



MAY 15, 2010

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

(Pages 8-17, 24-32)

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE
WEEKS OF:

June 28—July 4

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Christ's Headship?

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 8-17

The first study article shows how important it is for men to be in subjection to their Head, the Christ, and to imitate him in their dealings with others. The second article explains how Christian women should view the statement: "The head of a woman is the man."

STUDY ARTICLES 3, 4 PAGES 24-32

For many today, the thought of making personal sacrifices for someone else does not have much appeal. The first article is designed especially to assist baptized men to examine their view of self-sacrifice and the shouldering of responsibility as ministerial servants or elders. The second article explains how we can avoid grieving God's holy spirit.

MEN, DO YOU SUBMIT TO CHRIST'S HEADSHIP?

"The head of every man is the Christ."—1 COR. 11:3.

“YOU are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power,” states Revelation 4:11, “because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created.” By reason of his Creatorship, Jehovah God is the Supreme Sovereign of the universe and is above all of his creation. That Jehovah “is a God, not of disorder, but of peace” can be seen by the way in which his angelic family is organized.—1 Cor. 14:33; Isa. 6:1-3; Heb. 12:22, 23.

² Before anything was created, God existed by himself for countless ages of time. His very first creation was the spirit creature known as “the Word” because he was the Spokesman for Jehovah. The Word is the one through whom all other things came into existence. Later, he came to earth as a perfect human and became known as Jesus Christ.—*Read John 1:1-3, 14.*

³ What do the Scriptures say about the relative positions of God and his firstborn Son? Writing under inspiration, the apostle Paul tells us: “I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God.” (1 Cor. 11:3) The Christ is under the headship of his Father. Headship and subjection are essential for peace and order to prevail among intelligent creatures. Even the one ‘by means of whom all other things

were created’ is required to submit to God’s headship.—Col. 1:16.

⁴ How did Jesus feel about submitting to Jehovah’s headship and coming to earth? The Scriptures state: “Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God’s form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave’s form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake.”—Phil. 2:5-8.

⁵ At all times, Jesus humbly submitted to his Father’s will. He said: “I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; . . . the judgment that I render is righteous, because I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me.” (John 5:30) “I always do the things pleasing to [my Father],” he declared. (John 8:29) Toward the end of his life on earth, Jesus said in prayer to his Father: “I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do.” (John 17:4) Evidently, Jesus had no problem with recognizing and accepting God’s headship over him.

Submission to the Father Brings Benefits to the Son

⁶ When on earth, Jesus demonstrated many wonderful qualities. Among them

1. What shows that Jehovah is a God of order?
- 2, 3. (a) Who was Jehovah’s first creation?
- (b) What position does the firstborn Son have with respect to the Father?

4, 5. How did Jesus feel about his position with respect to Jehovah?

6. What wonderful qualities did Jesus display?

was the great love he displayed for his Father. “I love the Father,” he said. (John 14:31) He also demonstrated great love for people. (*Read Matthew 22:35-40.*) Jesus was kind and considerate, not harsh or overbearing. “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down,” he said, “and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) Sheeplike people of all ages, especially those who were downtrodden and oppressed, found great comfort in Jesus’ delightful personality and uplifting message.

⁷ Consider how Jesus dealt with women. Throughout history, many men have treated women very badly. That was true of the religious leaders in ancient Israel. But Jesus treated women with respect. This is made evident in his dealings with a woman who had been sick for 12 years with a flow of blood. “She had been put to many pains” by physicians and had spent all her resources trying to get well. Despite all that effort, she “had got worse.” Under the Law, she was considered unclean. Anyone touching her would also become unclean.—Lev. 15:19, 25.

⁸ When the woman heard that Jesus was healing the sick, she joined the crowd surrounding him, saying: “If I touch just his outer garments I shall get well.” She touched Jesus and immediately got well. Jesus knew that she should not have touched his garment. Nevertheless, he did not scold her. On the contrary, he was kind to her. He understood how she must have felt after all

7, 8. Under the Law, how was the woman with a flow of blood restricted, but how did Jesus deal with her?

those years of illness and discerned that she was desperate for help. Compassionately, Jesus told her: “Daughter, your faith has made you well. Go in peace, and be in good health.”—Mark 5:25-34.

⁹ Even children could feel at ease in the presence of Jesus. When people brought children to him on one occasion, his disciples reprimanded them, evidently feeling that he would not want to be bothered with children. But that is not the way Jesus felt. The Scriptural account tells us: “At seeing this Jesus was indignant and said to [the disciples]: ‘Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to suchlike ones.’” Further, “he took the children into his arms and began blessing them, laying his hands upon them.” Jesus did not just tolerate children; he warmly welcomed them.—Mark 10:13-16.

¹⁰ How did Jesus come to possess the qualities he displayed during his life on earth? In his prehuman existence, he observed his heavenly Father for aeons of time and absorbed his ways. (*Read Proverbs 8:22, 23, 30.*) In heaven, he had seen Jehovah’s loving way of exercising headship over all His creation and had made that way his own. Would Jesus have been able to do that had he not been submissive? It was a delight for him to be in subjection to his Father, and it was a pleasure for Jehovah to have such a Son. When on earth, Jesus reflected perfectly the marvelous qualities of his heavenly Father. What a privilege it is for us to be in subjection to Christ, God’s appointed Ruler of the heavenly Kingdom!

9. When Jesus’ disciples tried to prevent children from coming to him, what was his response?

10. How did Jesus come to possess the qualities that he displayed?



*Imitate Jesus
by showing honor
to others*



Imitate Christ's Qualities

¹¹ All in the Christian congregation, especially the men, should continually work hard to imitate Christ's qualities. As already noted, the Bible declares: "The head of every man is the Christ."

As Christ imitated his Head, the true God, Christian men should strive to imitate their head—the Christ. Upon becoming a Christian, the apostle Paul did just that. "Become imitators of me," he exhorted fellow Christians, "even as I am of Christ." (1 Cor. 11:1) And the apostle Peter said: "To this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Pet. 2:21) The admonition to imitate the Christ is of particular interest to men for still another reason. They are the ones who become elders and ministerial servants. As Jesus found joy in imitating Jehovah, Christian men should find joy in imitating Christ and his qualities.

¹² The elders in the Christian congregation are under obligation to learn to be like Christ. Peter gave the older men, or elders, this exhortation: "Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; neither as lording it over those who are

11. (a) Whom should we work hard to imitate? (b) Why should the men in the congregation especially strive to imitate Jesus?

12, 13. How should elders deal with the sheep in their care?

God's inheritance, but becoming examples to the flock." (1 Pet. 5:1-3) Christian elders are not to be dictatorial, domineering, arbitrary, or harsh. Imitating Christ's example, they endeavor to be loving, considerate, humble, and kind in their dealings with the sheep entrusted to their care.

¹³ Those taking the lead in the congregation are imperfect men, and they should constantly be aware of that limitation. (Rom. 3:23) So they must be eager to learn about Jesus and imitate his love. They need to ponder over the way that God and Christ deal with people and then strive to imitate them. Peter exhorts us: "All of you gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—1 Pet. 5:5.

¹⁴ In their dealings with God's flock, the appointed men in the congregation are to exhibit fine qualities. Romans 12:10 states: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." Elders and ministerial servants show honor to others. Like Christians in general, these men are 'to do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism but with lowliness of mind are to consider that the others are superior to them.' (Phil. 2:3) Those taking the lead should certainly view others as being superior to them. By doing so, the appointed men will be following Paul's counsel: "We, though, who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those not strong, and not to be pleasing ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor in what is good for his upbuilding. For even the Christ did not please himself."—Rom. 15:1-3.

14. To what extent should elders show honor to others?

'Assigning Wives Honor'

¹⁵ Consider now Peter's counsel to married men. He wrote: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one." (1 Pet. 3:7) To honor someone means to hold that individual in high esteem. Thus, you would consider the opinions, needs, and wants of such a person and may defer to that one where there is no vital issue at stake. That is how a husband should deal with his wife.

¹⁶ When telling husbands to honor their wives, Peter adds a warning: "In order for your prayers not to be hindered." (1 Pet. 3:7) That clearly shows how seriously Jehovah views the way a man treats his wife. Failure to show honor to her could hinder his prayers. Moreover, do not wives generally respond positively to being treated honorably by their husbands?

¹⁷ On the matter of loving one's wife, God's Word counsels: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. . . . For no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation . . . Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself." (Eph. 5:28, 29, 33) To what extent

15. How should husbands deal with their wives?

16. What warning does God's Word give to husbands in regard to honoring wives?

17. To what extent should a husband love his wife?

Do You Recall?

- What qualities of Jesus should we imitate?
- How should elders deal with the sheep?
- How should a husband treat his wife?

should husbands love their wives? “Husbands,” wrote Paul, “continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it.” (Eph. 5:25) Yes, a husband should be willing even to lay down his life for his wife, just as Christ did for others. When the Christian husband deals with his wife tenderly, considerately, attentively, unselfishly, it is easier for his wife to submit to his headship.

¹⁸ Is assigning honor to wives in this way too much to expect from husbands? No, Jehovah would never ask them to do something that is beyond their capabilities. Besides, Jehovah’s worshippers have access to

18. What help do men have in caring for their responsibilities in marriage?

the greatest force in the universe—God’s holy spirit. Jesus said: “If you, although being wicked, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!” (Luke 11:13) In their prayers, husbands can ask that by means of his spirit, Jehovah will help them in their dealings with others, including their wives.—*Read Acts 5:32.*

¹⁹ Indeed, men bear a heavy responsibility to learn how to be submissive to Christ and imitate his headship. But what about women, wives in particular? The next article will discuss how they should view their role in Jehovah’s arrangement.

19. What will our next study article consider?

WOMEN, WHY SUBMIT TO HEADSHIP?

“The head of a woman is the man.”—1 COR. 11:3.

Jehovah has established the orderly sequence that the apostle Paul mentioned when he wrote that “the head of every man is the Christ” and “the head of the Christ is God.” (1 Cor. 11:3) The preceding article noted that Jesus considered it a privilege and a joy to be in subjection to his Head, Jehovah God, and that Christian men have Christ as their head. Christ was kind, gentle, compassionate, and unselfish when dealing

1, 2. (a) What did the apostle Paul write about Jehovah’s arrangement of headship and subjection? (b) What questions will be considered in this article?

with people. Men in the congregation need to be that way toward others, especially their wives.

² What, though, about women? Who is their head? “The head of a woman is the man,” wrote Paul. How should women view this inspired statement? Does the principle still apply when the husband is an unbeliever? Does submission to man’s headship require that the wife be a silent partner in marriage, having no say when decisions are made? In what way does a woman procure praise for herself?

“I Am Going to Make a Helper for Him”

³ The headship arrangement is of divine origin. After Adam was created, Jehovah God went on to say: “It is not good for the man to continue by himself. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him.” Following Eve’s creation, Adam was so delighted at having a companion and helper that he said: “This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen. 2:18-24) Adam and Eve had the marvelous prospect of becoming the father and mother of an entire human race of perfect people, who would live forever in happiness in a global paradise.

⁴ Because of the rebellion of our first parents, the perfect situation in the garden of Eden was lost. (*Read Romans 5:12.*) But the headship arrangement remained in effect. When properly followed, it brings great benefit and happiness in marriage. The result becomes similar to how Jesus felt about being in subjection to his Head, Jehovah. In his prehuman existence, Jesus was “glad before [Jehovah] all the time.” (Prov. 8:30) Because of imperfection, men are no longer capable of being perfect heads, nor are women able to demonstrate perfect subjection. When husbands and wives continue to work at doing the best they can, however, the arrangement results in the greatest possible contentment in marriage at this time.

⁵ Crucial to the success of a marriage is that the marriage mates apply this Scriptural counsel meant for all Christians: “In brotherly love have tender affection for one

3, 4. Why is the headship arrangement in marriage beneficial?

5. Why should marriage mates take to heart the counsel found at Romans 12:10?

another. In *showing honor to one another* take the lead.” (Rom. 12:10) Also, both husband and wife should work hard to “become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another.” —Eph. 4:32.

When the Mate Is Not a Believer

⁶ What if your marriage mate is not a servant of Jehovah? Often, it is the husband who is not a believer. In this case, how should the wife treat him? The Bible answers: “You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect.” —1 Pet. 3:1, 2.

⁷ God’s Word tells the wife to maintain a submissive attitude toward the unbelieving husband. Her good conduct can influence him to consider what it is that motivates her to behave in such a fine manner. As a result, the husband may look into the beliefs of his Christian wife and eventually accept the truth himself.

6, 7. What may be the result if a Christian wife is in subjection to an unbelieving husband?



*Prayer can help a Christian wife
to display godly qualities*

⁸ What, though, if the unbelieving husband does not respond favorably? The Scriptures encourage the believing wife to display Christian qualities at all times, however difficult this may be. For example, we read at 1 Corinthians 13:4: “Love is long-suffering.” The Christian wife does well, then, to continue to behave “with complete lowliness of mind and mildness, with long-suffering,” putting up with the situation in love. (Eph. 4:2) With the help of God’s active force—his holy spirit—it is possible to maintain Christian qualities even under difficult circumstances.

⁹ “For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me,” wrote Paul. (Phil. 4:13) God’s spirit enables the Christian mate to do many things that would not be possible otherwise. For example, harsh treatment by one’s spouse may make it tempting for one to retaliate. However, the Bible tells all Christians: “Return evil for evil to no one. . . . For it is written: ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay, says Jehovah.’” (Rom. 12:17-19) Similarly, 1 Thessalonians 5:15 counsels us: “See that no one renders injury for injury to anyone else, but always pursue what is good toward one another and to all others.” With the backing of Jehovah’s holy spirit, what is impossible in our own strength becomes possible. How appropriate that we pray for God’s holy spirit to provide what we lack!

¹⁰ Jesus set an outstanding example in dealing with those who said or did unpleasant things to him. “When he was being reviled,” states 1 Peter 2:23, “he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he

did not go threatening, but kept on committing himself to the one who judges righteously.” We are exhorted to follow his fine example. Do not be provoked by the bad behavior of others. As all Christians are admonished, be “tenderly compassionate, humble in mind, not paying back injury for injury or reviling for reviling.”—1 Pet. 3:8, 9.

Only Silent Partners?

¹¹ Does submission to a husband’s headship mean that women are silent partners in marriage, having no voice in family matters or other subjects? Not at all. Women as well as men are given many privileges by Jehovah. Just think of the great honor that 144,000 individuals have in being kings and priests in heaven under Christ when he rules over this earth! That number includes women. (Gal. 3:26-29) Obviously, Jehovah has given women an active role in his arrangement of things.

¹² In Bible times, for example, women prophesied. Joel 2:28, 29 foretold: “I shall pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will certainly prophesy. . . . Even on the menservants and on the maidservants in those days I shall pour out my spirit.”

¹³ Some 120 disciples of Jesus who were gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost in 33 C.E. included women as well as men. God’s spirit was poured out on this entire group. Peter could therefore quote what the prophet Joel had foretold and apply it to men and women alike. Peter stated: “This is what was said through the prophet Joel, ‘And in the last days,’ God says, ‘I shall pour out some of

8, 9. What can a Christian wife do if her unbelieving husband does not respond favorably to her fine conduct?

10. How did Jesus handle the unkind words and actions of others?

11. In what great privilege will some Christian women have a share?

12, 13. Give an example to show that women prophesied.

my spirit upon every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy . . . ; and even upon my men slaves and upon my women slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’ ”—Acts 2:16-18.

¹⁴ In the first century, women played a significant part in spreading Christianity. They preached to others about God’s Kingdom and did things related to that preaching work. (Luke 8:1-3) For example, the apostle Paul called Phoebe “a minister of the congregation that is in Cenchreae.” And in sending greetings to fellow workers, Paul mentioned a number of faithful women, including “Tryphaena and Tryphosa, women who are working hard in the Lord.” He also noted “Persis our beloved one, for she performed many labors in the Lord.”—Rom. 16:1, 12.

¹⁵ In our time, a large part of the more than seven million people preaching the good news of God’s Kingdom throughout the world are women of all ages. (Matt. 24:14) Many of them are full-time ministers, missionaries, and members of Bethel families. The psalmist David sang: “Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army.” (Ps. 68:11) How true these words have proved to be! Jehovah values the part women play in declaring the good news and accomplishing his purposes. His requirement that Christian

14. What part did women play in the spread of early Christianity?

15. What part do women play in the spread of Christianity in our time?



Jehovah values the part women play in advancing Kingdom interests

women be in submission surely does not mean silent subjection.

Two Women Who Spoke Up

¹⁶ If Jehovah grants women many privileges, should not husbands consult their wives before making serious decisions? It would be wisdom on their part to do so. The Scriptures mention several incidents in which wives spoke or acted even without their views being solicited by their

husbands. Consider two cases.

¹⁷ Sarah, the wife of the patriarch Abraham, kept on telling him to dismiss his secondary wife and her son because of their lack of respect. “The thing proved to be very displeasing to Abraham”—but not to God. Jehovah told Abraham: “Do not let anything that Sarah keeps saying to you be displeasing to you about the boy and about your slave girl. Listen to her voice.” (Gen. 21:8-12) Abraham obeyed Jehovah, listened to Sarah, and did what she requested.

¹⁸ Think also of Abigail, the wife of Nabal. When David was fleeing from jealous King Saul, he spent time encamped near Nabal’s flocks. Instead of taking any of this wealthy man’s many possessions, David and his men protected his property.

16, 17. How does Sarah’s example show that women are not to be silent partners in marriage?

18. What initiative did Abigail take?

However, Nabal “was harsh and bad in his practices,” and he “screamed rebukes” at David’s men. He was a “good-for-nothing man,” and ‘senselessness was with him.’ When David’s men respectfully asked for some provisions, Nabal refused. How did Abigail respond when she heard what had happened? Without telling Nabal, she “has-tened and took two hundred loaves of bread and two large jars of wine and five sheep dressed and five seah measures of roasted grain and a hundred cakes of raisins and two hundred cakes of pressed figs” and gave them to David and his men. Did Abigail do what was right? “Jehovah struck Nabal,” states the Bible, “so that he died.” David later married Abigail.—1 Sam. 25:3, 14-19, 23-25, 38-42.

‘The Woman Who Procures Praise’

¹⁹ The Scriptures commend the wife who does things Jehovah’s way. The Bible book of Proverbs praises “a capable wife,” saying: “Her value is far more than that of corals. In her the heart of her owner has put trust, and there is no gain lacking. She has rewarded him with good, and not bad, all the days of her life.” Moreover, “her mouth she has opened in wisdom, and the law of loving-

19, 20. What makes a woman truly praiseworthy?

Do You Recall?

- What is Jehovah’s arrangement of headship and subjection?
- Why should marriage mates honor each other?
- How should a believing wife treat her unbelieving mate?
- Why should husbands consult their wives before making serious decisions?

kindness is upon her tongue. She is watching over the goings-on of her household, and the bread of laziness she does not eat. Her sons have risen up and proceeded to pronounce her happy; her owner rises up, and he praises her.”—Prov. 31:10-12, 26-28.

²⁰ What makes a woman truly praiseworthy? “Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain,” states Proverbs 31:30, “but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself.” Included in the fear of Jehovah is the need to submit willingly to the divine arrangement of headship. “The head of a woman is the man,” just as “the head of every man is the Christ,” and “the head of the Christ is God.”—1 Cor. 11:3.

Be Grateful for God’s Gift

²¹ Christians joined in wedlock have so many reasons to express gratitude to God! They can walk hand in hand as a happily married couple. Especially can they be thankful for God’s blessed gift of marriage because it affords them the opportunity to blend their lives and walk with Jehovah. (Ruth 1:9; Mic. 6:8) He—the Originator of marriage—knows exactly what is required for marital happiness. Always do things his way, and ‘the joy of Jehovah will be your stronghold,’ even in today’s troubled world.—Neh. 8:10.

²² A Christian husband who loves his wife as he does himself will exercise tender, considerate headship. His godly wife will be truly lovable, for she will be supportive and will show him deep respect. Most important of all, their exemplary marriage will honor our praiseworthy God, Jehovah.

21, 22. (a) What reasons do wedded Christians have for being grateful for God’s gift of marriage? (b) Why should we show respect for Jehovah’s arrangements for authority and headship? (See box on page 17.)

Why Show Respect for Authority?

Jehovah has established among intelligent creatures arrangements for authority and headship. This has been done for the good both of spirit creatures and of humans. It affords them opportunities to exercise their free will and to honor God by serving him in a unified, harmonious way.—Ps. 133:1.

The congregation of anointed Christians recognizes the authority and headship of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 1:22, 23) In recognition

of Jehovah's authority, eventually "the Son himself will also subject himself to the One who subjected all things to him, that God may be all things to everyone." (1 Cor. 15:27, 28) How fitting it is, then, that humans dedicated to God cooperate with the headship arrangement within the congregation and in the family! (1 Cor. 11:3; Heb. 13:17) By doing so, we benefit ourselves as recipients of Jehovah's approval and blessing.—Isa. 48:17.

BROTHERS —SOW TO THE SPIRIT AND REACH OUT!

*“He who is sowing with a view to the spirit
will reap everlasting life.”—GAL. 6:8.*

YOU are witnessing history in the making! A work spoken of by Jesus Christ is in full swing. “The harvest is great, but the workers are few,” said Jesus. “Therefore, beg the Master of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest.” (Matt. 9:37, 38) Jehovah God is answering such prayers in an unprecedented way. During the 2009 service year, the number of congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses worldwide increased by 2,031, reaching 105,298. On average, 757 individuals were baptized each day!

² Such growth creates a need for qualified brothers to take the lead in teaching and shepherding in the congregations. (Eph. 4:11) Over the decades, Jehovah has raised up qualified men to care for the needs of his sheep, and we are confident that he will continue to do so. The prophecy recorded at Micah 5:5 assures us that during the last days, Jehovah’s people will have “seven shepherds” and “eight dukes,” representing a considerable number of capable men to take the lead among them.

³ If you are a baptized male Witness of Jehovah, what can help you to want to reach out for service privileges? A key factor is that you ‘sow with a view to the spirit.’ (Gal. 6:8)

1, 2. How is Matthew 9:37, 38 undergoing fulfillment, resulting in what need in the congregations?

3. Explain what it means to ‘sow with a view to the spirit.’

Doing so involves living in a way that allows for God’s holy spirit to operate freely in your life. Be determined not to ‘sow with a view to the flesh.’ Avoid letting such things as comfort, leisure, and entertainment dampen your desire to expend yourself in God’s service. All Christians should ‘sow with a view to the spirit,’ and in time, men who do so may well qualify for privileges in the congregation. Because there is a great need for ministerial servants and elders today, this article is especially directed to Christian men. Therefore, brothers, we urge you to give it prayerful consideration.

Reach Out for a Fine Work

⁴ A Christian man does not automatically become an overseer. He must reach out for this “fine work.” (1 Tim. 3:1) It includes serving fellow believers by genuinely caring for their needs. (*Read Isaiah 32:1, 2.*) A man who reaches out with proper motives is not ambitious. Instead, he is filled with an unselfish desire to benefit others.

⁵ One seeks to qualify as a ministerial servant and reaches out for the office of overseer by striving to meet the qualifications set out in the Scriptures. (1 Tim. 3:1-10, 12, 13; Titus 1:5-9) If you are a dedicated male, ask

4, 5. (a) Baptized men are urged to reach out for what privileges in the congregation? (b) How does one reach out?

yourself: 'Do I have a full share in the preaching work, and am I assisting others to do so? Am I building up my fellow worshippers by taking a sincere interest in their welfare? Do I have the reputation of being a good student of God's Word? Am I improving the quality of my comments? Do I diligently care for the assignments entrusted to me by the elders?' (2 Tim. 4:5) Such questions merit serious consideration.

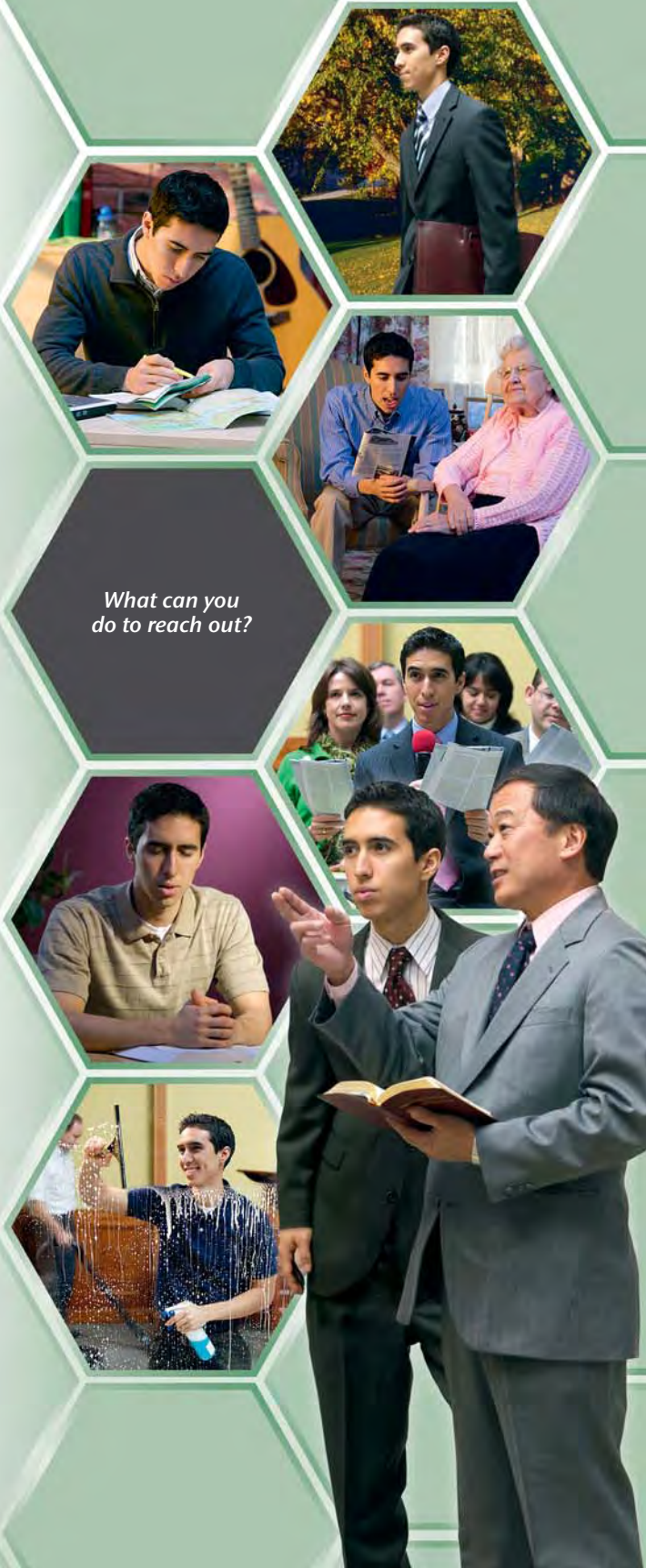
⁶ Another way to qualify for congregation responsibilities is to "be made mighty in the man you are inside with power through [God's] spirit." (Eph. 3:16) Becoming a ministerial servant or an elder in the Christian congregation is not a matter of being elected to an office. This privilege is attainable only through spiritual growth. How is spiritual growth achieved? One way is for you to "keep walking by spirit" and cultivating its fruitage. (Gal. 5:16, 22, 23) As you give evidence of the spiritual qualities needed to handle added privileges and as you apply counsel for improvement, your 'advancement will be manifest to all persons.' —1 Tim. 4:15.

Needed—A Spirit of Self-Sacrifice

⁷ Serving others involves hard work and requires a spirit of self-sacrifice. Because Christian overseers are spiritual shepherds, the problems of the flock concern them deeply. Notice how the responsibilities of his shepherding work affected the apostle Paul. He told fellow believers in Corinth: "Out of much tribulation and anguish of heart I wrote you with many tears, not that you might be saddened, but that you might know the love that I have more especially for

6. What is a key factor in qualifying for congregation responsibilities?

7. Serving others involves what?



*What can you
do to reach out?*

you.” (2 Cor. 2:4) It is evident that Paul put his heart into his work.

⁸ A self-sacrificing spirit has always been the hallmark of men who have labored in behalf of Jehovah’s servants. For example, we can hardly imagine Noah telling others in his household: ‘Let me know when the ark is finished so that I may join you.’ Moses did not tell the Israelites in Egypt: ‘I will meet you at the Red Sea. Get there the best way you can.’ Joshua never said: ‘Let me know when the walls of Jericho fall.’ And Isaiah did not point to someone else and say: ‘There he is! Send him.’—Isa. 6:8.

⁹ Our foremost example of a man who allowed God’s spirit to motivate him is Jesus Christ. He willingly accepted his assignment to serve as mankind’s Redeemer. (John 3:16) Should not Jesus’ self-sacrificing love evoke an appreciative response in us? When describing his feelings for the flock, one long-time elder said: “Jesus’ words to Peter—shepherd my little sheep—deeply move me. Over the years, I have come to appreciate how a few loving words or a simple act of kindness can lift another person’s spirit. Shepherding is a work that I enjoy very much.”—John 21:16.

¹⁰ When it comes to the flock of God, dedicated men in the congregation surely want to reflect the attitude of Jesus, who said: “I will refresh you.” (Matt. 11:28) Faith in God and love for the congregation move Christian men to reach out for this fine work, not thinking that the price is too high or that it is too demanding. What, though, if one is not particularly inclined to reach out? Can a brother cultivate the desire to serve the congregation?

8, 9. Give Bible examples showing how men cared for the needs of others.

10. What can move Christian men to imitate Jesus’ example in serving others?

Cultivate the Desire to Serve

¹¹ If feelings of inadequacy have prevented you from reaching out, it is proper that you pray for holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) Jehovah’s spirit will help you to cope with any concern you may have in this regard. The very desire to serve is God-given, for it is Jehovah’s spirit that motivates a brother to reach out and then supplies the strength to render sacred service. (Phil. 2:13; 4:13) Therefore, it is fitting to ask Jehovah to help you to build a desire to accept privileges of service.—*Read Psalm 25:4, 5.*

¹² Because he observes that the needs of the flock appear taxing and complicated, a Christian may decide not to reach out. Or he may feel that he lacks sufficient wisdom to handle responsibilities. If this is the case, perhaps he can gain wisdom by being a more diligent student of God’s Word and Bible-based publications. He might well ask himself, ‘Am I setting aside time to study God’s Word, and am I praying for wisdom?’ The disciple James wrote: “If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him.” (Jas. 1:5) Do you believe this inspired statement? In answer to Solomon’s prayer, God gave him “a wise and understanding heart” that enabled him to discern between good and bad when rendering judgment. (1 Ki. 3:7-14) True, Solomon’s case was special. Yet, we can be confident that God will give wisdom to men entrusted with congregation responsibilities so that they can care for his sheep properly.—Prov. 2:6.

¹³ Another aid in cultivating the desire to

11. How can one cultivate the desire to serve others?

12. How may a person gain sufficient wisdom to handle responsibilities entrusted to him?

13, 14. (a) Explain how Paul was affected by “the love the Christ has.” (b) How should “the love the Christ has” affect us?

serve others is that of thinking deeply on all that Jehovah and his Son have done for us. For example, consider 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15. (*Read.*) How is it that “the love the Christ has compels us”? The love Christ showed in laying down his life in our behalf according to God’s will is so outstanding that as our appreciation grows, our heart is deeply moved. Christ’s love controlled Paul. It restrained him from acting selfishly and helped him to confine his objectives to serving God and fellow humans inside and outside the congregation.

¹⁴ Meditating on the love Christ has for people stirs up gratitude within us. As a result, we realize that it would be most unfitting for us to keep on ‘sowing with a view to the flesh’ by pursuing selfish goals and living largely to gratify ourselves. Instead, we adjust our affairs to give first place to the work God has given us to do. We are moved to “slave” for our brothers out of love. (*Read Galatians 5:13.*) If we view ourselves as slaves working humbly in behalf of Jehovah’s dedicated servants, we will treat them with dignity and respect. Certainly, we would not imitate the critical, judgmental spirit promoted by Satan.—Rev. 12:10.

A Family Effort

¹⁵ If a brother is a married man with children, the situation existing in his family is taken into consideration when determining if he qualifies to be a ministerial servant or an elder. Indeed, the spirituality and reputation of his family have a direct bearing on his appointment. This underscores the importance of the family’s role in supporting the husband and father as he seeks to serve the congregation’s interests as a ministerial servant or an elder.—*Read 1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12.*

15, 16. What role do family members play if a man is to qualify for appointment as a ministerial servant or an elder?

¹⁶ Jehovah is pleased when Christian family members cooperate with one another. (Eph. 3:14, 15) It takes balance for a family head to handle congregation responsibilities and preside over his household “in a fine manner.” Hence, it is vital that an elder or a ministerial servant study the Bible with his wife and children so that all can benefit from Family Worship every week. He should participate in the field ministry with them on a regular basis. By the same token, it is important for family members to cooperate with the efforts of the head of the household.

Will You Serve Again?

¹⁷ Perhaps you were an elder or a ministerial servant at one time but are not presently serving in that capacity. You love Jehovah and can be sure that he still cares for you. (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Were you told that you need to make some adjustments? Be willing to admit a fault and work on it with God’s help. Guard against becoming bitter. Be wise, and manifest a positive spirit. An elder who had served for years but who lost his privileges of service stated: “I was determined to

17, 18. (a) If a brother no longer qualifies for appointment, what may be needed? (b) What view can well be taken by a brother who served as an elder or a ministerial servant in the past?

How Would You Answer?

- Of what does the prophecy recorded at Micah 5:5 assure us?
- Explain what a spirit of self-sacrifice involves.
- How can one cultivate the desire to serve others?
- How important is family cooperation if a man is to qualify to serve as a ministerial servant or an elder?

maintain the same level of meeting attendance, field service, and Bible reading I had while serving as an elder—a goal I was able to achieve. I learned patience because I thought I would regain my privileges in a year or two, but it took almost seven years before I again could serve as an elder. During that time the encouragement not to tire out but to continue to reach out greatly helped me.”

¹⁸ If you are a brother in the situation just described, do not become discouraged. Reflect on how Jehovah is blessing your ministry and your household. Build your family up spiritually, visit the sick, and encourage the weak. Above all, cherish your privilege of praising God and proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.*—Ps. 145:1, 2; Isa. 43:10-12.

* See *The Watchtower*, August 15, 2009, pages 30-32.

Take a Fresh Look

¹⁹ The need for overseers and ministerial servants is greater today than ever before. We therefore urge all baptized males to take a fresh look at their circumstances and ask themselves, ‘If I am not a ministerial servant or an elder, should I analyze the reasons why I am not serving?’ Let God’s spirit help you to get the right focus on this vital matter.

²⁰ All members of the congregation stand to benefit from the godly self-sacrificing efforts of their fellow believers. When we engage in kind, unselfish acts, we reap the joy that comes from serving others and sowing with a view to the spirit. As the next article will show, however, we must not grieve God’s holy spirit. How can that be avoided?

19, 20. (a) All baptized males are urged to do what? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

DO NOT GRIEVE JEHOVAH’S HOLY SPIRIT

*“Do not be grieving God’s holy spirit,
with which you have been sealed.”—EPH. 4:30.*

JEHOVAH has done something special for millions of people living in this troubled world. He has made it possible for them to draw close to him through his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. (John 6:44) You are one of these individuals if you have made a dedication to God and are carrying it

1. What has Jehovah done for millions of people, and what duty do they have?

out. As a person baptized in the name of the holy spirit, you have the duty to conduct yourself in harmony with that spirit.—Matt. 28:19.

² We who ‘sow with a view to the spirit’ put on the new personality. (Gal. 6:8; Eph. 4:17-24) But the apostle Paul gives us counsel and warns us not to grieve God’s holy spirit.

2. What questions will we consider?

(Read *Ephesians 4:25-32*.) We will now take a close look at the apostle's counsel. What did Paul mean when he spoke of grieving God's spirit? How could anyone dedicated to Jehovah ever do such a thing? And how can we avoid grieving Jehovah's spirit?

What Paul Meant

³ First of all, note Paul's words recorded at *Ephesians 4:30*. He wrote: "Do not be grieving God's holy spirit, with which you have been sealed for a day of releasing by ransom." Paul did not want his beloved fellow believers to endanger their spirituality. It was with Jehovah's spirit that they had been "sealed for a day of releasing by ransom." God's holy spirit was and still is a seal, or an advance "token of what is to come" for anointed integrity keepers. (2 Cor. 1:22) The seal signifies that they are God's possession and are in line for heavenly life. Those finally sealed number 144,000.—Rev. 7:2-4.

⁴ Grieving the spirit can be the first step leading to the total loss of the influence of God's active force in a Christian's life. That this is possible is evident from what David said after he had sinned in connection with Bath-sheba. David repentantly begged Jehovah: "Do not throw me away from before your face; and your holy spirit O do not take away from me." (Ps. 51:11) Only those anointed ones who prove "faithful even to death" will receive the "crown" of immortal life in heaven. (Rev. 2:10; 1 Cor. 15:53) Christians with an earthly hope also need holy spirit if they are to maintain integrity to God and receive his gift of life on the basis of faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice. (John 3:36; Rom. 5:8; 6:23) Hence, all of us

3. How would you explain what is meant by the words recorded at *Ephesians 4:30*?

4. Why is it important to avoid grieving God's spirit?

must guard against grieving Jehovah's holy spirit.

How Could a Christian Grieve the Spirit?

⁵ As dedicated Christians, we can avoid grieving the spirit. This is possible if we 'keep on walking and living by spirit,' for then we will not be overcome by wrong fleshly desires and will not manifest ungodly traits. (Gal. 5:16, 25, 26) But that could change. We could grieve God's spirit to a degree by allowing ourselves to drift slowly, perhaps almost imperceptibly, toward conduct condemned in God's spirit-inspired Word.

⁶ If we continually went contrary to the direction of holy spirit, we would be grieving it and Jehovah, the Source of that spirit. An examination of *Ephesians 4:25-32* will show us how we should conduct ourselves, and it can help us to avoid grieving God's spirit.

How to Avoid Grieving the Spirit

⁷ *We must be truthful.* According to *Ephesians 4:25*, Paul wrote: "Now that you have put away falsehood, speak truth each one of you with his neighbor, because we are members belonging to one another." Since we are united as "members belonging to one another," we certainly should not be devious or deliberately try to mislead our fellow worshippers, for that is the same as lying to them. Any who were to persist in such a course would end up having no relationship with God.—Read *Proverbs 3:32*.

⁸ Deceitful words and actions could disrupt the unity of the congregation. Therefore, we should be like the trustworthy

5, 6. How could a Christian grieve Jehovah's spirit?
7, 8. Explain why we must be truthful.

prophet Daniel, in whom others could find nothing corrupt. (Dan. 6:4) And we ought to bear in mind Paul's counsel to Christians with a heavenly hope that each member of "the body of the Christ" belongs to all the others and needs to remain united with Jesus' truthful anointed followers. (Eph. 4:11, 12) If we hope to live forever on the Paradise earth, we too must speak the truth, thereby contributing to the unity of our worldwide brotherhood.

⁹ *We must oppose the Devil, giving him no opportunity to harm us spiritually.* (Jas. 4:7) Holy spirit helps us to resist Satan. For instance, we can do so by guarding against unbridled rage. Paul wrote: "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil." (Eph. 4:26, 27) If we do become justifiably angry, an immediate silent prayer can help us to be "cool of spirit," displaying self-control instead of acting in a way that could

9. Why is it vital that we comply with Ephesians 4: 26, 27?



grieve God's spirit. (Prov. 17:27) So let us not remain in a provoked state and give Satan a chance to induce us to do something evil. (Ps. 37:8, 9) One way to resist him is by settling disputes quickly in harmony with Jesus' counsel.—Matt. 5:23, 24; 18:15-17.

¹⁰ *We must not succumb to any temptation to steal or be dishonest.* Regarding theft, Paul wrote: "Let the stealer steal no more, but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need." (Eph. 4:28) If a dedicated Christian were to steal, he would actually 'assail the name of God' by bringing reproach on it. (Prov. 30:7-9) Even poverty does not justify theft. Those who love God and neighbor realize that stealing is never justified.—Mark 12:28-31.

¹¹ Paul does not just mention what we should not do; he points out what we should do. If we are living and walking by holy spirit, we will work hard so that we can

care for our family and also have "something to distribute to someone in need." (1 Tim. 5:8) Jesus and his apostles set aside funds to help the poor, but the betrayer Judas Iscariot carried off some of the money. (John 12: 4-6) He surely was not led by holy spirit. We who are guided by God's spirit "conduct ourselves honestly in all things," as Paul did. (Heb. 13:18) We thus avoid grieving Jehovah's holy spirit.

10, 11. Why must we not steal or do what is dishonest?

Other Ways to Avoid Grieving the Spirit

¹² *We must guard our speech.* Paul declared: “Let a rotten saying not proceed out of your mouth, but whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers.” (Eph. 4:29) Again, the apostle does not merely say what we should not do; he tells us what we should be doing. Under the influence of God’s spirit, we will be moved to ‘say what is good for building up so that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers.’ Furthermore, we should not let a “rotten saying” come out of our mouth. The Greek word rendered “rotten” has been used to describe putrefying fruit, fish, or meat. Just as we are repulsed by such food, we hate speech that Jehovah considers bad.

¹³ Our speech should be decent, kind, “seasoned with salt.” (Col. 3:8-10; 4:6) People should be able to discern that we are different when they hear what we say. So let us help others by speaking what is “good for building up.” And may we feel as did the psalmist who sang: “Let the sayings of my mouth and the meditation of my heart become pleasurable before you, O Jehovah my Rock and my Redeemer.”—Ps. 19:14.

¹⁴ *We must rid ourselves of bitterness,*

12, 13. (a) As shown at Ephesians 4:29, what kind of speech should we avoid? (b) What should be the nature of our speech?

14. According to Ephesians 4:30, 31, we must rid ourselves of what?

wrath, abusive speech, and all badness. After warning against grieving God’s spirit, Paul wrote: “Let all malicious bitterness and anger and wrath and screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you along with all badness.” (Eph. 4:30, 31) As imperfect humans, all of us need to work hard to control our thoughts and actions. If we were to give free rein to “malicious bitter-

ness and anger and wrath,” we would be grieving God’s spirit. The same is true if we kept score of wrongs committed against us, manifested a resentful attitude, and refused to become reconciled to the offender. If we even begin to ignore the Bible’s counsel, we might develop traits that could lead to sinning against the spirit and we might experience disastrous consequences.

¹⁵ *We need to be kind, compassionate, and forgiving.* Paul wrote: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.” (Eph. 4:32) Even if we are deeply hurt

by some wrong done to us, let us forgive, as God does. (Luke 11:4) Suppose a fellow believer has said something negative about us. In an effort to straighten matters out, we approach him. He expresses true sorrow and asks for forgiveness. We forgive him, but we need to do more. “You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge against the sons of your people,” says Leviticus 19:18, “and you

15. If some wrong is done to us, what should we do?



must love your fellow as yourself. I am Jehovah.”

Vigilance Is Needed

¹⁶ Even in private, we could be tempted to do something displeasing to God. For instance, a brother may have been listening to questionable music. Eventually, his conscience becomes troubled because of ignoring Bible counsel presented in publications of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45) He may pray about this problem and may recall Paul’s words recorded at Ephesians 4:30. Firmly determined to do nothing that would grieve God’s spirit, he resolves to avoid questionable music from now on. Jehovah will bless the spirit the brother shows. Therefore, let us constantly guard against grieving God’s spirit.

¹⁷ Unless we are vigilant and prayerful, we could succumb to an unclean or wrong practice that would constitute a grieving of the spirit. Because the holy spirit produces qualities that are expressive of our heavenly Father’s personality, when we grieve it we grieve, or sadden, him—something we surely do not want to do. (Eph. 4:30, ftn.) First-century Jewish scribes sinfully ascribed Jesus’ miracles to Satan. (*Read Mark 3:22-*

16. Give an example showing that we may need to make adjustments so as not to grieve Jehovah’s spirit.

17. What could happen if we are not vigilant and prayerful?

How Would You Answer?

- What does it mean to grieve God’s spirit?
- How might a person dedicated to Jehovah grieve his spirit?
- In what ways can we avoid grieving the holy spirit?

30.) Those enemies of Christ ‘blasphemed against the holy spirit’ and thus committed sin that was unforgivable. May we never end up that way!

¹⁸ Since we do not even want to come close to committing unforgivable sin, we need to remember what Paul said about not grieving the spirit. But what if we have erred seriously? If we have repented and have been helped by the elders, we can conclude that God has forgiven us and that we have not sinned against the holy spirit. With God’s help, we can also avoid grieving the spirit again in any way.

¹⁹ By means of his holy spirit, God furthers the love, joy, and unity of his people. (Ps. 133:1-3) Therefore, we should refrain from grieving the spirit because of engaging in harmful gossip or by saying things that would undermine respect for those who are spirit-appointed shepherds. (Acts 20:28; Jude 8) Instead, we ought to promote unity and respect for one another in the congregation. Surely, we should not encourage cliques by forming exclusive groups among God’s people. Paul wrote: “I exhort you, brothers, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ that you should all speak in agreement, and that there should not be divisions among you, but that you may be fitly united in the same mind and in the same line of thought.”—1 Cor. 1:10.

²⁰ Jehovah is willing and able to help us avoid grieving his spirit. Let us continue to pray for holy spirit and be determined not to grieve it. May we keep “sowing with a view to the spirit,” earnestly seeking its guidance now and forever.

18. How can we determine that we have not committed unforgivable sin?

19, 20. (a) What are some things we need to avoid? (b) We should be determined to do what?