

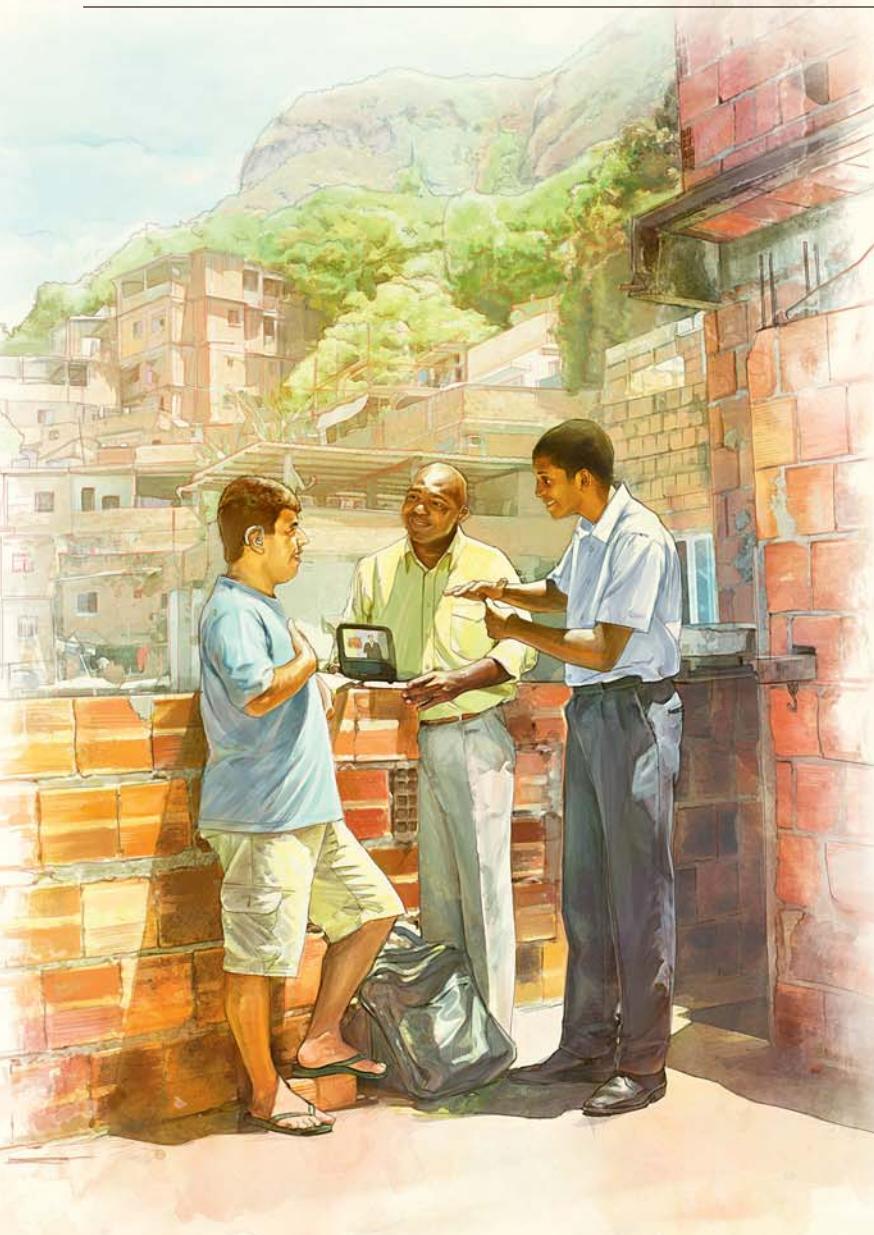
JULY 15, 2012

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION



## STUDY ARTICLES

AUGUST 27-SEPTEMBER 2

**Let Jehovah Lead You  
to True Freedom**

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JULY 15, 2012

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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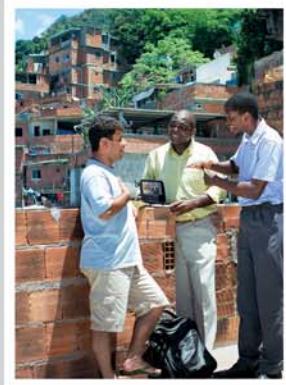
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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 7-16

Jehovah wants all his intelligent creatures to enjoy the greatest measure of freedom possible. In these articles, see how he is teaching us to be a free people. See, too, how Satan is trying to rob us of our freedom by tempting us with the so-called freedoms of the world.



### STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 22-26

Why are we courageously forging ahead with our preaching activity despite opposition and worsening economic conditions? Many of the reasons are highlighted in the 27th Psalm, which is the basis for this article.

### STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 27-31

God's administration is functioning today. Examining portions of Paul's letter to the Ephesians will help us to understand the purpose of this administration and to work in harmony with it.

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### 17 JEHOVAH TAUGHT ME TO DO HIS WILL

### 32 "MY DREAM HAS COME TRUE"

**COVER:** Preaching the good news in Brazilian Sign Language in the city of Rio de Janeiro in Comunidade da Rocinha

**BRAZIL'S SIGN-LANGUAGE FIELD**

**CONGREGATIONS**

**358**

**GROUPS**

**460**

**CIRCUITS**

**18**

THEY OFFERED  
THEMSELVES  
WILLINGLY



# in Ecuador



A YOUNG brother in *Italy* was under pressure. He had just graduated from high school with the highest grades in his class, and now relatives and teachers were urging him to pursue higher education. Some years earlier, though, **Bruno** had dedicated himself to Jehovah, promising to put God's will foremost in his life. What choice did he make? He explains: "I told Jehovah in prayer that I would live up to my dedication and put him first. But I honestly added in my prayer that I wanted, not a dull life, but one filled with a variety of activities in his service."



*"Many prayers to Jehovah and long conversations with mature brothers and sisters helped me to see that Jehovah blesses a willing spirit."*

—**Kayla** from the United States



A few years later, Bruno found himself in Ecuador, South America. He says: “Jehovah answered my prayer well beyond my expectations.” To his surprise, when he arrived in Ecuador, he met many other young adults who also had moved there to serve Jehovah to a fuller extent.

### **YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ‘TEST JEHOVAH OUT’**

Bruno, like thousands of other young people around the world, accepted Jehovah’s invitation: “Test me out, please, . . . whether I shall not open to you people the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing.” (Mal. 3: 10) Moved by love for God, they decided to ‘test

Jehovah out’ by willingly offering their time, energy, and resources to support his interests in a country where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers.

Soon after these willing workers arrive in their new assignment, they see firsthand that “the harvest is great, but the workers are few.” (Matt. 9: 37) For example, **Jaqueline** from Germany enthusiastically wrote to the Ecuador branch: “I’ve been serving in Ecuador for just over two years, and I already have 13 Bible studies, 4 of whom attend meetings regularly. Isn’t that great?” **Chantal** from Canada relates: “In 2008, I moved to an area on Ecuador’s coast where there was only one con-



1 **Jaqueline** from Germany

2 **Bruno** from Italy

3 **Beau** from Canada

4 **Siobhan** from Ireland

5 **Joel** from the United States

6 **Jonathan** from the United States  
States

7 **Anna** from Estonia

8 **Elke** from Austria

9 **Chantal** from Canada

10 **Ines** from Austria





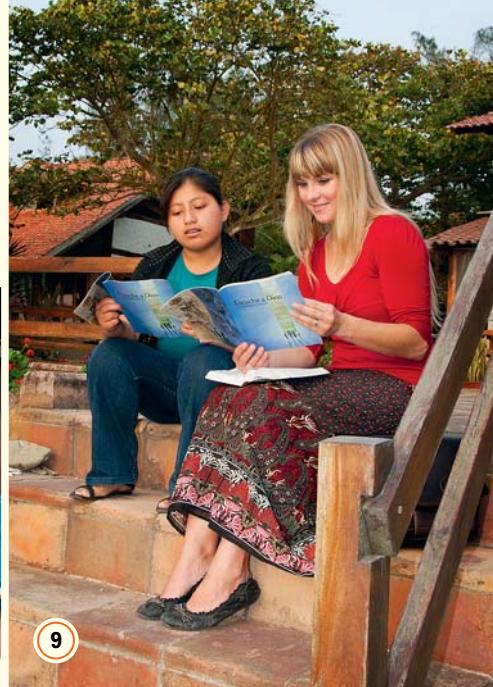
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gregation. Now there are three congregations and more than 30 pioneers in that area. Nothing compares to seeing so many new ones making progress!" She adds: "I recently moved to a city 9,000 feet

(2,743 m) up in the Andes Mountains. The city has over 75,000 inhabitants but only one congregation. It's such a productive territory! I'm greatly enjoying my ministry."

### THE CHALLENGES INVOLVED

Of course, serving in a foreign country presents significant challenges. In fact, some young people encountered obstacles even before they moved. **Kayla** from the United States notes: "The negative reaction of some well-meaning brothers back home was discouraging. They didn't understand why I wanted to move to a foreign country to pioneer. At times, it made me wonder, 'Am I making the right decision?'" Even so, Kayla decided to move. She explains: "Many prayers to Jehovah and long conversations with mature broth-

ers and sisters helped me to see that Jehovah blesses a willing spirit."

For many, learning a new language is an obstacle. **Siobhan** from Ireland remembers: "It was hard for me not to be able to express myself. I had to learn to be patient, study the language diligently, and laugh at myself when I made mistakes." **Anna** from Estonia adds: "Getting used to the tropical heat, lots of dust, and a lack of hot showers was nothing compared to learning Spanish. At times, I felt like giving up. I had to learn to focus on my progress, not on my errors."

Not to be overlooked is the challenge of homesickness. **Jonathan** from the United States admits: "Shortly after arriving I became discouraged because of being separated from my friends and family. But I overcame those feelings by concentrating on my personal Bible study and the ministry. Before long, the thrilling experiences I had in the field and the new friends I made in the congregation helped me to regain my joy."

Another challenge is the living conditions. Likely, they will not be the same as what you are



## How to prepare for serving in a foreign country

- Establish strong personal study habits
- Review the August 2011 *Our Kingdom Ministry*, pages 4-6
- Talk to others who have served in a foreign land
- Research the culture and history of the country
- Take a basic language course



## Some who serve abroad support themselves financially by . . .

- working a few months each year in their home country
- renting out their house, apartment, or business
- working via the Internet

accustomed to. **Beau** from Canada tells us: “In your home country, you take for granted such basic services as electricity and running water. But here, these things come and go as they please.” Poverty, uncomfortable modes of transportation, and illiteracy are also common in many developing lands. **Ines** from Austria copes with such conditions by focusing on the positive qualities of the local people. “They are so hospitable, gentle, helpful, and humble,” she says. “Most of all, they have a huge interest in learning more about God.”

### A BLESSING UNTIL THERE IS NO MORE WANT

While all these young adults serving in Ecuador have made sacrifices, they find that Jehovah provides “more than superabundantly beyond all the things” they ever expected. (Eph. 3:20) Indeed, they feel that they have received “a blessing until there is no more want.” (Mal. 3:10) Here is how they feel about their ministry:

**Bruno:** “I began my service here in Ecuador in the intriguing Amazon region. Later, I helped with the expansion of the Ecuador branch office. Now I’m serving at Bethel. Back in Italy, I made the choice to put Jehovah first, and he is truly fulfilling my desire for an exciting, varied life in his service.”

**Beau:** “I have grown so much closer to Jehovah because in Ecuador I can devote all my time to spiritual activities. At the same time, I have the added blessing of traveling to fas-

cinating places—something I’ve always wanted to do.”

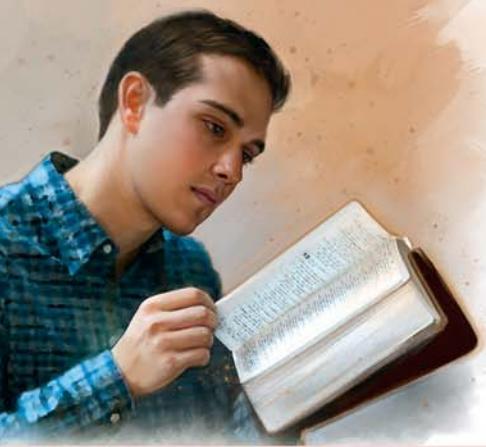
**Anna:** “I didn’t think it was possible for me, a single sister, to enjoy a life like that of a missionary. But now I know that it *is* possible. Thanks to Jehovah’s blessing, I am so happy making disciples, building Kingdom Halls, and making new friends.”

**Elke:** “In my home country of Austria, I often prayed to Jehovah for just one Bible study. Here, I have 15 Bible studies! Seeing the happy faces of progressive students gives me so much satisfaction.”

**Joel:** “It’s a great experience to arrive in an unknown place to serve Jehovah. You learn to rely on him so much more, and it’s exciting to see his blessing on your efforts! In my first year here from the United States, the group where I’m serving grew from 6 to 21 publishers. We had a Memorial attendance of 110.”

### WHAT ABOUT YOU?

Young brothers and sisters, do your circumstances allow you to serve in a land where there is a greater need for Kingdom proclaimers? Of course, making a big decision like that will require careful planning. Above all else, a strong love for Jehovah and neighbor is necessary for such a move. If you have that love and otherwise qualify, pray earnestly to Jehovah about this matter of serving abroad. Further, talk to your Christian parents and the congregation elders about your desire. You may come to the conclusion that you too can have a share in this exciting and satisfying form of sacred service.



# LET JEHOVAH LEAD YOU TO TRUE FREEDOM

*"[Peer] into the perfect law that belongs to freedom."*—JAS. 1:25.

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## CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

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What law leads to true freedom, and who benefit from that law?

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What is the secret to gaining true freedom?

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What freedom awaits all who stay on the path to life?

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**W**E ARE living in a time of increasing greed, lawlessness, and violence. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) In response, governments make more laws, strengthen police forces, and install electronic surveillance. In some countries, private citizens try to increase their safety by installing alarm systems in their homes, as well as extra locks and even electric fences. Many refuse to go out at night or to let their children play outside unattended—day or night. Clearly, freedom is on the wane, and the trend will likely continue.

**2** Back in the garden of Eden, Satan asserted that the key to true freedom is independence from Jehovah. What a malicious and monstrous lie that has proved to be! Indeed, the more that people disregard the moral and spiritual boundaries established by God, the more society as a whole suffers. This worsening condition also affects us as Jehovah's servants. Nevertheless, we have the hope of seeing an end to mankind's enslavement to sin and corruption and of enjoying what the Bible calls "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21) In fact, Jehovah has already begun preparing his servants for that freedom. In what way?

**3** The answer lies in what the Bible writer James called "the perfect law that belongs to freedom." (*Read James 1:25.*) Other Bible versions render this phrase "the law that makes us free" (*The New English Bible*) and "the perfect law of freedom" (*The New American Bible*). Normally, of course, people

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- 1, 2.** (a) What is happening to the world's freedoms, and why? (b) What freedom lies ahead for Jehovah's servants?
  - 3.** Jehovah has given Christ's followers what law, and what questions will we consider?

associate law with restrictions, not with freedom. What, then, is “the perfect law that belongs to freedom”? And how does that law make us free?

### THE LAW THAT SETS FREE

**4** “The perfect law that belongs to freedom” is not the Mosaic Law, for that code made transgressions manifest and was fulfilled in Christ. (Matt. 5:17; Gal. 3:19) To what law, then, was James referring? He had in mind “the law of the Christ,” also called “the law of faith” and “the law of a free people.” (Gal. 6:2; Rom. 3:27; Jas. 2:12) “The perfect law,” therefore, encompasses everything that Jehovah requires of us. Both anointed Christians and the “other sheep” benefit from it.—John 10:16.

**5** Unlike the law codes of many countries, “the perfect law” is neither complex nor burdensome but consists of simple commandments and basic principles. (1 John 5:3) “My yoke is kindly and my load is light,” said Jesus. (Matt. 11:29, 30) Additionally, “the perfect law” has no need for a long list of sanctions, or penalties, for it is founded on love and is engraved on minds and hearts, not on tablets of stone.—*Read Hebrews 8:6, 10.*

### HOW “THE PERFECT LAW” SETS US FREE

**6** The boundaries that Jehovah has set for his intelligent creatures are for their benefit and protection. Take, for example, the physical laws that govern ener-

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**4.** What is “the perfect law that belongs to freedom,” and who benefit from it?

**5.** Why is the law of freedom not burdensome?

**6, 7.** What can be said about Jehovah’s standards, and why is the law of freedom liberating?

gy and matter. People do not complain of being oppressed by those laws. Rather, they appreciate them, recognizing that natural laws are essential for their welfare. Likewise, Jehovah’s moral and spiritual standards, reflected in “the perfect law” of the Christ, are for man’s benefit.

**7** In addition to being a protection, the law of freedom allows us to satisfy all our proper desires without harming ourselves or encroaching on the rights and freedoms of others. The secret, then, to being truly free—being able to do what we desire—is to cultivate the right desires, those that harmonize with Jehovah’s personality and standards. In other words, we have to learn to love what Jehovah loves and to hate what he hates, which the law of freedom helps us to do.—Amos 5:15.

**8** In our imperfect state, we struggle to subdue wrong desires. Nevertheless, as we loyally adhere to the law of freedom, we taste its liberating powers even now. To illustrate: A new Bible student named Jay was addicted to tobacco. When he learned that his habit displeased God, he had to make a decision. Would he continue to submit to his flesh or would he subject himself to Jehovah? Wisely, he chose to serve God, even though his flesh ached for nicotine. How did he feel after overcoming his habit? “I felt wonderfully free and overjoyed,” he later said.

**9** Jay learned by experience that the world’s freedoms, which allow people to ‘mind the flesh,’ actually enslave, whereas Jehovah’s freedoms, which mean “the minding of the spirit,” set

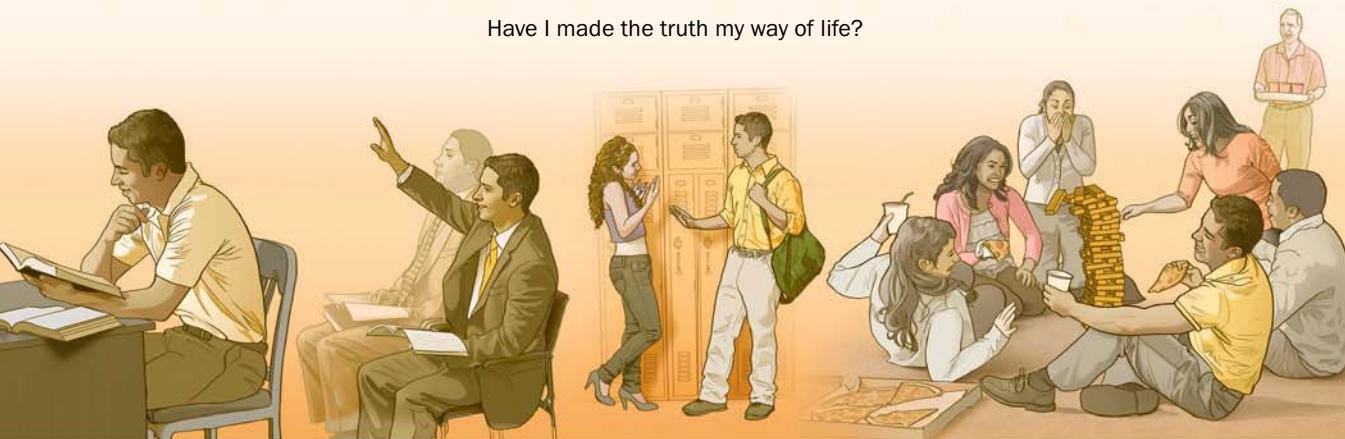
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**8, 9.** What benefits come to those who adhere to the law of freedom? Illustrate.

Do I still crave some of the “freedoms” of the world?



Have I made the truth my way of life?



free and lead to “life and peace.” (Rom. 8:5, 6) Where did Jay find the strength to overcome his enslaving habit? Not within in himself; it came from God. “I regularly studied the Bible, prayed for holy spirit, and sought the loving help willingly extended to me by the Christian congregation,” he said. These same provisions can help us all in our quest for true freedom. Let us see how.

#### PEER INTO GOD’S WORD

**10** James 1:25 reads, in part: “He who *peers* into the perfect law that belongs to freedom and who *persists* in it . . . will be happy in his *doing* it.” The original Greek word translated “peers” means “to stoop to look into,” which implies

**10.** What does it mean to “peer” into God’s law?

concentrated effort. Yes, if we want the law of freedom to affect our mind and heart, we must do our part by diligently studying the Bible and prayerfully meditating on what we read.—1 Tim. 4:15.

**11** At the same time, we must ‘persist,’ or endure, in applying God’s Word, thus making the truth our way of life. Jesus expressed a similar thought when he said to some who believed in him: “If you *remain* in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will *know* the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) To “know,” says one reference, here means also to have appreciation because “what is ‘known’ is of value

**11, 12.** (a) How did Jesus stress the need to make the truth our way of life? (b) As illustrated above, what danger must young ones in particular avoid?

or importance to the one who knows." Thus, we "know" the truth in the fullest sense when we make it our way of life. Then we can rightly say that "the word of God" is "at work" in us, molding our personality so that we more closely reflect our heavenly Father.—1 Thess. 2:13.

**12** Ask yourself, 'Do I really *know* the truth? Have I made it my way of life? Or do I still crave some of the "freedoms" of the world?' Looking back on her youth, a sister who was raised by Christian parents wrote: "When you grow up in the truth, Jehovah is always there, as it were. But in my case, I never really got to know him. I never learned to hate what he hates. I never believed that what I did mattered to him. And I never learned to go to him when I was in trouble. I leaned on my own understanding, which I now know was ridiculous because I knew nothing." Happily, the sister later realized that her thinking was very wrong, and she made some major changes. She even began to serve as a regular pioneer.

#### HOLY SPIRIT CAN HELP SET YOU FREE

**13** At 2 Corinthians 3:17, we read: "Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom." How does holy spirit contribute to our freedom? Among other things, it produces within us qualities that are essential to freedom—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) Without those qualities, especially love, no society can be truly free—a fact that is obvious in the world today. Interestingly, after listing the spirit's fruitage, the apostle Paul added:

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**13.** How does God's holy spirit help to set us free?

"Against such things there is no law." What did he mean? The fruitage of God's spirit is not restricted by any law that can limit its growth. (Gal. 5:18) After all, what would be the point of such a law? It is Jehovah's will that we cultivate Christlike qualities forever and display them without restriction.

**14** Those who are enthralled by the world's spirit and who indulge their fleshly desires may think they are free. (*Read 2 Peter 2:18, 19.*) The reality, however, is quite the opposite. Mountains of rules and regulations are necessary to curb their hurtful appetites and behavior. "Law is promulgated, not for a righteous man, but for persons lawless and unruly," says Paul. (1 Tim. 1:9, 10) They also are slaves of sin, driven to do "the things *willed* by the flesh," which is a cruel master. (Eph. 2:1-3) In a way, such individuals are like insects that crawl right into a bowl of honey. Driven by their appetite, they soon find themselves entrapped.—Jas. 1:14, 15.

#### SET FREE WITHIN THE CHRISTIAN CONGREGATION

**15** When you began associating with the Christian congregation, you did not join some sort of social club. Rather, you came into the congregation because Jehovah drew you. (John 6:44) What moved him to do so? Did he see a righteous, God-fearing person? "Not at all!" you may say. What, then, did God see? He saw a heart that would be receptive to his liberating law, a heart that would submit to his kind influence. Within

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**14.** In what ways does the world's spirit enslave those who submit to it?

**15, 16.** How important is our association with the congregation, and what freedom do we enjoy?

the congregation, Jehovah has nurtured your heart by feeding you spiritually, setting you free from religious falsehoods and superstitions, and by teaching you how to develop the Christlike personality. (*Read Ephesians 4:22-24*) As a result, you have the privilege of being among the only people in the world who can rightly be called "a free people."—Jas. 2:12.

16 Consider this: When you are in the company of those who love Jehovah with all their heart, do you feel afraid? Do you find yourself constantly glancing over your shoulder? While engaging in conversation at the Kingdom Hall, do you keep a firm grip on your belongings lest they disappear? On the contrary! You feel at ease and free. Would you feel that way at a secular event? Not likely! What is more, the freedom that you enjoy now among God's people is just a foretaste of the freedom that lies ahead.

#### "THE GLORIOUS FREEDOM OF THE CHILDREN OF GOD"

17 When discussing the freedom that Jehovah has in store for his earthly servants, Paul wrote: "The eager expectation of the creation is waiting for the revealing of the sons of God." Then he added: "The creation itself also will be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:19-21) "The creation" refers to mankind with the earthly hope, those who will benefit from "the revealing" of God's spirit-anointed sons. That revealing will begin when these "sons," resurrected to the spirit realm, share with Christ in cleansing the earth of evil and preserv-

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17. How is mankind's freedom related to "the revealing of the sons of God"?

ing "a great crowd" into the new system of things.—Rev. 7:9, 14.

18 Redeemed mankind will then experience a completely new freedom—freedom from the influence of Satan and the demons. (Rev. 20:1-3) What a relief that will be! Thereafter, Christ's 144,000 fellow kings and priests will continue to liberate mankind by progressively applying the benefits of the ransom sacrifice until Adamic sin and imperfection have been fully erased. (Rev. 5:9, 10) Having proved faithful even under test, humans will have attained the very perfection of freedom that Jehovah has purposed for them—"the glorious freedom of the children of God." Think! No longer will you struggle to do what is right in God's eyes, for your entire organism will have been perfected and your personality will have been fully transformed according to God's image.

19 Do you long for "the glorious freedom of the children of God"? If so, let your mind and heart continue to be influenced by "the perfect law that belongs to freedom." Yes, diligently study the Scriptures. Live the truth, making it your own. Pray for holy spirit. Take full advantage of the Christian congregation and the spiritual food Jehovah provides. Do not let Satan deceive you, as he deceived Eve, into thinking that God's ways are unduly restrictive. To be sure, the Devil can be very clever. But as we shall see in the following article, we need not be "overreached by Satan, for we are not ignorant of his designs." —2 Cor. 2:11.

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18. How will freedom increase for obedient mankind, and what freedom will they finally enjoy?

19. Today, what must we continue to do in order to remain on the path to true freedom?



# SERVE THE GOD OF FREEDOM

*"This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome."*

—1 JOHN 5:3.

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## CAN YOU ANSWER?

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How does Satan try to make God's laws appear burdensome?

Why must we be extremely careful about our associates?

What will help us to remain loyal to the God of freedom?

JEHOVAH is the only Person with absolute freedom. Yet, he never misuses it; nor does he monopolize freedom by micromanaging his servants. Instead, he has given them free will, which allows them to use initiative and satisfy all their proper desires. For example, God gave Adam and Eve only one restrictive command—the prohibition against eating from “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.” (Gen. 2:17) What an amazing degree of freedom they had in carrying out their Creator’s will!

2 Why did God grant our original parents so much freedom? He formed them in his image and gave them a conscience, rightly expecting that their love for him as their Creator would guide them in the right way. (Gen. 1:27; Rom. 2:15) Sadly, Adam and Eve failed to appreciate their wonderful Life-Giver and the freedom that he had given them. Instead, they chose the illegitimate freedom offered by Satan, which was moral independence. But instead of finding more freedom, our original parents sold themselves and their future offspring into bondage to sin, with disastrous consequences.—Rom. 5:12.

3 If Satan could induce two perfect humans—not to mention a number of spirit creatures—to reject God’s sovereignty, he could deceive us too. His strategy remains much the same. He tries to mislead us into thinking that God’s standards are burden-

1. How does Jehovah view freedom, and how did he show that in his dealings with Adam and Eve?
2. Why did our original parents lose their God-given freedom?
- 3, 4. How does Satan try to deceive us with regard to Jehovah’s standards?

some and rob us of fun and excitement. (1 John 5:3) That thinking can exert a lot of power if we are repeatedly exposed to it. "Bad association greatly influenced me, especially because I was afraid of having a different opinion from my peers," said a 24-year-old sister who had engaged in sexual immorality. Perhaps you have experienced similar peer pressure.

**4** Sadly, on occasion negative peer influence can also come from within the Christian congregation. "I have known some young ones who dated nonbelievers," said a Witness youth. "Eventually, though, it struck me that the more I hung around with them, the more I was becoming like them. My spirituality began to suffer. I was not enjoying the spiritual food at the meetings, and I barely went out in service. This was my signal to cut off those associates, and I did!" Are you aware of the power that your associates can have on you? Consider a timely Bible example.—Rom. 15:4.

### HE STOLE THEIR HEARTS

**5** The Bible contains many examples of those who were a bad influence on others. One such example is Absalom, a son of King David. Absalom was an exceptionally good-looking man. In time, however, like Satan, he let greedy ambition fill his heart, for he began to covet his father's throne, to which he was not entitled.\* In a sly attempt to seize the kingship, Absalom feigned deep con-

\* God's promise to David of a future "seed" to inherit the throne was given *after* Absalom's birth. Therefore, Absalom should have known that Jehovah had not chosen him as David's successor.—2 Sam. 3:3; 7:12.

**5, 6.** How did Absalom mislead others, and did his scheme succeed?

cern for his fellow Israelites while cleverly insinuating that the king's court lacked regard for them. Yes, just like the Devil in the garden of Eden, Absalom presented himself as a benefactor, at the same time cruelly maligning his own father.—2 Sam. 15:1-5.

**6** Did Absalom's clever scheme succeed? To some extent, yes, for the Bible account states: "Absalom kept stealing the hearts of the men of Israel." (2 Sam. 15:6) In the end, though, Absalom's arrogance led to his own downfall. And tragically, it also led to his death and the death of the thousands who were overreached by him.—2 Sam. 18:7, 14-17.

**7** Why were those Israelites so easily deceived? Perhaps they desired the things Absalom promised them. Or maybe they were swayed by his physical appearance. Whatever the case, we can be sure of this: They lacked loyalty to Jehovah and his appointed king. Today, Satan continues to use "Absaloms" in his attempt to steal the hearts of Jehovah's servants. 'Jehovah's standards are too restrictive,' they may say. 'And look at all those people who do not serve Jehovah. They have all the fun!' Will you see through such contemptible lies and remain loyal to God? Will you recognize that only Jehovah's "perfect law," the law of the Christ, can lead you to true freedom? (Jas. 1:25) If so, cherish that law, and never be tempted to misuse your Christian freedom.—*Read 1 Peter 2:16.*

**8** Young people in particular are a

7. What lessons can we learn from the account about Absalom? (See picture on page 14.)

8. What real-life examples illustrate that happiness does not result from disregarding Jehovah's standards?



How can we identify modern-day Absaloms and guard ourselves against them?

target of Satan. A brother who is now in his 30's said about his teen years: "I viewed Jehovah's moral standards as a restriction, not as a protection." As a result, he committed sexual immorality. But this brought him no happiness. "Deep feelings of guilt and remorse surfaced for many years," he said. Reflecting on her teen years, a sister wrote: "After committing immorality, you feel cold and empty. Even now after 19 years, bad memories come back." Another sister stated: "The thought that my conduct crushed the people I love so much had a mentally, spiritually, and emotionally devastating effect on me. It is terrible to live without Jehovah's favor." Satan does not want you to think about such consequences of sin.

<sup>9</sup> How sad that many young ones in the truth—and even a number of older ones—have had to learn the hard way that sinful pleasures often come at great cost! (Gal. 6:7, 8) So ask yourself: 'Do I recognize Satan's schemes for what they really are—cruel deceptions? Do I view Jehovah as my closest Friend, the one who always tells the truth and wants what is best for me? Am I fully convinced that he would *never* withhold from me something that is truly good and will result in my greatest happiness?' (*Read Isaiah 48:17, 18.*) In order to say a heartfelt yes, you need to have more than a superficial knowledge

9. (a) What questions can help us to analyze our view of Jehovah and his laws and principles? (b) Why is it important to know God well?

of Jehovah. You need to know him intimately and recognize that Bible laws and principles reflect his love for you, not a desire to hem you in.—Ps. 25:14.

### PRAY FOR A WISE AND OBEDIENT HEART

**10** When he was still a young man, Solomon humbly said in prayer: “I am but a little boy. I do not know how to go out and how to come in.” He then prayed for a wise and obedient heart. (1 Ki. 3:7-9, 12) Jehovah answered that sincere request, and he will do the same for you, whether you are young or old. Of course, Jehovah will not give you miraculous insight and wisdom. But he will make you wise if you earnestly study his Word, pray for holy spirit, and take full advantage of the spiritual provisions made available through the Christian congregation. (Jas. 1:5) Indeed, by these means, Jehovah makes even his young servants wiser than all those who ignore his counsel, even the so-called “wise and intellectual ones” of this world.—Luke 10:21; *read Psalm 119: 98-100.*

**11** To illustrate the value of studying the Bible and meditating on what we read so that we can come to know Jehovah intimately, consider the following scriptures. Each one contains an important principle regarding our choice of associates: “I have not sat with men of untruth; and with those who hide what they are I do not come in.” (Ps. 26:4) “He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having deal-

**10.** Why should we strive to imitate young King Solomon?

**11-13.** (a) What valuable lessons can we learn from Psalm 26:4, Proverbs 13:20, and 1 Corinthians 15:33? (b) How would you apply these Scriptural principles?

ings with the stupid ones will fare badly.” (Prov. 13:20) “Bad associations spoil useful habits.”—1 Cor. 15:33.

**12** What valuable lessons can we learn from those texts? (1) Jehovah wants us to be selective about our associates. He wants to protect us morally and spiritually. (2) We are influenced for good or for bad by the people with whom we associate; that is simply a fact of life. The way the verses above are worded shows that Jehovah is appealing to our heart. How so? Notice that none of the verses are set out as rules, such as “you must not . . .” Rather, they are written as plain statements of truth. In effect, Jehovah is saying to us: ‘Here are the facts. How will you respond? What is in your heart?’

**13** Finally, because the three verses are set out as basic truths, they are timeless and have a very broad application. To illustrate, ask yourself such questions as: How can I avoid associating with individuals “who hide what they are”? In what situations might I come in contact with such ones? (Prov. 3:32; 6:12) Who are the “wise persons” with whom Jehovah wants me to associate? Who are the “stupid ones” he wants me to avoid? (Ps. 111:10; 112:1; Prov. 1:7) What “useful habits” will I ruin by choosing bad associates? Will I encounter bad associates only in the world? (2 Pet. 2:1-3) How would you answer these questions?

**14** Having thus reasoned on the Scriptures, why not examine other Bible texts that reveal God’s thinking on matters that concern you or your family?\* Parents, consider discussing such topics

\* Good examples are 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, where Paul describes love, and Psalm 19:7-11, which sets out the many blessings that result from obedience to Jehovah’s laws.

**14.** How can you enrich your Family Worship evening?

during your Family Worship evening. As you do, keep in mind that your goal is to help each family member to appreciate more fully the depth of God's love for us as revealed in his laws and principles. (Ps. 119:72) Indeed, such study should draw all in the family closer to Jehovah and to one another.

15 How can you tell if you are developing a wise and obedient heart? One way is to compare your thinking with that of the faithful ones of old, such as King David, who wrote: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is *within my inward parts.*" (Ps. 40:8) Likewise, the writer of Psalm 119 said: "How I do *love your law!* All day long it is my concern." (Ps. 119:97) Such love does not grow in shallow soil. Rather, it is a result of deep study, prayer, meditation, and experience—seeing in one's own life the countless blessings that result from adhering to God's standards.—Ps. 34:8.

### FIGHT FOR YOUR CHRISTIAN FREEDOM!

16 Throughout history, nations have waged brutal wars in the name of freedom. How much more, then, should you be willing to fight spiritually for your Christian freedom! Realize that your enemies are not just Satan, the world, and its poisonous spirit. You also have to contend with your own imperfections, including a treacherous heart. (Jer. 17:9; Eph. 2:3) Yet, with Jehovah's help, you can win the fight. What is more, each victory—large or small—will have at least two positive effects. First, you will make Jehovah's heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) Second, as you taste the liberating power of God's "perfect law that belongs to

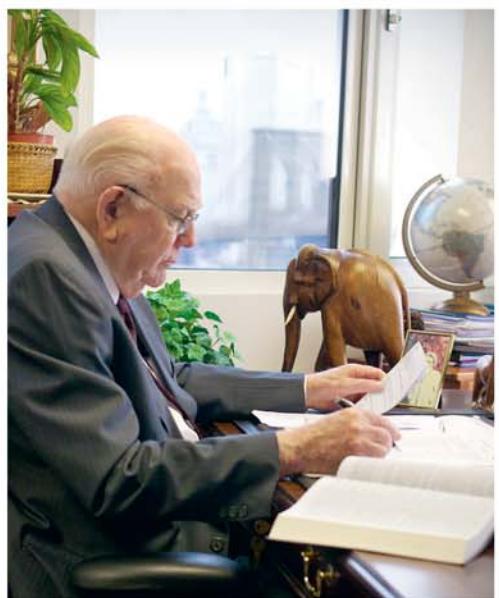
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15. How can you discern if you are developing a wise and obedient heart?
  16. What must we realize if we are going to win our fight for true freedom?

freedom," you will become even more determined to remain on the 'narrow road' to everlasting life. In time, you will enjoy the more expansive freedom that lies ahead for Jehovah's loyal ones.—Jas. 1:25; Matt. 7:13, 14.

17 At times, of course, we all make mistakes. (Eccl. 7:20) When that occurs, do not feel worthless or overly discouraged. If you stumble, so to speak, get up and move forward—even if that means asking the local elders for help. Their "prayer of faith," wrote James, "will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him." (Jas. 5:15) Yes, never forget that God is truly merciful and that *he drew you* into the congregation because he saw your potential. (*Read Psalm 103:8, 9.*) So as long as you maintain a complete heart toward Jehovah, he will never give up on you.—1 Chron. 28:9.

18 While praying on his last night with his 11 faithful apostles, Jesus said these unforgettable words in their behalf: "Watch over them because of the wicked one." (John 17:15) Jesus' concern was not limited to his apostles, but it extends to all his followers. Hence, we can be sure that Jehovah will answer Jesus' prayer by watching over us during these critical times. "For those walking in integrity [Jehovah] is a shield . . . He will guard the very way of his loyal ones." (Prov. 2:7, 8) Yes, the way of integrity is not without its challenges, but it is the only way to everlasting life and true freedom. (Rom. 8:21) Let no one lure you from it!

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17. Why should we not get downhearted about our imperfections, and what help does Jehovah provide?
  18. How can we act in harmony with Jesus' prayer recorded at John 17:15?



# Jehovah Taught Me to Do His Will

AS TOLD BY MAX LLOYD

It was late one night in 1955. A fellow missionary and I were in our assignment in Paraguay, South America, when the house we were in was surrounded by an angry mob shouting: "Our god is a bloodthirsty god, and he wants the blood of the gringos." How did we gringos (foreigners) come to be here?

FOR me, it all began years ago in Australia where I grew up and where Jehovah began teaching me to do his will. My dad accepted the book *Enemies* from a Witness in 1938. He and Mum were already dissatisfied with the local clergy, who referred to portions of the Bible as fables. About a year later, my parents were baptized in symbol of their dedication to Jehovah. From that time forward, the doing of Jehovah's will became the most important part of our family life. My sister, Lesley, who was five years older than I, was baptized next, and I was baptized in 1940 when I was nine years old.

Soon after the start of World War II, the printing and distribution of the Bible literature of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Australia. So as a young child, I learned to explain the basis for my faith, using only the Bible. I made a practice of taking my Bible to school to show why I would not salute the flag or support the war efforts of the nations.—Ex. 20:4, 5; Matt. 4:10; John 17:16; 1 John 5:21.

Many at school would not associate with me because I was labeled "a German spy." At that time, movies were shown in school. Before the movie began, everyone was supposed to stand up and sing the country's national anthem. When I remained seated, two or three boys would try to pull me up off the seat by my hair. I was eventually expelled from school because of holding to my Bible-based beliefs. However, I was able to take correspondence courses at home.

## A GOAL I EVENTUALLY REALIZED

I had set a personal goal to start in the full-time ministry as a pioneer when I turned 14. So I was very disappointed when my parents said that I must first find a job and go to work. They insisted that I pay room and board at home but promised that when I turned 18, I could start pioneering. This led to regular discussions about the money I was earning. I argued that I wanted to save it for pioneering, but they were taking it.



Left: While in circuit work in Australia  
Right: With my parents

ways reached that goal, which set a fine example for Lesley and me.

#### PIONEERING IN TASMANIA

My first pioneer assignment was on the Australian island of Tasmania, where I joined my sister and her husband. However, they left soon thereafter to attend the 15th class of Gilead School. I was very shy and had never been away from home before. Some speculated that I would last only three months. Yet, within a year, in 1950, I was appointed to serve as company servant, now called the coordinator of the body of elders. Later, I was appointed as a special pioneer, and another young brother became my partner.

Our assignment was an isolated copper-mining town where there were no Witnesses. We arrived by bus late one afternoon. We stayed in an old hotel the first night. The next day as we went witnessing from house to house, we asked the householders if they knew of a vacant room. Near the end of the day, a person mentioned that the minister's house next to the Presbyterian church was empty and said that we should speak to the deacon. He was friendly and made the house available to us. It seemed strange to walk out of the clergyman's house each day to go preaching.

The territory was fruitful. We had fine conversations and started many Bible studies. When church authorities in the capital learned about this and heard that Jehovah's Witnesses were occupying the minister's residence, they demanded that the deacon get us out immediately. Once again we were without accommodations!

After preaching until mid-afternoon the next day, we looked for a place to spend the night. The grandstand at the sports stadium was the best we could find. We hid our suitcases there and resumed witnessing. It was getting dark, but we decided to visit a few more homes to finish a street. At one house a man offered us accommodations in a small two-room house at the back of his property!

When the time came to start pioneering, my parents sat down with me and explained that they had deposited the money I had given them in a savings account. Then they gave it all back to me to buy clothes and other needs for pioneering. They were teaching me to care for myself and not to expect others to do this. Looking back, that training was most valuable.

While Lesley and I were growing up, pioneers often stayed in our home, and we enjoyed sharing in the ministry with them. Our weekends were devoted to the house-to-house ministry, street witnessing, and conducting Bible studies. The goal for a congregation publisher in those years was 60 hours a month. Mother almost al-

## CIRCUIT WORK AND GILEAD

After about eight months in this preaching assignment, I received an invitation from the Australia branch office to become a circuit overseer. This shocked me, as I was only 20 years old. After receiving a couple of weeks of training, I started making regular visits to encourage the congregations. Those older than I, who included just about everyone, did not look down on my youth but respected the work I was doing.

What variety there was traveling between congregations! One week I went by bus, another week by tram, then by car or on the back of a motorcycle, balancing a suitcase and a witnessing bag. Staying with fellow Witnesses was a real joy. One company servant was eager to have me stay with him even though his home was only partially built. That week my bed was made up in the bathtub, but what a spiritually joyful week we had together!

Another surprise came in 1953 when I received an application for the 22nd class of Gilead School. But my joy was mixed with anxiety. You see, after my sister and her husband graduated from Gilead on July 30, 1950, they were assigned to Pakistan. Less than a year later, Lesley became ill and died there. How would my parents feel, I wondered, about my going off somewhere else in the world so soon thereafter? However, they said: "Go and serve Jehovah wherever he directs." I never saw Father again. He died in the late 1950's.

Before long, I was boarding a ship with five other Australians for a six-week voyage to New York City. On the way, we engaged in Bible reading, study, and witnessing to fellow passengers. Before going upstate to the school's facilities in South Lansing, New York, we attended the July 1953 international convention at Yankee Stadium. A peak of 165,829 were in attendance!

Our class of 120 Gilead students came from every corner of the earth. It was not until graduation day that we were told where we were being assigned to serve. As soon as we could, we

rushed to the Gilead library to learn about the countries to which we were assigned. I learned that my assignment, Paraguay, was a country with a history of political revolutions. Shortly after arriving there, I asked the other missionaries one morning what the "celebration" had been during the night. They smiled and said: "You have experienced your first revolution. Look out the front door." Soldiers were on every corner!

## A MOMENTOUS EXPERIENCE

On one occasion, I accompanied the circuit overseer to visit an isolated congregation and to show the film *The New World Society in Action*. We traveled for eight or nine hours, first by train, then by horse and buggy, and finally by oxcart.



*One week I went by bus, another week by tram, then by car or on the back of a motorcycle, balancing a suitcase and a witnessing bag*

We carried along a generator and a movie projector. After finally arriving at our destination, we spent the next day visiting farms and inviting all to the showing of the film that night. Some 15 people attended.

After showing about 20 minutes of the film, we were told to go inside the house as quickly as possible. We grabbed the projector and obeyed. It was then that men started shouting, firing guns, and chanting: "Our god is a blood-thirsty god, and he wants the blood of the gringos." There were only two gringos there, and I was one of them! Those who attended the film showing held off the mob's attempts to break into the house. But the opposers returned about three o'clock in the morning, firing their guns and promising to get us on our way back to town later that day.

The brothers contacted the sheriff, and he came in the afternoon with two horses to take us to town. On the way back, whenever we came near a clump of bushes or trees, he pulled out his gun and rode ahead to inspect the area. A horse, I could see, was an important means of transportation, so I later obtained one.

#### MORE MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

The preaching work continued to have good success in spite of regular clergy opposition. In



Our wedding day, December 31, 1957

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1955, five new missionaries arrived, including a young Canadian sister named Elsie Swanson, who graduated from the 25th class of Gilead. We were together for a while at the branch office before she was assigned to another town. She had devoted her life to the service of Jehovah with little help from her parents, who never accepted the truth. On December 31, 1957, Elsie and I were married, and we lived by ourselves in a missionary home in the southern part of Paraguay.

Our home did not have running water; instead, we had a well in the backyard. So there was no indoor shower or toilet, no washing machine, not even a refrigerator. We bought perishable food each day. But the simplicity of life and the loving relationships with our brothers and sisters in the congregation made this a very happy period in our married life.

In 1963, shortly after we arrived back in Australia to visit my mother, she had a heart attack, seemingly brought on by the excitement of see-



ing her son after ten years. As the time drew near to return to our assignment in Paraguay, we were faced with one of the most difficult decisions of our lives. Should we leave my mother in a hospital, hoping that someone would care for her, and return to our assignment in Paraguay, which we loved? After much prayer, Elsie and I decided to stay and care for Mother. We were able to do that and stay in the full-time ministry until she died in 1966.

It was a privilege to be used in the circuit and district work in Australia for a number of years and to teach the Kingdom Ministry School for elders. Then came another adjustment in our lives. I was assigned to serve as a member of the first Branch Committee in Australia. Then, when we were to build a new branch office, I was appointed as chairman of the building committee. With the help of many experienced, cooperative workers, a beautiful branch was built.

I was next assigned to the Service Department, which deals with the oversight of the preaching work in a country. I also received

the privilege of visiting other branches throughout the world as a zone overseer to provide help and encouragement. It was especially faith-strengthening to me to visit in some countries those who had spent years—even decades—in prisons and concentration camps because of their faithful obedience to Jehovah.

### OUR PRESENT ASSIGNMENT

After returning from a tiring zone trip in 2001, I found a letter of invitation to come to Brooklyn, New York, to serve as part of the newly formed United States Branch Committee. Elsie and I prayerfully considered the invitation, and we happily accepted the assignment. After more than 11 years, we are still in Brooklyn.

I am so glad that I have a wife who is happy to do whatever Jehovah asks. Elsie and I now are in our early 80's and still have reasonably good health. We look forward to enjoying the teachings of Jehovah throughout eternity as well as all the rich blessings that will be realized by those who continue to do his will.



*We look  
forward to  
enjoying the  
teachings  
of Jehovah  
throughout  
eternity*



*"Though against me war should rise, even then I shall be trusting."* —PS. 27:3.

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ACCORDING TO THE FOLLOWING VERSES, WHAT CAN HELP YOU TO DEVELOP COURAGE?

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Psalm 27:1

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Psalm 27:4

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Psalm 27:11

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## "OF WHOM SHALL I BE IN DREAD?"

**W**HY is our preaching activity on the increase despite worsening world conditions? Why do we give freely of our time and energy while many are experiencing economic reversals? How can we remain courageous when many others fear the future? An inspired song of King David, recorded in Psalm 27, gives us the answers.

<sup>2</sup> David begins this psalm with the words: "Jehovah is my light and my salvation. Of whom shall I be in fear? Jehovah is the stronghold of my life. Of whom shall I be in dread?" (Ps. 27:1) While fear can exert a weakening influence, the feeling of dread is even more severe. But no underlying dread should agitate one who fears Jehovah. (1 Pet. 3:14) When we make Jehovah our stronghold, we "will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity." (Prov. 1:33; 3:25) Why so?

### "JEHOVAH IS MY LIGHT AND MY SALVATION"

<sup>3</sup> The metaphor "Jehovah is my light" draws attention to the fact that Jehovah frees us from ignorance and spiritual darkness. (Ps. 27:1) A literal light may reveal a danger or an obstacle on our pathway, but it does not remove it. We must act wisely on what we see. In a similar way, Jehovah reveals to us the basic meaning of world events. He alerts us to the dangers of this system of things. He provides us with Bible principles that always work, but we must apply what we learn. When we do, we can act with

1. What will the 27th Psalm help us to understand?
2. What does the feeling of dread do to a person, but what confidence do we have?
3. In what sense is Jehovah our light, but what must we do?

more wisdom than either our enemies or our teachers.—Ps. 119:98, 99, 130.

4 David's words at Psalm 27:1 show that he must have recalled how Jehovah had delivered, or saved, him on previous occasions. For instance, Jehovah had delivered him "from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear." Jehovah also gave him victory over the giant

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4. (a) Why could David say with conviction: "Jehovah is my . . . salvation"? (b) When especially will Jehovah become our salvation?

David drew strength from his memories of Jehovah's acts of deliverance



Goliath. Later, King Saul tried to pierce David with a spear, but each time Jehovah delivered him. (1 Sam. 17:37, 49, 50; 18:11, 12; 19:10) No wonder David could say with conviction: "Jehovah is my . . . salvation"! Jehovah will again become to his servants what he was to David—a salvation. How? By delivering his worshippers through the coming "great tribulation."—Rev. 7:14; 2 Pet. 2:9.

#### REMEMBER EACH SUCCESS

5 An important factor in developing courage is brought to our attention at **Psalm 27:2, 3. (Read.)** David recalled events in which he experienced deliverance with the aid of Jehovah. (1 Sam. 17:34-37) Those memories filled him with confidence to face even the worst of adversities. Do you draw similar conclusions from your experiences? For instance, have you prayed intensely about a distressing problem and then seen how Jehovah gave you wisdom or strength to cope with that trial? Or can you recall how obstacles to your joyful service were removed or how a large door of activity was opened to you? (1 Cor. 16:9) What effect does remembering such events have on you now? Do not those memories continue to persuade you that Jehovah can help you to overcome or endure even more serious obstacles or adversities?—Rom. 5:3-5.

6 What if a powerful government were to hatch a plot to exterminate Jehovah's Witnesses as an organization? Many men in modern times have attempted to do just that but have failed. Recounting how Jehovah has helped his people in the past will instill in

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- 5, 6. (a) What role does our memory play in our developing courage? (b) How does the record of Jehovah's dealings with his servants fortify your courage?

us confidence to face the future.—Dan. 3:28.

### APPRECIATE PURE WORSHIP

**7** Another essential component of courageous action is our fondness for true worship. (*Read Psalm 27:4*) In David's day, "the house of Jehovah" was the tabernacle. It was David himself who made arrangements for the elaborate temple structure that was to be built by his son Solomon. Centuries later, Jesus revealed that rendering acceptable worship to Jehovah would no longer be contingent on having one grand structure that was blessed by God. (John 4: 21-23) The apostle Paul indicated in Hebrews chapters 8 to 10 that a great spiritual temple came into existence at Jesus' baptism in 29 C.E., when he presented himself to do Jehovah's will. (Heb. 10:10) This great spiritual temple is the arrangement Jehovah has made so that we, through our faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice, can approach God acceptably. How do we worship there? By praying "with true hearts in the full assurance of faith"; by declaring our hope publicly without wavering; and by considering, inciting, and encouraging fellow worshippers when we assemble together at our congregation meetings and during family worship. (Heb. 10:22-25) Appreciation for the arrangement of true worship fortifies us in these critical last days.

**8** Earth wide, Jehovah's faithful servants are increasing their share in the ministry, learning new languages, and moving to areas where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater. Their ac-

tions reveal that they, like the psalmist, have but one thing to ask of Jehovah. They want to enjoy the pleasantness of Jehovah and to participate in sacred service no matter what happens.—*Read Psalm 27:6*.

### TRUST IN GOD'S HELP

**9** David forcefully articulates his trust in Jehovah's help by saying: "In case my own father and my own mother did leave me, even Jehovah himself would take me up." (Ps. 27:10) We may conclude from the events mentioned in 1 Samuel chapter 22 that David's parents did not abandon him. However, many today have had to endure extreme rejection by their family. Yet, many thus forsaken have found help and protection in the warmth of the Christian congregation.

**10** Since Jehovah is ready to support his servants when others desert them, would he not also sustain them during any other sort of tribulation? If, for instance, we are concerned about how to provide materially for our family, can we not be certain that Jehovah will help us? (Heb. 13:5, 6) He understands the circumstances and needs of all his loyal servants.

**11** Consider the case of Victoria, a Bible student in Liberia. As she progressed toward baptism, the man she was living with left her and her three children. Despite being homeless and jobless, she continued to make spiritual progress. After Victoria's baptism, her 13-year-old daughter discovered a purse full of money. In order to avoid temp-

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**7, 8.** (a) According to Psalm 27:4, what did David ask from Jehovah? (b) What is Jehovah's great spiritual temple, and how is worship offered there?

**9, 10.** What is the meaning of the assurance given at Psalm 27:10?

**11.** What impact can our trust in Jehovah have on others? Illustrate.

tation, they decided not even to count the money. Instead, they quickly contacted the soldier to whom the purse belonged. He told them that if all people were as honest as Jehovah's Witnesses, the whole world would be better and more peaceful. From the Bible, Victoria showed the soldier Jehovah's promise of a new world. Impressed with her integrity, the soldier gave Victoria a considerable reward from the recovered funds. Indeed, implicit faith in Jehovah's ability to provide has given Jehovah's Witnesses an impeccable reputation for honesty.

**12** Or imagine how Thomas, an unbaptized publisher in Sierra Leone, must have felt. He started working as a teacher in a secondary school, but he could not receive his salary for nearly one year until the paperwork was final. What was the last requirement Thomas had to meet before receiving his salary and back pay? An interview with the school administrator—a priest. The priest explained that the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses were not compatible with those of the institute. He insisted that Thomas choose between his job and his Bible-based beliefs. Quitting that job and forfeiting nearly a year's salary, Thomas found other work, repairing radios and mobile phones. As this and numerous similar examples show, fear of privation may be the object of other people's dread, but it is no match for our well-founded trust in the Creator of all things and Protector of his people.

**13** In a number of lands where living

**12.** What do we demonstrate when we continue to serve Jehovah despite suffering material loss? Illustrate.

**13.** How is the Kingdom-preaching work progressing in lands where material resources are scarce?

conditions are challenging, Kingdom proclaimers are often markedly active. Why is this? One branch office writes: "Many householders accepting Bible studies are unemployed and therefore have more time to study during the day. Brothers also have more time to preach. People, especially in the worst-hit areas, do not have to be told that we are living in the last days; they see the conditions all around them." A missionary serving for over 12 years in a land where every publisher conducts, on average, more than three Bible studies writes: "Since many of the publishers have a simple lifestyle with few distractions, they generally have more time for the field ministry and Bible study work."

**14** Jehovah has promised to help, protect, and deliver his people, as a group,

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**14.** In what ways can the great crowd enjoy divine protection?

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Do we see economic hardship as an opportunity to expand our ministry?



physically and spiritually, and we trust in him. (Ps. 37:28; 91:1-3) The crowd that survive “the great tribulation” must indeed be great. (Rev. 7:9, 14) Thus that crowd, as a group, will be shielded from extinction throughout the remainder of the last days. They will be supplied with everything they need to endure trials and to safeguard their relationship with Jehovah. And throughout the final phase of the great tribulation, Jehovah will protect his people.

#### **“INSTRUCT ME, O JEHOVAH, IN YOUR WAY”**

**15** To remain courageous, we need ongoing instruction in God’s way. This is evident from David’s plea: “Instruct me, O Jehovah, in your way, and lead me in the path of uprightness on account of my foes.” (Ps. 27:11) Acting in harmony with this prayer means paying careful attention to any Bible-based direction that we receive through Jehovah’s organization and applying it at once. Many who have rid themselves of needless debt can testify that applying wise counsel to simplify their life has benefited them during the recent economic crises. Rather than finding themselves burdened with possessions they can no longer afford, they are free to expand their ministry. Each of us does well to ask himself, ‘Do I immediately apply everything I read in the Bible and in the publications of the faithful and discreet slave class, even when it requires making personal sacrifices?’—Matt. 24:45.

**16** By allowing Jehovah to instruct us and lead us in the path of uprightness, we will have no cause for fear. When a regular pioneer in the United States ap-

plied for a job that would help him to keep his entire family in full-time service, his supervisor told him that he would never get that position without a college degree. Had this happened to you, would you have regretted pursuing full-time service to the exclusion of seeking higher education? Two weeks later, that supervisor’s employment was terminated, and another manager asked the brother about his goals. He readily explained that he and his wife were full-time ministers of Jehovah’s Witnesses and wanted to continue as such. Before the brother could say anything else, the manager said: “I knew there was something different about you! When my father was on his deathbed, two of your fellow believers came and read the Bible to him every day. I promised myself that if I ever had an opportunity to help one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I would do it.” The next morning, this brother was given the very job that the former director had refused to give him. Indeed, when we put Kingdom interests first in our life, Jehovah lives up to his assurance that we will not go without material necessities.—Matt. 6:33.

#### **FAITH AND HOPE ESSENTIAL**

**17** David next underscores the necessity of faith and hope by saying: “If I had not had faith in seeing the goodness of Jehovah in the land of those alive—!” (Ps. 27:13) Indeed, where would we be without our God-given hope and our appreciation for the things discussed in Psalm 27! May we, then, continue to pray confidently for strength and deliverance as we face the events leading up to Armageddon.—*Read Psalm 27:14.*

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**15, 16.** How do we benefit when we heed divine instruction? Illustrate.

**17.** What will enable us to face the future with confidence?



*'I entreat you to observe the oneness of the spirit.'*—EPH. 4:1, 3.

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#### HOW WOULD YOU EXPLAIN?

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What is the purpose of God's administration?

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How do we "observe the oneness of the spirit"?

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What will help us to "become kind to one another"?

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# "ONE JEHOVAH" GATHERS HIS FAMILY

**F**AMILY. What does that word bring to your mind? Warmth? Happiness? Working together toward a common goal? A safe haven in which to grow, learn, and share ideas? Likely it does if you are part of a caring family. Jehovah himself is the Originator of the family. (Eph. 3:14, 15) He purposed that all his creatures in heaven and on earth enjoy a sense of security, mutual trust, and genuine unity.

<sup>2</sup> After they sinned, humans were no longer part of God's universal family, but Jehovah's purpose was not thwarted. He will make sure that the Paradise earth will be fully inhabited with the offspring of Adam and Eve. (Gen. 1:28; Isa. 45:18) He has made every preparation to fulfill this purpose. A number of these arrangements are brought to our attention in the Bible book of Ephesians, which has unity as its theme. Let us consider some verses from that book and see how we can cooperate with Jehovah's purpose to unite his creation.

#### THE ADMINISTRATION AND ITS WORK

<sup>3</sup> Moses told the Israelites: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah." (Deut. 6:4) Jehovah's actions and purpose are harmonious. Thus, "at the full limit of the appointed times," God put into operation "an administration"—that is, an arrangement for unifying all his intelligent creatures. (*Read Ephesians 1:8-10.*) This administration will carry out its objective in two stages. The first stage prepares the congregation

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- 1, 2. What has Jehovah purposed for the earth and for mankind?
  3. What is God's administration spoken of at Ephesians 1:10, and when did its first stage of operation begin?

of anointed ones for life in heaven under Jesus Christ as their spiritual Head. This stage began at Pentecost 33 C.E. when Jehovah started to gather those who would rule with Christ in heaven. (Acts 2:1-4) Since the anointed have been declared righteous for life on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice, they readily acknowledge that they have been adopted as "God's children."—Rom. 3:23, 24; 5:1; 8:15-17.

4 The second stage prepares those who will dwell in Paradise on earth under Christ's Messianic Kingdom. The "great crowd" make up the initial part of this group. (Rev. 7:9, 13-17; 21:1-5) During the Thousand Year Reign, they will be joined by billions of resurrected ones. (Rev. 20:12, 13) Imagine how the resurrection will further demonstrate our unity! At the end of the thousand years, the "things on the earth" will be subjected to a final test. Those proving faithful will be adopted as earthly "children of God."—Rom. 8:21; Rev. 20:7, 8.

5 Both stages of God's administration are developing today—heavenly and earthly. But as individuals, how do we cooperate now with God's administration?

#### "OBSERVE THE ONENESS OF THE SPIRIT"

6 The Scriptures indicate that Christians must literally gather themselves together. (1 Cor. 14:23; Heb. 10:24, 25) That involves far more than just spending some time together in the same space, as is done by people who go to a market or to a sports arena. Genuine

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4, 5. What is the administration's second stage of operation?

6. How do the Scriptures indicate that Christians are to associate with one another?

unity goes beyond that. We attain such unity when we apply Jehovah's instruction and allow ourselves to be molded by God's holy spirit.

7 Although Jehovah has declared his anointed ones righteous as sons and the other sheep righteous as friends on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice, personal differences will arise as long as any of us are alive on earth in this system of things. (Rom. 5:9; Jas. 2:23) Otherwise there would have been no need for the inspired advice for us to continue "putting up with one another." How is unity with fellow believers achieved? We need to develop "complete lowliness of mind and mildness." Moreover, Paul urges that we earnestly endeavor "to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (*Read Ephesians 4:1-3.*) Applying this counsel involves yielding to the influence of God's spirit and allowing it to produce its fruitage in us. That fruitage mends rifts between individuals, in contrast with the works of the flesh, which are always divisive.

8 Note how "the works of the flesh" breed disunity. (*Read Galatians 5:19-21.*) Fornication separates the one practicing it from Jehovah and the congregation, and adultery can cruelly separate children from parents and innocent partners from marriage mates. Uncleanliness affects a person's unity with God and with those who love him. One who has attempted to glue two things together knows that both surfaces must be clean before a proper bond can be forged. Engaging in *brazen conduct* dem-

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7. What does it mean to "observe the oneness of the spirit"?

8. In what sense do the works of the flesh breed disunity?



Leaving his gift at the altar,  
he goes to make peace with his brother

onstrates total disregard for God's righteous laws. Each of the other works of the flesh separates people from one another and from God. Such conduct is completely out of harmony with the personality of Jehovah.

9 Thus, each of us needs to ask himself: 'Just how earnest am I in trying "to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace"? How do I respond when problems arise? Do I air my grievances before a wide audience, hoping to get support from several friends? Do I expect the elders to intervene in my behalf rather than my making real efforts to restore a peaceful relationship? Do I avoid others so as not to remind

9. How can we examine ourselves as to whether we are "earnestly endeavoring to observe the oneness of the spirit"?

them of whatever it is they have against me, perhaps making sure there is sufficient distance between us?' Would such actions show that we are acting in harmony with Jehovah's purpose to gather all things together again in the Christ?

10 Jesus said: "If, then, you are bringing your gift to the altar and you there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away; first make your peace with your brother, and then, when you have come back, offer up your gift. Be about settling matters quickly." (Matt. 5:23-25) James wrote that "the fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for those who are making peace." (Jas. 3:17, 18) Thus, we cannot maintain righteous conduct in the absence of peace.

11 To illustrate, it is estimated that in some war-ravaged countries, 35 percent more land could be cultivated if the inhabitants did not have to worry about the presence of land mines. When a mine is detonated, fields are abandoned by farmers, villages are robbed of their livelihood, and cities are deprived of their food. In a similar way, our growth in spiritual matters is hindered if we have personal traits that could disrupt peace with our brothers. But by being quick to forgive and by working for the well-being of others, we engender conditions that result in true prosperity.

12 Furthermore, "gifts in men" can be a real force for unity. They have been given to help us to "attain to the oneness in the faith." (Eph. 4:8, 13) When elders

10, 11. (a) How important is it to be at peace with our brothers? (b) What actions will engender peace and spiritual prosperity?

12. How can elders help us to be united?

work along with us in sacred service and offer perceptive observations based on God's Word, they assist us to make progress in putting on the new personality. (Eph. 4:22-24) Do you see in their counsel Jehovah's efforts to prepare you for life in the new world under the rule of his Son? Elders, do you try to readjust others with that objective in view?—Gal. 6:1.

#### **"BECOME KIND TO ONE ANOTHER"**

<sup>13</sup> Ephesians 4:25-29 identifies conduct that we should specifically avoid. This includes speaking falsehood, being wrathful or lazy, and uttering rotten speech rather than sayings that are good and upbuilding. If a person were to fail to heed this counsel, he would grieve God's spirit, for holy spirit is a force that promotes unity. (Eph. 4:30) Application of what Paul wrote next is also essential for peace and unity: "Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness. But become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you."—Eph. 4:31, 32.

<sup>14</sup> The words "*become kind*" suggest that at least to a certain degree, we may not have been kind and that we may need to improve. How appropriate that we train ourselves to consider the feelings of others ahead of our own! (Phil. 2:4) Perhaps something we are thinking of saying would evoke a laugh or would make us appear intelligent, but would it be kind? Giving thought to this mat-

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**13.** What would be the result if we did not heed the counsel found at Ephesians 4:25-32?

**14.** (a) What is suggested by the words "*become kind*"? (b) What will help us to be kind?

ter in advance will help us to "become kind."

#### **LEARNING LOVE AND RESPECT IN THE FAMILY**

<sup>15</sup> The Bible compares Christ's relationship with the congregation to that of a husband with his wife. This should at once impress on us the direction a husband should give and the love and care he needs to exercise—as well as the subjection the wife should manifest—within the marital union. (Eph. 5: 22-33) When Paul wrote: "In this *way* husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies," about which "*way*" was he speaking? (Eph. 5:28) His preceding words drew attention to the way in which "Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it, . . . cleansing it with the bath of water by means of the word." Indeed, to work in harmony with Jehovah's purpose for gathering all things together again in the Christ, a husband must be alert to feed his family spiritually.

<sup>16</sup> Parents do well to remember that they are carrying out an assignment from Jehovah. Sadly, in the world today, many have "no natural affection." (2 Tim. 3:1, 3) Countless fathers shirk their responsibilities—to the dismay and detriment of their children. But Paul counseled Christian fathers: "Do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Eph. 6:4) Where but in the family do children form their first impressions of love and authority? Parents who have taught

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**15.** To what facet of Christ's dealings with the congregation was Paul alluding at Ephesians 5:28?

**16.** What results when parents fulfill their Scriptural responsibilities in the home?

those lessons successfully have worked in harmony with Jehovah's administration. By making our homes havens of love where we put away all anger and wrath and abusive speech, we are teaching our children vital lessons about how to show love and how to respect authority. This will prepare them for life in God's new world.

17 We need to realize that the Devil, the one who first disrupted universal peace, will strongly oppose our efforts to do God's will. No doubt Satan's purposes are served as the divorce rate soars, marriage is dispensed with in favor of living together, and marriages between homosexuals are tolerated. We do not pattern our behavior or attitudes after trends observed in modern society. Christ is our model. (Eph. 4:17-21) Thus, we are admonished to "put on the complete suit of armor from God" to resist the Devil and his demons successfully.—*Read Ephesians 6:10-13.*

#### **"GO ON WALKING IN LOVE"**

18 The real key to our Christian unity is love. With hearts full of love for our "one Lord," for our "one God," and for one another, we are determined "to observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3-6) Jesus prayed about such love: "I make request, not concerning these only, but also concerning those putting faith in me through their word; in order that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in union with me and I am in union with you, that they also may be in union with us . . . And I have made your name known to them and will make it known, in order that the love with which you

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17. What is needed in order for us to resist the Devil?

18. What is the key to our Christian unity?

loved me may be in them and I in union with them."—John 17:20, 21, 26.

19 If we are experiencing inner conflict on account of our imperfection, may love move us to pray as did the psalmist: "Unify my heart to fear your name." (Ps. 86:11) Let us be determined to resist the Devil's efforts to distance us from our loving Father and those he approves. Work diligently to "become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love"—in the family, in our ministry, and in the congregation. —Eph. 5:1, 2.

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19. What are you determined to do?

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Parents, teach your children  
to show respect



# “My Dream Has Come True”

Fifteen years ago, Emilia was serving as a regular pioneer. However, she had to discontinue her full-time service. In recent years, she has often reflected on that most joyful time of her life, and she again wanted to increase her share in the ministry.

Yet, Emilia’s secular job took too much time, and this obstacle was robbing her of joy. Once, in front of her fellow workers, she groaned: “I wish I could work fewer hours!” Her boss heard of this and approached her to ask if that was true. Emilia assured her that it was. However, making it possible required the approval of a director because company policy required a total commitment from all the employees. Our sister prepared for the meeting with the director and prayed for peace and courage.

During the meeting, Emilia tactfully but boldly requested a cut in her hours of work. She explained that she takes advantage of her time off to help others: “I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and I help people spiritually. Nowadays the moral character of many is weakened. They need clear values and standards, and the wisdom that I share from the Bible is invaluable to them. I do not want my after-hours activities to lessen the quality of my work here, but I would like to have more free time to help people. That is why I need my hours on the job reduced.”

The director listened carefully and said that he once considered undertaking charity work. Then he said: “For the reasons you presented, I feel I must agree with your request. But do you realize you will earn less money?” Emilia said that she did and that if necessary, she would simplify her life. She added: “My most important goal is to do



**The director told her: “I admire those who unselfishly devote their time to others”**

something really fulfilling for people.” The director told her: “I admire those who unselfishly devote their time to others.”

No one employed by that company had ever had such favorable terms. Emilia is now allowed to work only four days a week. To her great surprise, she was given a pay raise, and she earns as much as previously! She says: “My dream has come true, and I can regular pioneer again!”

Have you thought of adjusting your circumstances to enter or reenter the pioneer service?