive to be good—not perfect—examples. And use your occasional poor behavior to teach a positive lesson. “If I lost my temper with my children or if I made a bad decision that adversely affected them,” says Chris, a father of two, “I would admit my mistake and apologize. This taught my children that parents make mistakes too and that we all need to work to improve our conduct.” Kostas, mentioned earlier, says: “I have found that because I apologize when I lose my temper, my girls have learned to say they are sorry when *they* make mistakes.”

Jehovah God says: “Do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jeho-



*When a parent apologizes,
a child also learns to do so*

**“Do you, . . . the one teaching
someone else, not teach
yourself?”—Romans 2:21**

vah.” (Ephesians 6:4) When someone in authority says one thing but does another, this irritates children as much as, or possibly more than, it does adults. Therefore, why not ask yourself these questions at the end of each day: If I had not said a word all day, what lessons would my children have learned from my actions? Are these the same lessons I try to teach verbally?

Can Worshipping God Be Enjoyable?

“I BELIEVE in and love God,” writes one professed Christian. “But . . . church bores me.” Do you share those feelings? The fact is, boredom, dissatisfaction, and frustration have caused some to invent their own ways of worshipping God.

“Do-it-yourself religion” is how one newspaper labeled the phenomenon of self-invented forms of worship. But for those who desire to enjoy worship of God, such an alternative can be unrewarding. Why? Because the disenchantment that drove such ones away from their churches may overtake them again.

This leads to the question, Is living according to Bible teachings boring, devoid of joy? Not at all! Note, for example, the words of one Bible psalmist: “O come let us cry out joyfully to Jehovah! . . . O come in, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker.”—Psalm 95:1, 6.

Another Bible psalmist sang to Jehovah with appreciation: “You alone are the Most High over all the earth.” In the Scriptures, Jehovah is called “the happy God,” and his

worshippers have often expressed joy, both in the past and today.—Psalm 83:18; 1 Timothy 1:11.

The Basis for Joy

The basis for true joy in our worship is the realization of what Jehovah has actually done to manifest his love for us. And what is that? “God loved the world [humankind] so much that he gave his only-begotten Son [Jesus Christ], in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”—John 3:16.

So, as the Bible says, God’s will is that “all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4) That does not mean simply knowing what certain Bible verses say. Rather, we need to *“get the sense of”* what we read, which involves careful, sincere study. (Matthew 15:10) The reward is: “You will find the very knowledge of God.” That can be enjoyable indeed!—Proverbs 2:1-5.

In the first century, people of the Macedonian city of Beroea realized such joy. When

*Joining others in Bible study can be
a joyful experience*



the apostle Paul taught them God's word, "they received the word with the *greatest eagerness of mind*, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so." They would not have had such eagerness if their study of the Scriptures had been boring or joyless.—Acts 17:11.

Jesus said: "*Happy* are those hungering and thirsting for righteousness, since they will be filled." (Matthew 5:6) Like famished people who have begun eating regularly, many today have been thrilled to find their spiritual hunger being satisfied. Therefore, like the Bereans, "many of them [have become] believers."—Acts 17:12.

A Way of Life

True worshippers of the first century took up "The Way," a term used at Acts 9:2 to refer to the new life course that early Christians followed. Today, those who want to experience joy in worshipping God must do the same. They need to allow Bible truths to affect their thinking and their daily conduct.

The apostle Paul thus urged people of Ephesus: "Put away the old personality which conforms to your former course of conduct." Yet, more is needed, as Paul continued: "Put on the new personality which was created according to God's will in true righteousness and loyalty."—Ephesians 4:22-24.*

As we respond to that counsel, making changes in our life in harmony with God's will, we gain access to a source of great satisfaction and joy. What is that? Paul wrote to Christians in Colossae that they needed to make adjustments in their lives "in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end

* By reading Ephesians chapter 4 and Colossians chapter 3, you will get a clear picture of what this change of personality entails.

of fully pleasing him." (Colossians 1:10) Surely, knowing that the true God is pleased with our life is reason for joy! Furthermore, God makes it possible to please him "fully." How so? Through forgiveness.

Each of us sins; each of us needs to receive God's forgiveness. "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," stated Paul, as recorded at 1 Timothy 1:15. When Jesus sacrificed his life for us, he made it possible for us to receive forgiveness of our sins. Hence, a true worshipper feels relief, for a heavy load of guilt is lifted from his heart. He can have a clean conscience and can rejoice in the confidence that as long as he earnestly does God's will, he will have forgiveness of his sins.

Further Cause for Joy

When one takes up the worship of the true God, he is not alone. The Bible psalmist David wrote: "I rejoiced when they were saying to me: 'To the house of Jehovah let us go.'" (Psalm 122:1) Indeed, regularly meeting with other true worshippers greatly enhances our joy.

After attending a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses, one man wrote: "We were welcomed by kindness and helpfulness that were indicative of a comprehensive 'togetherness.' The composure and poise of so many young people must be a source of pride to them and to their parents. I wish to express how grateful I was to be invited to such a moving and thrilling experience."

You too may find occasions to worship Jehovah enjoyable, delighting in them as did David long ago. "Serve Jehovah with rejoicing," he urged. "Come in before him with a joyful cry." (Psalm 100:2) All who serve the true God with the right motive can expect their worship to be enjoyable.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- What is the foundation of true worship?—1 Timothy 2:3-6.
- What role does Christ's ransom sacrifice play in bringing us joy?—1 Timothy 1:15.
- How can Christian meetings contribute to your enjoyment in worship?—Psalm 100:1-5.

YOUNG PEOPLE ASK...

How can I stop the gossip?

*"Once I went to a party, and the next day rumors were spread that I had had sex with one of the boys there. That wasn't true at all!"—Linda.**

"Sometimes I'll hear a rumor that I'm dating someone—someone whom, in fact, I don't even know! Many people who gossip don't bother to check the facts."

—Mike.

GOSSIP can fill your life with more intrigue than a feature film. Just ask 19-year-old Amber. "I've been a *constant* victim," she says. "It was rumored that I was pregnant, that I'd had abortions, and that I was selling drugs, buying drugs, and doing drugs. Why would people say these things about me? Really, I have no idea!"

High-Tech Gossip

When your parents were in their teens, the latest buzz was most often spread by word of mouth. Today, though, gossip has gone high-tech. Armed with e-mail and instant messaging, a boy or a girl with malicious intent can tarnish your reputation without even speaking a word. All it takes is a few keystrokes to

send a vicious rumor on its way to dozens of eager recipients.

Some say that the Internet is quickly replacing the telephone as the preferred tool for gossip. In some cases an entire Web site has been set up just to humiliate someone. More commonly, online blogs—Web sites that contain personal journals—are glutted with gossip such as would never be uttered in person. Indeed, in one survey 58 percent of youths said that they had been the target of hurtful things written about them online.

But is talking about others *always* bad? And is there such a thing as . . .

Good Gossip?

Is the following true or false?

Gossip is always bad. True False

* Names in this article have been changed.

What's the correct response? Really, it depends on how you define "gossip." If the word merely means casual talk, there may be times when it's appropriate. After all, the Bible tells us to "be interested in the lives of others." (Philippians 2:4, *New Century Version*) Not that we should be busybodies in matters that don't concern us. (1 Peter 4:15) But informal conversation often provides useful information, such as who's getting married, who had a baby, and who's in need of some type of assistance. Let's face it—we can't say we care about others if we never talk about them.

Still, casual talk can easily turn into harmful gossip. For example, the innocent remark "Bob and Sue would make a good couple" might be repeated as "Bob and Sue *are* a couple"—even though Bob and Sue know nothing of their supposed romance. 'Not a serious problem,' you might say—unless, of course, you were Bob or Sue!

Julie, aged 18, was the victim of that kind of gossip, and it hurt. "It made me angry," she says, "and it raised doubts in my mind about trusting others." Jane, aged 19, was in a similar situation. "I ended up avoiding the boy I was supposedly dating," she says, adding, "It didn't seem fair, as we were friends and I felt that we should be able to talk without rumors starting."

Clearly, harmful gossip has far-reaching negative effects. Yet, many who have been hurt by the practice will readily admit that they have also engaged in it. The fact is that when disparaging remarks are being made about someone, it can be powerfully tempting to join in. Why? "It's an escape," suggests 18-year-old Phillip. "People would rather focus on other people's problems than their own." What can you do, then, if innocent talk turns into harmful gossip?

Steer Conversations Carefully!

Think of the skill that's required to drive on a busy highway. Unexpectedly, a situation

may arise that makes it necessary for you to change lanes, yield, or come to a complete stop. If you're alert and safety conscious, you see what's ahead and react accordingly.

It's similar with conversation. You can usually tell when a discussion is veering into harmful gossip. When that happens, can you skillfully change lanes, as it were? If you don't, be forewarned—gossip can do damage. "I said something unkind about a girl—that she was boy crazy—and it got back to her," relates Mike. "I'll never forget her voice when she confronted me, how hurt she was over my thoughtless remark. We smoothed things over, but I didn't feel good knowing that I had hurt someone in that way!"

True, it may take courage to put the brakes on a conversation that has veered into gossip. Still, it is as 17-year-old Carolyn points out: "You need to be careful of what you say. If you haven't heard it from a reliable source, you could be spreading lies."

To steer clear of harmful gossip, follow the advice of these scriptures from the Bible:

"In the abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression, but the one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." (Proverbs 10:19) The more you talk, the more likely it is that you will say something that you'll later regret. In the end, it's better to be known as a quiet listener than a big talker!

"The heart of the righteous one meditates so as to answer, but the mouth of the wicked ones bubbles forth with bad things." (Proverbs 15:28) Think before you speak!

"Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor." (Ephesians 4:25) Before relating information, make sure it is factual.

"Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them." (Luke 6:31) Before relating even accurate information about someone, ask yourself, 'How would I feel if I were

in that person's position and someone divulged these facts about me?"

"Let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:19) Even factual information can be harmful if it is not upbuilding.

"Make it your aim to live quietly and to mind your own business and work with your hands." (1 Thessalonians 4:11) Don't be consumed with others' affairs. There are better ways to use your time.

When You Are the Victim

It's one thing to control the tongue and to refrain from gossiping about others. But when *you* are the subject of gossip, you might take the matter even more seriously. "I felt that I would never have friends again," says 16-year-old Joanne, a victim of malicious gossip. "Some nights I cried myself to sleep. I felt as if my entire reputation had been destroyed!"

What can you do if you become the victim of baseless rumors?

■ Look behind the words. Try to understand what motivates people to gossip. Some do it to gain popularity, to make it appear that they are in the know. "They want people to think they're cool just because they're talking about other people," says Karen, aged 14. Insecurity can cause some youths to put others down just so they can feel better about themselves. Renee, aged 17, takes it a step further. "People are bored," she says. "They want to create drama and make life more interesting by starting a rumor."

■ Control Your Emotions. One who is injured by harmful gossip and fails to keep his

feelings of embarrassment and resentment in check could react in a way that he will later regret. "He that is quick to anger will commit foolishness," says Proverbs 14:17. Although it is easier said than done, this is the time to exercise more than the usual restraint. If you do, you'll avoid falling into the same trap as the one did who gossiped about you.

■ Discern the actual intent. Ask yourself the following: 'Am I certain that what I heard was actually said about me? Is it a rumor or a serious misunderstanding? Am I being too sensitive?' Of course, there's no excuse for harmful gossip. Yet, overreacting may cast a more negative light on you than the actual gossip would. Why not, then, adopt the view that helped Renee. "I'm usually hurt when someone says something bad about me, but I try to keep it in perspective," she says. "I mean, next week they'll probably be talking about someone or something else."*

Your Best Defense

The Bible acknowledges that "we all stumble many times," adding: "If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man, able to bridle also his whole body." (James 3:2) Hence, to take seriously every remark that is made about us would be unwise. Ecclesiastes 7:22 says: "Your own heart well knows even many times that you, even you, have called down evil upon others."

In the face of harmful gossip, your best defense is your fine conduct. Jesus said: "Wisdom is proved righteous by its works." (Matthew 11:19) So try to remain truly friendly and loving. You might be surprised at how quickly that can stop the gossip—or at least enable you to endure its effects.

* In some circumstances it may be wise to find a tactful way to confront the gossiper. In many cases, though, this is not necessary, as "love covers a multitude of sins."—1 Peter 4:8.

TO THINK ABOUT

- How can you keep from spreading gossip about others?
- How will you respond if someone gossips about you?

More articles from the "Young People Ask . . ." series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype



A Voice of the “Eternal City”

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN ITALY

The sight and sound of Rome's many fountains moved Italian composer Ottorino Respighi to compose a suite entitled "The Fountains of Rome." Let's visit one of the most stunning examples—the Trevi Fountain.

As we walk down a narrow street that leads to the fountain and turn a corner, we are greeted by a sight that takes our breath away. It is the huge Trevi Fountain, 65 feet wide and 85 feet high, which dominates a small square. What an impressive structure to be tucked away in such a confined space!

The Trevi Fountain was commissioned by Pope Clement XII and designed by Italian architect Niccolò Salvi. Construction was started in 1732 and completed in 1762. The fountain is fed by the first-century B.C.E. Aqua

Virgo aqueduct, which begins some eight miles from the city.

The theme of the fountain, which is built against the facade of a palace, is the sea. The mythical figure Oceanus (or, some say, Neptune) stands proudly in his shell-shaped chariot, controlling the flood that cascades beneath him. As water gushes around the other figures and tumbles over the rocks below, it sounds like waves crashing against the shore. The basin takes up a large part of the piazza, giving the impression that the whole square is part of the fountain.

Every day hundreds of visitors pour into the tiny square and toss coins into what is one of Rome's biggest tourist attractions. Once a week, the fountain is drained. The money left by tourists, which averages \$11,000 a week, is then collected and donated to a religious charity.

If, as Respighi believed, the fountains sing with the voice of the city, then the Trevi Fountain stands out as a soloist—exceptional among the many fountains that are admired by visitors to Rome, the so-called Eternal City.

Christmas Island

WHY WE VISITED IT

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN FIJI



Frigate
birds

GaryKramer.net

THE island of Kiritimati (pronounced Ki-ris-mas', or Christmas) is the largest of the 33 islands in the Pacific Ocean that make up the nation of Kiribati.* The island has some 150 square miles of land area, which equals that of all the other 32 islands of Kiribati combined. About 5,000 people live on Christmas Island, while the total population of all the islands of Kiribati is about 92,000.

All but one of the islands of Kiribati are coral atolls. Christmas Island is not only the largest atoll in this nation but also, in terms of land area, the largest coral atoll in the world!

In addition, Christmas Island is notable because of its proximity to the international date line. People there are among the first to experience the beginning of a new calendar day, a new year, and other annual observances, such as that of the death of Jesus Christ.[#]

Furthermore, this remote coral atoll is one of the most important breeding grounds for seabirds in the Tropics. Not long ago it was said that some 25 million sooty terns regularly nested there.

No Longer an Avian Secret

When the explorer Captain James Cook landed there the day before Christmas in 1777, the island was uninhabited by humans. But there was an abundance of birds. Cook named it Christmas Island.[▲] For many years the location of the island had apparently remained a secret known only to the birds.

During one of our visits, a warden from the Wildlife Conservation Unit gave us a fascinating tour. As the warden led

* Kiribati was formerly called the Gilbert Islands. Now Kiribati includes not only the 16 islands of the Gilbert Islands but also the Phoenix and Line island groups as well as Banaba (Ocean Island).

[#] In obedience to Jesus' command, Jehovah's Witnesses memorialize his death once a year on the day that corresponds to the one on which he died.—Luke 22:19.

[▲] An island named Christmas is also found in the Indian Ocean.

us onto a beach, graceful, inquisitive white terns flew out to greet us. Hovering teasingly just beyond arm's length, they watched our every move.

On the ground beyond the beach was a colony of sooty terns. Hundreds of thousands of these birds come to Christmas Island to breed. When they arrive, they fly day and night for weeks in a swirling, chattering mass above their breeding sites, waiting for all the birds to arrive before they finally settle to nest on the bare ground.

Fledgling sooty terns begin their ocean wandering at about three months of age. They do not return to land until some five to seven years later, when they are ready to breed. During those years away, they spend most of their time in the air. There is not enough oil in their feathers to allow them to remain afloat on water.

We saw black noddies sitting on nests, along with their chicks and unhatched eggs. Whereas these seabirds build a nest for their young, the white terns do not. They lay their eggs on bare tree branches. Fortunately, their young hatch with well-developed feet and claws, which are just right for hanging on. These fluffy baby terns clinging to the branches instantly won our hearts. The parents too are exquisite little snow-white birds with a contrasting black bill.

As we toured, a Christmas shearwater resolutely sitting on its egg kept a watchful eye on us from a sheltered area nearby. Christmas Island has the largest known colony of wedge-tailed shearwaters in the world. And it is one of the last known breeding grounds for both the Polynesian storm petrel and the Phoenix petrel. Among the many other birds breeding there are the red-tailed tropic bird, the masked booby, the brown booby, the red-footed booby, the brown noddy, and the frigate bird.

Frigate birds soared effortlessly overhead, performing magnificent aerial acrobatics, stealing fish in midair from other birds, and vying for tidbits discarded by fishermen. This aerial skill is borne of necessity, since the frigate bird does not ordinarily land on water. As with sooty terns, their plumage lacks sufficient waterproofing properties, and in addition, their six-foot wingspan makes takeoff a challenge.

White tern

© Doug Perrine/
SeaPics.com



Brown boobies

Valerie & Ron Taylor/
ardea.com





We learned that a little brown bird seen earlier was a Pacific golden plover. It is one of many migratory birds that use Christmas as a vital refueling and wintering stop after a long flight from their breeding ground thousands of miles away, above the Arctic Circle. Excellent navigation skills direct these marathon fliers to this avian outpost, some 1,300 miles south of Honolulu, Hawaii.

Our Special Reason to Visit

We regularly visited Christmas, not to see birds, but to be

with fellow Jehovah's Witnesses there and to share with them in their meetings and preaching activities. Geographic isolation presents real challenges for these dear ones. For example, years ago when a Witness died suddenly, his bereaved wife courageously delivered the funeral discourse herself because there was no one else to do it. She wanted the many in attendance to hear the Bible's hope for the dead.—John 11:25; Acts 24:15.

Apart from three fine Bible translations, there are few vernacular Bible publications. However, Jehovah's Witnesses publish a four-color monthly *Watchtower* magazine in the Gilbertese language along with other Bible literature. That surprises many, as fewer than 100,000 people in the world speak this language. Such Bible-based publications enable this isolated group of Witnesses to hold their regular meetings for worship and to fulfill Jesus' commission to preach the good news of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Transportation presents a challenge to visitors. However, on Christmas Island one can travel by road from London to Poland via Tennessee in just three hours! How is this possible? Banana, London, Paris, Poland, Tennessee, and Tabwakea are colorful village names, suggesting the origins of some of the early visitors to this island.

During one of our visits, a kind doctor invited us to accompany him to Poland, allowing us to preach there for the very first time. As we had only two hours at Poland, we literally ran from house to house so that we could reach all the homes. Everyone we contacted listened appreciatively to our Bible message and accepted some literature, which they could not believe was in their own language.

We have warm feelings for these dear people so far away on Christmas Island. Also, there is a special place in our hearts for its magnificent feathered inhabitants. Long ago Captain Cook might have felt that the island was strictly "for the birds," but today many people there beg to differ. They, like the birds, call it home.

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Preaching with local Witnesses





My Love for Music, Life, and the Bible

AS TOLD BY BORIS N. GULASHEVSKY

Imagine a blind man in his 60's who had suffered two severe heart attacks. Tears are flowing from his eyes as he thanks God for revealing Himself to him. That was my situation just 11 years ago.

Playing a
C-major
bass pipe

I WAS born in 1930 in the Ukrainian village of Tsibulev, in the district of Cherkassy. In 1937, during one of the Stalinist repressions, my father was arrested and convicted as "an enemy of the State." Our apartment was confiscated, and we were shunned by most of our acquaintances. Soon many of them were also arrested. Those were times of widespread distrust, betrayal, and fear.

Two months after my father's arrest, my sister, Lena, was born. Mother, Lena, my brother Nikolai, and I spent that winter in a tiny room that had neither windows nor a stove. Afterward, we moved to my grandfather's house. Nikolai and I took care of the house, chopped firewood, and did repairs. I liked working with my hands. I made shoes and did carpentry work. I also loved music, so I made myself a balalaika from a piece of plywood and learned to play it. Later I took up the guitar and the mandolin.

Earlier, I had been baptized in the Catholic Church. But since I didn't understand the teachings or customs of the church, atheistic views seemed reasonable to me. After World War II, I joined the Komsomol (a Communist youth organization), and when opportunity arose, other members and I argued with believers, trying to prove that there was no God.

When I Lost My Eyesight

Following Germany's attack on the Soviet Union in 1941, the front line passed through our village several times during the second world war. On March 16, 1944, I was injured during a bombing and lost my eyesight. I started to feel despair and hopelessness, as well as pain.

When the battlefield moved westward and the Germans were driven back, I began to take walks in the garden and listen to the birds sing. Feeling sorry for me, Mother gave me vodka to drink, and locals invited me to their parties, where I provided music. I smoked, and I drowned my despair in alcohol. Soon I realized that this would not solve anything.

My aunt, a schoolteacher, learned about schools for the blind and convinced Mother to enroll me in one of them. In 1946, I began school in what is now named Kam'yanets'-Podil's'kyy, where I eagerly took up my studies. I learned to read and type in Braille. I also continued my musical studies, spending hours mastering the concertina. Seeing my efforts, the assistant principal allowed me to play his accordion. I also learned to play the piano.

A Home of My Own

In 1948, I married one of the teachers at the school, who had helped me with my studies. Her husband had died during the war, leaving her with two young daughters. After I finished school, I moved into her home. I did my best to be a good husband and father, earning a living playing music. Then, in 1952, we had a son.

I made arrangements to build a house for our family, hiring others to construct the foundation and external walls, but I did many things myself. Touch and imag-

ination helped me to compensate for my blindness. I would hold a piece of wood in my hands, feel it, and picture it in my mind. After that I could form it into wooden objects, including wooden tools. Steel tools I ordered from a factory. I laid a brick stove, made furniture, and accomplished other tasks.

A Pipe Orchestra

I obtained further musical training and became a professional musician. After mastering various musical instruments, I learned to play the pipe. Once, I repaired a small pipe made of bamboo. In time, I learned to make my own pipes. At the time, the experts did not think pipes could be made that would produce bass notes, since the large size of the pipes would mean that the sound would be too soft. That was why there were no pipe orchestras.

However, I managed to construct a pipe with a special resonator that intensified the

A pipe orchestra



Playing an accordion, 1960

sound. This meant that pipes with low bass notes could be made without losing sound volume. In time, I began to make different sets, or families, of pipes that could produce complex harmonies.

Previously, I had organized orchestras made up of traditional musical instruments. One of my orchestras was composed of only blind musicians. Then, in 1960, I organized an orchestra that played exclusively on pipes—the only one of its kind in the Soviet Union and possibly the world.

Discoveries and Doubts

In 1960, I had some musical instruments repaired by an expert, who started talking to me about religion. As usual, I argued with him, claiming there was no God. He suggested that I just listen to what he read from the Bible. Since I had never read the Bible, I decided to listen.

I was deeply touched by the account about Jacob working hard to provide for his family. Listening to the account of Joseph's brothers selling him into slavery and his trials, as well as how he later forgave his brothers, made me cry. (Genesis, chapters 37, 39-45) I also really liked the Golden Rule, about treating others as we wish to be treated. (Matthew 7:12) Thus, I became acquainted with the Bible and came to love it.

I began attending Baptist meetings along with my friend and was presented with the "New Testament" in Braille, which I started to read carefully. However, I noticed contradictions between what it said and Baptist teachings. For example, as the Bible shows, God and Jesus are two different individuals and God is greater than Jesus. (Matthew 3:16, 17; John 14:28; Acts 2:32) Yet, Baptists insist that God and Jesus are equal, part of a Trinity. I read my "New Testament" many times, literally feeling through every word, and was certain that this teaching was not in the Bible.

In the Bible translation we had, the word

"hell" was used. I tried to picture hell as taught by the Baptists—a place of eternal fiery torment. That made me feel awful! The Bible says that God is love, and I could not imagine that he would create such a place. (1 John 4:8) Time passed, and my doubts about hell, as well as other Baptist teachings, increased.

Big Changes

By 1968 my stepdaughters were already married and had children of their own. At that time, my wife and I began having serious differences. Thinking back on those days, I regret that we did not show enough love and patience with each other. We divorced, and my two subsequent marriages also ended in divorce.

In 1981, I moved from Kam'yanets'-Podil's'kyy, where I had spent 35 years, to Yoshkar-Ola, about 400 miles east of Moscow. There I continued my creative activities. One of my orchestras had 45 members who played a variety of pipes. These ranged from an eight-inch-long high-pitched pipe less than a half inch in diameter to a more than nine-foot-tall double-bass pipe eight inches in diameter. Our concerts were broadcast by radio and television, and we performed throughout the country.

In a 1986 contest that involved musical groups from all over the Soviet Union, I received a certificate and a medal for developing the art of the pipe. Years later a documentary movie entitled *Solo for Pipe, or the Fairy Tale of a Musician* was produced. The newspaper *Mariiskaya Pravda* reported: "Boris Nikolaievich Gulashevsky, who is featured in this movie, received a special certificate for being the originator of a pipe orchestra that is the only one of its kind in Russia."

Searching for the Truth

When I moved to Yoshkar-Ola, I registered to use the library system, which had a lot of material for the blind. I became familiar with

the teachings of Catholics, Pentecostals, and Methodists. I also attended meetings of the Orthodox Church. To my surprise, I found they taught the same things I had heard in the Baptist Church, which I already knew were not based on the Bible.

An Orthodox priest, Alexander Men, wrote that God has a personal name—Yahweh. He also said that the Jews once practiced pure worship, which later became corrupted by pagan teachings and idolatry. His writings deeply impressed me and strengthened my desire to search for the truth.

Greater Determination

In one of my orchestras, there was a musician named Liza, whose sight is so limited that she is considered legally blind. We married in 1990, and she also became interested in spiritual matters. That same year I went to visit my mother, who lived with my sister, Lena, in Baranovichi, Belarus. At my mother's request, I attended the Catholic Church, where I received Communion. This was during the time of perestroika in the Soviet Union, and the priest devoted most of his sermon to the political changes. Once again, I was certain that this was not what I needed.

In 1994, I suffered two heart attacks and became seriously ill. That same year my mother passed away. Despite everything, I still kept reading the Bible. I had already read the "New Testament" 25 times, after which I lost track. But I kept reading it and had more and more questions. It became clear to me that I could not grasp Bible truths on my own.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- **Is God Responsible for Natural Disasters?**
- **Is Contraception Morally Wrong?**
- **Toothache—A History of Agony**

Light of Understanding

In 1996, Jehovah's Witnesses knocked on our door in Yoshkar-Ola. I was suspicious of them, since newspapers had said that they were a dangerous sect. But then I thought, 'What harm could they do to me?' The first thing I asked was what they thought about the Trinity. They replied that neither the word nor the concept was in the Bible. I was delighted, since I had arrived at the same conclusion.

When I read Exodus 6:3 from the Russian synodal Bible, where God's name, Jehovah, appears, my heart skipped a beat. I was amazed by the deception practiced by religions in hiding this name from people. And to think that the Witnesses bear the name of the Creator and reveal it to others!—Isaiah 43:10.

I inundated the Witnesses with questions. For example: "Why does the Bible talk about hell? Why in the popular Russian synodal version does it say the earth will be burned?" I had question after question, but upon receiving answers from the Bible, I realized that I had found the religion I had dreamed about for years. With tears of joy, I fell upon my knees and thanked God.

The Witnesses soon began taking me to their meetings, and I was impressed by the attentiveness of the audience and by the rustling of pages as the speaker gave his part. When the speaker mentioned a Bible verse, people looked it up in their own Bible. I had never experienced such a thing before. At that meeting the Witnesses sang a song based on Isaiah 35:5 that began with the words: "When eyes of blind ones see again."

I began enjoying a Bible study with the Witnesses up to four times a week. Soon I learned why God permits troubles and wars and how he will deal with the consequences of such suffering. I was especially impressed when I learned about God's loving promise regarding his Kingdom, by means of which

his will for obedient humans to enjoy everlasting life on a paradise earth will be realized. (Genesis 1:28; Isaiah 65:17-25; Revelation 21:1-5) Bible truths became ever clearer to me, and on November 16, 1997, I was baptized to symbolize my dedication to God.

United in God's Service

Soon after my baptism, Liza also started studying the Bible. Despite suffering paralysis, she made rapid spiritual progress and was baptized in 1998. She had to be carried to the baptism pool but was determined to serve God whole-souled. We hired a massage therapist, and Liza did exercises. In time, the paralysis disappeared. Now, she not only attends all the meetings but also engages in door-to-door witnessing and travels to distant territories to preach.

Each time I go out to preach, I pray for courage. After praying, I pick up my cane, leave the house, and head toward the trolleybus stop by a way I know well. When I hear approaching steps, I start a conversation about the Bible. When I get on the trolleybus, I sit down somewhere in the middle, talk about the Bible with people, and place literature. If someone shows interest, we exchange telephone numbers.

Not long ago, I had the opportunity to talk to a music teacher at a sanatorium. He was astonished by the wisdom found in the Bible. When this man returned home, he started studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. At the same sanatorium, I met the director of a local factory, whose son is blind. I shared my hope with him, and he became interested and appreciated the Bible truths he heard.

Since my baptism, I have helped eight people to become fellow Kingdom proclaimers and have studied the Bible with many others. Jehovah continues to provide my wife and me with immense support by means of our Christian brothers and sisters. They read to us, and together we discuss Bible-based publications. They also record convention and congregation talks for us. All of this has helped us to inscribe Bible truths on our hearts and to share those truths with others. Thus the congregation has become "a strengthening aid" to us.—Colossians 4:11.

I devoted many years to music, and now I gladly sing Kingdom melodies. I have learned by heart all the songs from the Russian songbook *Sing Praises to Jehovah*. I believe that Jehovah found me in this wicked world and helped me find the way out of spiritual darkness. That is why I am convinced that someday he will also deliver me from my literal darkness.

**With Liza
today**



King Philip II



Biblioteca Nacional, Madrid ▲

Queen Elizabeth I



The Spanish Armada A VOYAGE TO TRAGEDY

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SPAIN

OVER four centuries ago, two fleets fought in the narrow waters of the English Channel. The battle pitched Protestants against Catholics and was part of the 16th-century struggle between the armies of Protestant Queen Elizabeth I of England and Roman Catholic King Philip II of Spain. "To them the clash of the English and Spanish fleets in the Channel was," explains the book *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada*, "a final struggle to the death between the forces of light and the forces of darkness."

English observers of the time described the Spanish Armada, or great fleet, as "the greatest naval force they had ever seen on the open seas." But the expedition the Armada was on proved to be a

tragic mistake—especially for the many thousands who lost their lives. What was its objective, and why did it fail?

Why the Attempted Invasion?

English pirates had plundered Spanish ships for years, and England's Queen Elizabeth actively supported Dutch rebellion against Spanish rule. In addition, Catholic Philip II felt duty-bound to help English Catholics rid their country of the growing Protestant "heresy." To that end, the Armada carried some 180 priests and religious advisers. Even as the crews of the Armada assembled, each man had to confess his sins to a priest and receive Communion.

The religious mood of Spain and of its king was personified by the eminent Spanish Jesuit Pedro de



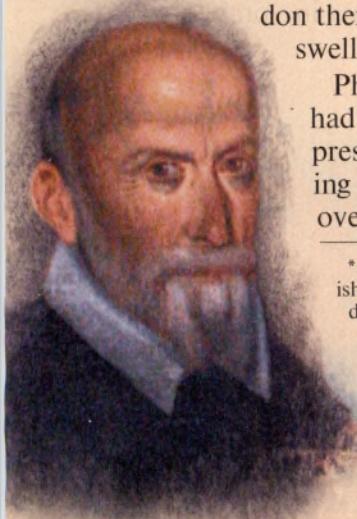
Ribadeneyra, who said: "God our Lord, whose cause and most holy faith we are defending, will go before us—and with such a captain we have nothing to fear." As for the English, they hoped that a decisive victory would pave the way for Protestant ideas to sweep across Europe.

The Spanish king's invasion plan seemed straightforward. He instructed the Armada to sail up the English Channel and pick up the Duke of Parma and his 30,000 veteran soldiers stationed in Flanders.* The combined forces would then cross the Channel, land on the Essex coast, and march on London. Philip assumed that English Catholics would abandon their Protestant queen and swell the ranks of his army.

Philip's scheme, however, had serious flaws. While he presumed to have the backing of divine providence, he overlooked two main ob-

* This area was part of the Spanish Netherlands, which Spain ruled during the 16th century. It included coastal regions of northern France, Belgium, and Holland.

The Duke of Medina-Sidonia was the commander of the Spanish Armada



stacles—the strength of the English navy and the difficulty of picking up the Duke of Parma's troops without a suitable deepwater port where they could meet.

A Huge but Unwieldy Fleet

Philip appointed the Duke of Medina-Sidonia to command the Armada. Although the duke had little naval experience, he was an efficient organizer who quickly won the cooperation of his veteran captains. Together they fashioned a fighting force and provisioned the huge fleet as best they could. They meticulously laid out the signals, sailing orders, and formations that would unify their multinational force.

The 130 ships, nearly 20,000 soldiers, and 8,000 sailors that made up the Armada finally left Lisbon harbor on May 29, 1588. But adverse winds and a storm obliged them to stop at La Coruña, in northwest Spain, for repairs and more supplies. Concerned about insufficient provisions and sickness among his men, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia frankly wrote to the king concerning his misgivings about the whole enterprise. But Philip insisted that his admiral adhere to the plan. So the unwieldy fleet continued its voyage and finally reached the English Channel two months after leaving Lisbon.



Battles in the English Channel

When the Spanish fleet reached the coast of Plymouth, in southwest England, the English were waiting. Both sides had a similar number of ships, but their design differed. The Spanish vessels stood high out of the water, and their decks bristled with short-range guns. With large turrets built at prow and stern, they resembled floating fortresses. Spanish naval tactics required their men to board and overwhelm the enemy. The English ships were lower and faster, with more long-range cannons. Their captains planned to avoid close contact with the enemy and to destroy Spanish ships from a distance.

To counteract the greater mobility and fire-power of the English fleet, the Spanish admiral devised a defensive formation in the shape of a crescent, or half-moon. The strongest ships with the longest-range guns would guard each end. Regardless of the direction from which the enemy approached, the Armada could wheel and face it like a buffalo presenting its horns to an approaching lion.

The two fleets skirmished throughout the length of the English Channel and fought two minor battles. The Spanish defensive formation proved effective, and the long-range shooting of the English failed to sink any Spanish ships. The English captains concluded that they must somehow break up the formation and close the range. Their opportunity came on August 7.

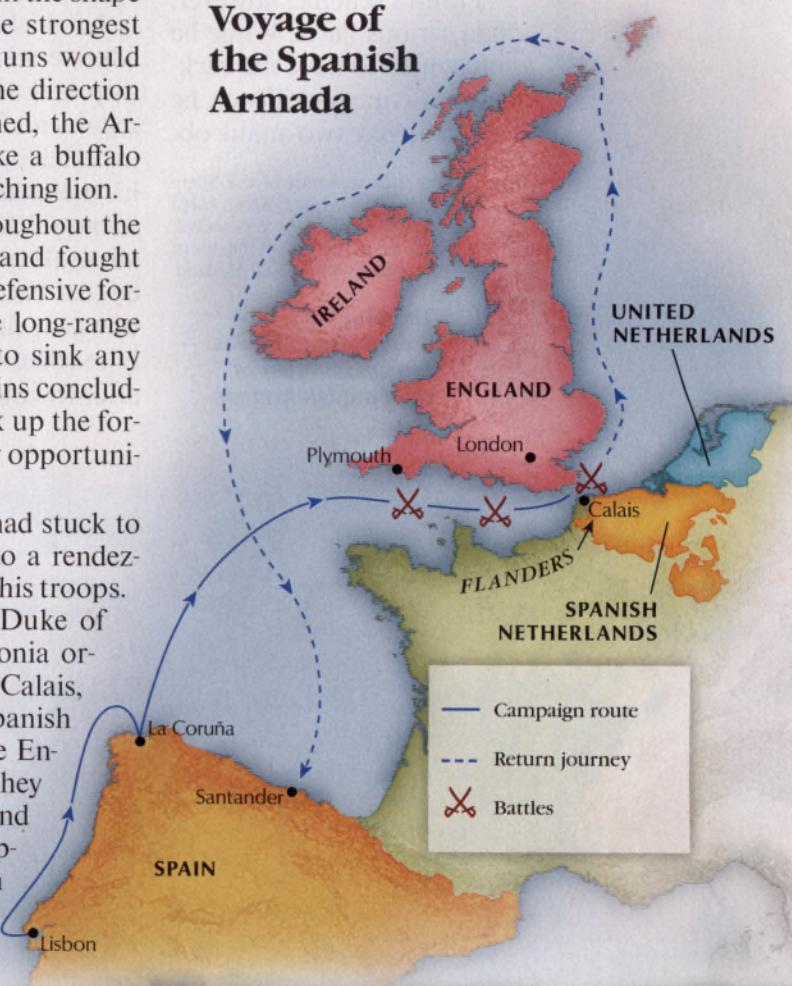
The Duke of Medina-Sidonia had stuck to his orders and led the Armada to a rendezvous with the Duke of Parma and his troops. While awaiting word from the Duke of Parma, the Duke of Medina-Sidonia ordered the fleet to drop anchor off Calais, on the French coast. With the Spanish ships moored and vulnerable, the English sent in eight ships, which they had loaded with combustibles and set on fire. Most of the Spanish captains frantically sought sea room

to escape the danger. Then the strong wind and current pushed them north.

At daybreak the following day, the final battle was fought. The English fleet fired on the Spanish ships at close range, destroying at least three ships and damaging many more. Since the Spanish had little ammunition, they had to endure the onslaught helplessly.

A violent storm led the English to suspend their attack until the next day. That morning, reorganized into the crescent formation, with little ammunition left, the Armada turned toward the enemy and prepared to fight. But before the English could open fire, the Spanish ships found themselves on a lee shore, driven by the wind and currents inexorably toward

Voyage of the Spanish Armada



disaster on the Zeeland sands off the Dutch coast.

When all seemed lost, the wind changed direction and drove the Armada north to the safety of open sea. But the route back to Calais was blocked by the English fleet, and the winds were still pushing the embattled Spanish ships northward. The Duke of Medina-Sidonia decided that he had little option but to call off the mission and save as many ships and men as possible. He decided to return to Spain by circumnavigating Scotland and Ireland.

Storms and Shipwrecks

The Armada's battered ships had a grueling journey home. Food was scarce, and because of leaky barrels, there was little water. The English attacks had badly damaged many of the ships, and few were seaworthy. Then, off the northwest coast of Ireland, the Armada ran into severe storms that lasted for two weeks. Some ships disappeared without a trace! Others were shipwrecked off the Irish coast.

Finally, the first ships of the Armada limped into Santander, northern Spain, on September 23. Some 60 ships and only about half the men that left Lisbon made it home. Thousands drowned at sea. Many others died from their wounds or from disease during the homeward voyage. Even for the survivors who reached the Spanish coast, the ordeal continued.

The book *The Defeat of the Spanish Armada* notes: "Several [ships' companies] had no food at all and went on dying of sheer starvation," though they were anchored in a Span-

ish port. The book says that in the Spanish harbor of Laredo, one ship ran aground "because there were not enough men left able to lower the sails and drop the anchor."

Significance of the Defeat

The defeat of the Armada instilled confidence in the Protestants of Northern Europe, even though religious wars continued unabated. That Protestants

believed their triumph to be proof of divine favor is evidenced by a Dutch medal that commemorates the event. Its inscription reads, *Flavit Jehovah et dissipati sunt 1588*, that is, "Jehovah blew and they were scattered 1588."

In time, Great Britain assumed the role of a world power, as the book *Modern Europe to 1870* notes:

"Great Britain emerged in 1763 as the foremost commercial and colonial power in the world." Indeed, "in 1763 the British Empire bestrode the world like some revived and enlarged Rome," observes the book *Navy and Empire*. Later, Great Britain united with its former colony the United States of America to form the Anglo-American world power.

Bible students find the rise and fall of the political world powers fascinating. This is because the Holy Scriptures deal extensively with the successive world governments, namely, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome, and eventually the Anglo-American world power. In fact, the Bible foretold long in advance the rise and fall of several of these powers.—Daniel 8:3-8, 20-22; Revelation 17:1-6, 9-11.

Looking back, it is evident that what happened in the summer of 1588, when efforts at conquest by the Spanish Armada proved unsuccessful, is very significant. Nearly 200 years after the defeat of the Armada, Great Britain rose to world prominence and, in time, came to have a key position in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.



- 1. Babylon—Daniel 3:1. ♦ Hamaniah, Mishael, and Azariah—Daniel 1:7. ♦ They worshipped only Jehovah.
- 2. Daniel 3:16-18. 2. Paul, 6:1-64 C.E. 3. Solomon, before 1000 B.C.E. 4. Paul, 51 C.E. 5. Lemuel.
- Proverbs 31:1. 6. Silvanus—1 Thessalonians 1:1.



Dorian
at school

Godly Training Bears Good Fruit

Parents who teach their children from an early age often realize the good fruit of their labors. Dorian, a youth in Peru, South America, gave his first student talk in the Theocratic Ministry School at the Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses when he was four. When he started secular school, he was able to explain to his teacher and his classmates from the Bible why he did not celebrate Christmas.

Recently, when he was five, Dorian was asked to speak to the entire school—some 500 students—on what he believed about Father's Day. He prepared a ten-minute talk on the subject "The Responsibilities of a Father," based on the Bible text at Ephesians 6:4. At the conclusion of the talk, he said, "Instead of celebrating Father's Day once a year, children should respect and obey their parents every day."

In 1943 the Theocratic Ministry School, which is designed to improve public-speaking ability for both young and old, became one of the weekly meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. Since then it has provided Bible-based training that supplements the instruction that parents are urged to provide for their children.—Proverbs 22:6.

In November 2005, at the age of six, Simon, a youth in Switzerland, had his first Bible-reading assignment in the Theocratic Ministry School. About a year later, he was interviewed on the program at a large assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. What kind of attitude toward spiritual matters had he developed?

Simon loves attending Christian meetings, as is shown by his efforts not to miss one, even when he is tired. Moreover, he accompanies family members in the ministry. Each month he places between 30 and 50 copies of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines with people of all ages. Moreover, he often speaks to his father about the Bible and encourages him to accompany family members to meetings.

Without a doubt, parents who raise their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah" receive much joy when their children respond and bear righteous fruit.—Ephesians 6:4; James 3:17, 18.



Simon at the
Kingdom Hall

Sleep Loss Lowers Productivity

Sleep habits among some Spaniards are ruining their ability to be productive. Dr. Eduard Estivill, who runs a sleep clinic in Barcelona, notes that compared with other Europeans, Spaniards wake up earlier, work longer hours, eat dinner later, and sleep an average of 40 minutes less. Sleep deficit, however, can result in such problems as irritability, memory loss, anxiety, and depression. Hence, "any professional who performs intellectual work or other activity that requires concentration," warns Dr. Estivill, "should sleep between seven and eight hours daily."

Wheat for Heat?

Is it ethical to burn wheat for heating purposes? The German newspaper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung* explains that with the price of grain falling and that of fuel oil rising, it is more cost-effective for a farmer to burn his wheat for heat than to sell it to buy oil. Six pounds of wheat costs him 20 cents to grow, but if burned, that quantity of wheat would produce about the same heat as a quart of fuel oil, which costs 60 cents. Hence the dilemma mentioned by the newspaper: Can you "burn cereal when other people are starving"?

Papal Visit Commercialized

When the pope visited Germany in 2006, manufacturers, merchants, and the tourism industry geared up well in advance to profit from his visit. The church too selected a business partner for exclusive marketing of paraphernalia. Souvenirs made available included rosaries, candles, bottles of holy water, cof-

fee cups, caps, T-shirts, key rings, and Vatican flags. The newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* commented: "The Catholic Church has its own fingers in the money-making pie, as if Jesus Christ . . . had never banished the merchants from the temple."

■ "The average American home now has more television sets than people"—2.73 TV sets to 2.55 people. "Half of American homes have three or more TVs."—ASSOCIATED PRESS, U.S.A.

■ Every day in courts across South Africa, 82 children are charged with "raping or indecently assaulting other children." According to some, a large proportion of the accused claim that the abuse "was inspired by acts they witnessed on television."

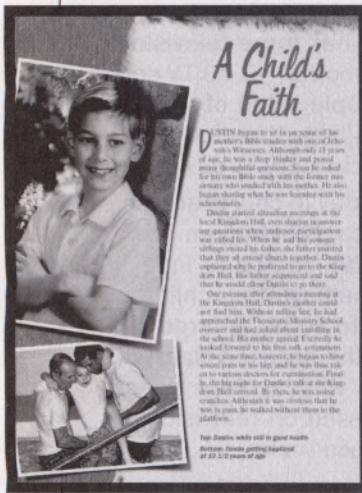
—THE STAR, SOUTH AFRICA.

fee cups, caps, T-shirts, key rings, and Vatican flags. The newsmagazine *Der Spiegel* commented: "The Catholic Church has its own fingers in the money-making pie, as if Jesus Christ . . . had never banished the merchants from the temple."

Violence Desensitization From Video Games

"Exposure to violent video games can desensitize individuals to real-life violence," say research psychologists at Iowa State University, U.S.A. Previous studies showed that exposure to such games "increases aggressive thoughts, angry feelings, physiological arousal and aggressive behaviors." This study monitored the heart rate and emotional response of participants to filmed episodes of actual violence shown to them immediately after they had played either violent or nonviolent video games. The results showed that those "who play violent video games habituate or 'get used to' all the violence and eventually become physiologically numb to it."





A Child's Faith

DUSTIN began to run in some of his mother's Bible studies with one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although only 11 years old at the time, he was very kind and more beautiful specimen. Soon he joined the group and became the little minister who studied with his parents. He was taught what he was learning with his parents.

Dustin started attending meetings at the local Kingdom Hall, even though his mother did not want him to. She thought he was being called to. When she and his younger siblings visited his father, the father insisted that they go to the Kingdom Hall. Dustin's mother was confused why he preferred to go to the Kingdom Hall. His father responded and said that he had been born again.

One evening after attending a meeting at the Kingdom Hall, Dustin's mother came home and asked him if he wanted to attend the school. He responded that he did not know where it was. He never attended. Eventually he looked toward to his first job assignment and he was given a task to go to the Kingdom Hall. He never told his mother about this because he was using scratches. Although it was obvious that he did not want to go, he took his mother's advice and went to the Kingdom Hall.

One evening after attending a meeting at the Kingdom Hall, Dustin's mother came home and asked him if he wanted to attend the school.

That night, while still in great health, Dustin's friends getting baptised at 22 1/2 years of age.

A Child's Faith (August 2006) I look forward to seeing Dustin, and millions of others who have died, running and jumping in their youthful vigor in the new world that is soon to come.

A. A., Sri Lanka

Dustin's faith and dauntless courage touched me deeply. His experience has helped me to assess the significance of the truth in my life and to get my priorities right. I now realize that maintaining a good relationship with Jehovah and putting Kingdom interests first should be my top priorities.

M.C.V., Brazil

My heart was touched by Dustin's motivating, positive feelings for the truth. His actions showed that he wanted to please Jehovah and to serve others. Like Dustin, I too want to 'run the course to the finish and observe the faith'!

M. N., Japan

I am seven years old. Thank you for publishing this experience. I was impressed by Dustin's strong faith in Jehovah, even though he had a bad illness. His example has encouraged me to do more for God.

T. D., Italy

Intriguing Patterns in Plants (September 2006) This article kept my attention for a full hour and a half! It was so educational! I made myself some diagrams so that I could understand it better. Please notice, however, that the fraction $13/21$ does not closely express the golden proportion of the circle but, rather, the remaining proportion of 222.5 degrees.

L. C. United States

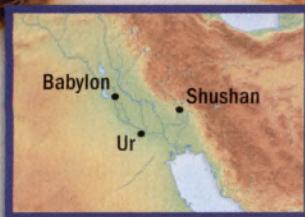
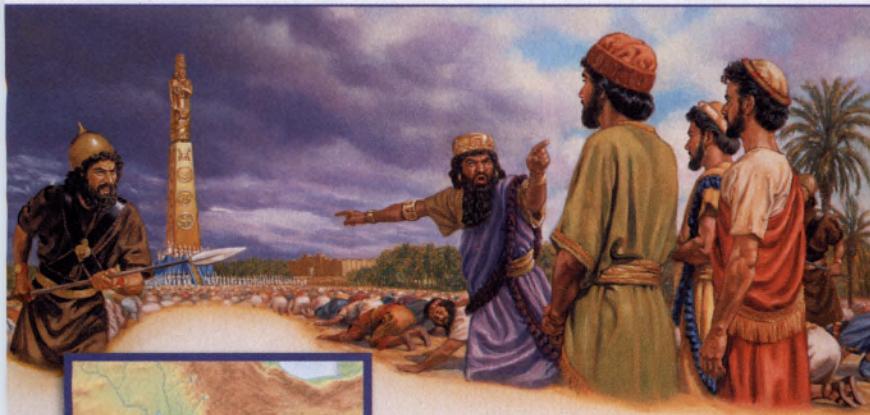
"Awake!" responds: Several readers correctly pointed out that the golden proportion of a revolution is approximately 222.5 degrees. Why did our article say that the golden angle is 137.5 degrees—the same angle measured counterclockwise? The Web resource MathWorld says: "The golden angle is the angle that divides a full angle [360°] in a golden ratio (but measured in the opposite direction so that it measures less than 180°). Explaining why mathematicians and scientists

express the golden angle this way, British mathematician Dr. Ron Knott says: "We tend to 'see' the smaller angle." Thus, although the golden proportion is about $13/21$ (more than half), the golden angle is normally expressed as 137.5 degrees (less than half).

"Imprisoned for Their Faith" (April 2006)

I am not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, but that does not prevent me from having the greatest respect for the members of your faith. I met several Witnesses during my incarceration in Gross-Rosen and Buchenwald concentration camps. Their behavior was so exemplary and their religious convictions so outstanding that they gained the respect and the admiration of all the other inmates. Even the SS were impressed by them. Jehovah's Witnesses will always be welcome at my house.

P. V., United States



WHERE DID IT HAPPEN?

- 1.** Near which city did this event likely happen? Circle your answer on the map.

♦ What are the Hebrew names of the three Israelite men?

♦ Why are they not bowing down like everyone else?

■ For Discussion:

What sorts of idols might you be asked to worship?
How can you apply the example of the three Hebrews?

WHEN IN HISTORY?

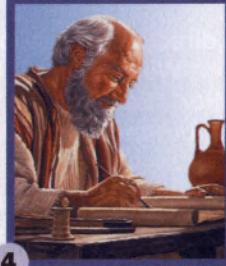
Name the writer(s) of the Bible books below, and draw a line connecting the book to the approximate date it was completed.



2
1 Timothy



3
Ecclesiastes



4
2 Thessalonians



1000 B.C.E.

607 B.C.E.

36 C.E.

51 C.E.

61-64 C.E.

WHO AM I?

- 5.** My mother corrected me with a weighty message.

WHO AM I?

- 6.** My Greek name is Silas, and I am likely the same person mentioned in the writings of Peter, Paul, and Luke.

(Answers on page 27)

FROM THIS ISSUE

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

Page 4 What is love? (Colossians 3:____)

Page 6 What will parents who love their children do? (Proverbs 13:____)

Page 11 When did King David rejoice? (Psalm 122:____)

Page 14 When it comes to harmful gossip, what should be our aim? (1 Thessalonians 4:____)

Children's Picture Search

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



LIFE

How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?

In the country of Estonia, directors of schools were approached and shown the book with the above title. "We visited all the Russian-language schools in our city," reported one teacher. "Each school accepted at least one book for each of the biology teachers, but most schools asked for between 15 and 40 books."

The director of one school wrote in appreciation: "I was impressed by the clear scientific basis for the arguments made in support of creation. The book is objective and beautifully illustrated. We are looking forward to using the books in class."

