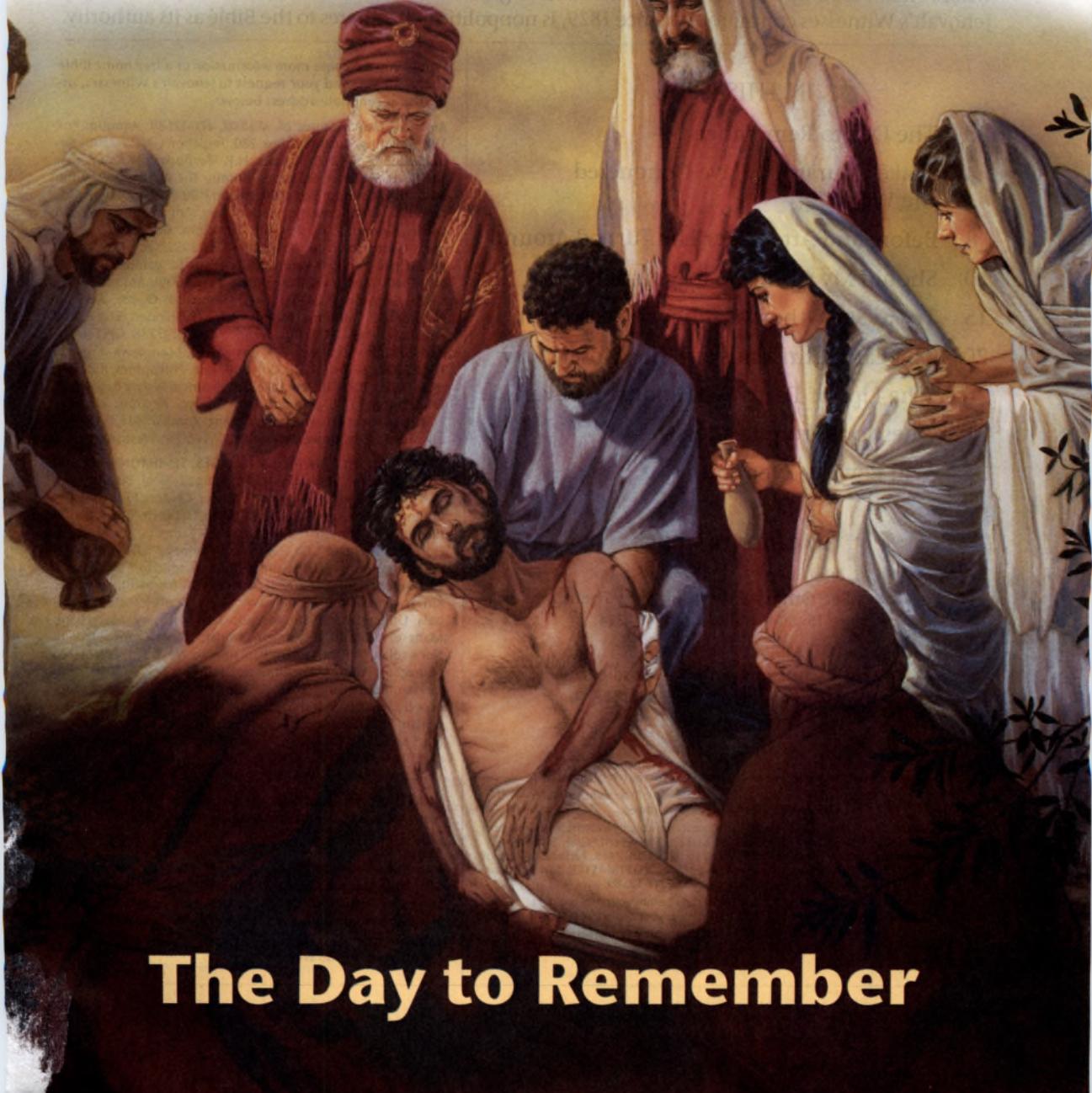


THE WATCHTOWER

MARCH 15, 2003

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



The Day to Remember

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

March 15, 2003

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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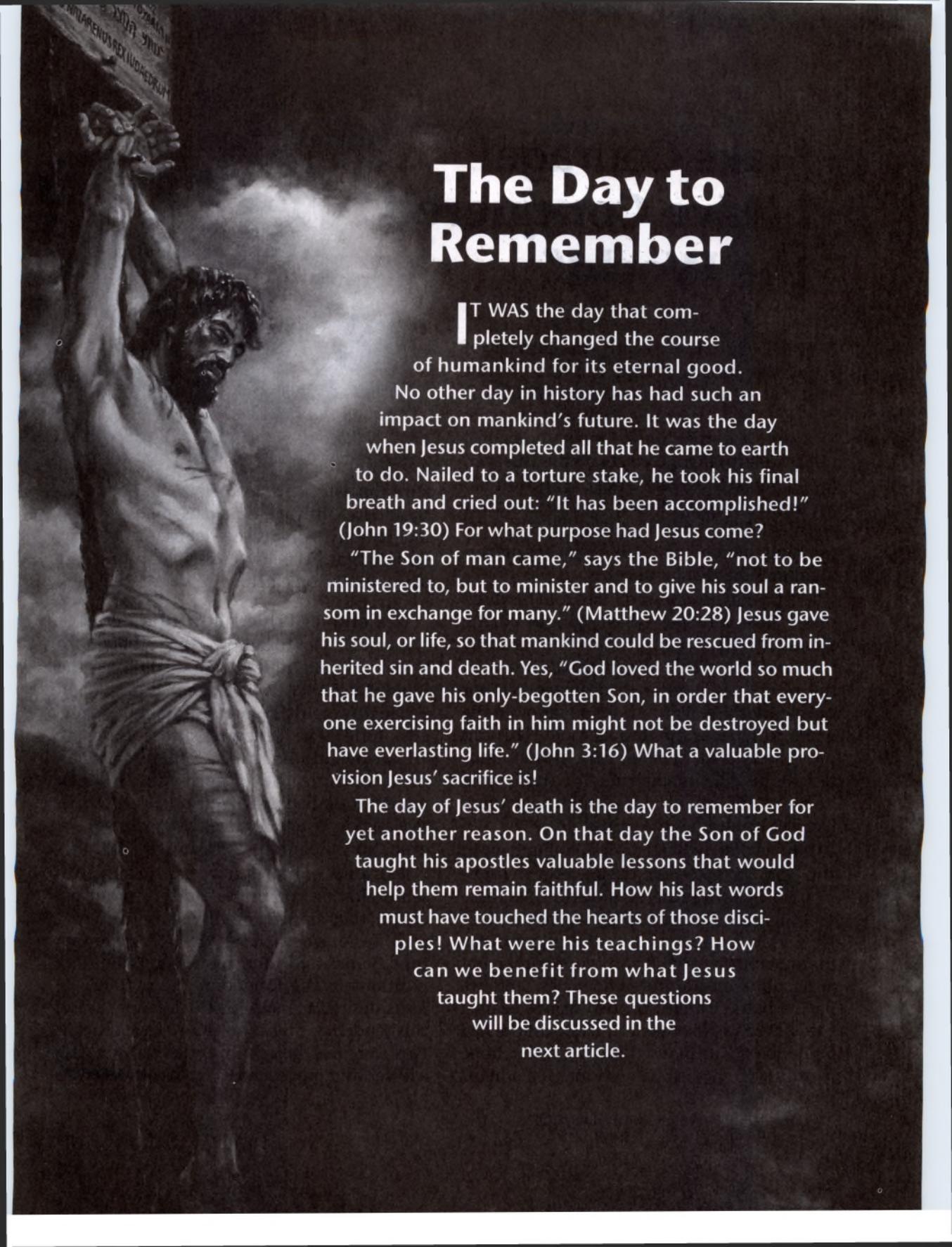
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The Day to Remember

IT WAS the day that completely changed the course of humankind for its eternal good.

No other day in history has had such an impact on mankind's future. It was the day when Jesus completed all that he came to earth to do. Nailed to a torture stake, he took his final breath and cried out: "It has been accomplished!" (John 19:30) For what purpose had Jesus come?

"The Son of man came," says the Bible, "not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matthew 20:28) Jesus gave his soul, or life, so that mankind could be rescued from inherited sin and death. Yes, "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) What a valuable provision Jesus' sacrifice is!

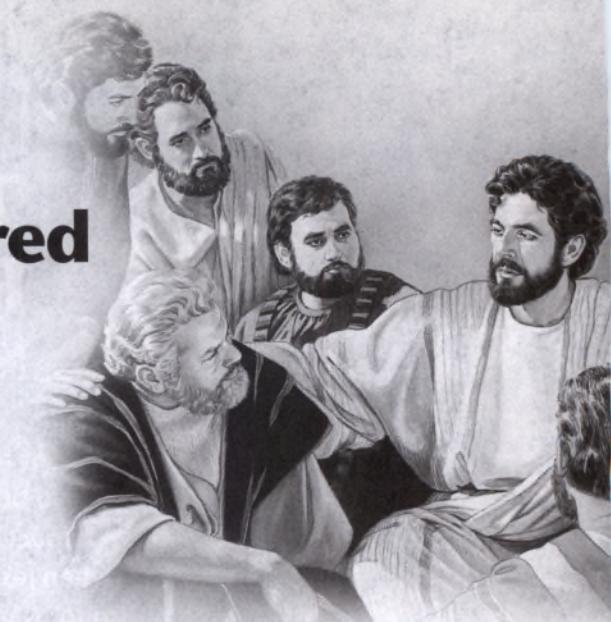
The day of Jesus' death is the day to remember for yet another reason. On that day the Son of God taught his apostles valuable lessons that would help them remain faithful. How his last words must have touched the hearts of those disciples! What were his teachings? How can we benefit from what Jesus taught them? These questions will be discussed in the next article.

"Take Courage! I Have Conquered the World"

THE day of Jesus' death—the 14th day of the Jewish month of Nisan—began at sundown on Thursday, March 31, 33 C.E. On that evening, Jesus and his apostles came together in an upper room of a house in Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. As he prepared "to move out of this world to the Father," Jesus showed that he loved his apostles to the end. (John 13:1) How? By teaching them beautiful lessons, thus preparing them for what lay ahead.

As the night progressed, Jesus told his disciples: "Take courage! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) What did he mean by that bold statement? In part, this: 'The evil in the world has neither made me bitter nor caused me to retaliate. I have not allowed the world to squeeze me into its mold. This can prove true also in your case.' What Jesus taught his faithful apostles in those final hours of his earthly life would help them likewise to conquer the world.

Who will deny that badness is abundant in the world today? How do we react to injustices and acts of senseless violence? Do these embitter us or tempt us to repay like for like? How are we influenced by the moral decay that surrounds us? Add to this our human imperfections and sinful tendencies, and we have a battle to fight on two fronts: against the wicked world outside and against the bad tendencies within us. Can we really hope to come off victorious without God's help?



How can we receive his help? What qualities should we cultivate to help us oppose fleshly inclinations? For answers, let us turn to what Jesus taught his beloved disciples on the last day of his life on earth.

Conquer Pride With Humility

Consider, for example, the problem of pride, or haughtiness. Concerning it, the Bible states: "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling." (Proverbs 16:18) The Scriptures also counsel us: "If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he is deceiving his own mind." (Galatians 6:3) Yes, pride is destructive and deceptive. We are wise to hate "self-exaltation and pride."—Proverbs 8:13.

Did Jesus' apostles have a problem with self-exaltation and pride? On at least one occasion, they argued among themselves about who was greater. (Mark 9:33-37) At another time, James and John requested prominent positions in the Kingdom. (Mark 10:35-45) Jesus desired to help his disciples get rid of this tendency. So in the course of eating the Passover meal, he got up, girded himself with a towel, and proceeded to wash the feet of his



disciples. He left no doubt as to the lesson he wanted them to learn. "If I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet," said Jesus, "you also ought to wash the feet of one another." (John 13:14) Pride must be replaced by its opposite—humility.

Pride, though, is not easy to conquer. Later that evening after Jesus had dismissed Judas Iscariot, who was about to betray him, a heated argument erupted among the 11 apostles. Their concern? Which one of them seemed to be greatest! Rather than scolding them, once again Jesus patiently stressed the importance of serving others. He said: "The kings of the nations lord it over them, and those having authority over them are called Benefactors. You, though, are not to be that way. But let him that is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the one acting as chief as the one ministering." Reminding them of his example, he adds: "I am in your midst as the one ministering."—Luke 22:24-27.

Did the apostles get the point? Evidently so. Years later the apostle Peter wrote: "All of you be like-minded, showing fellow feeling, having brotherly affection, tenderly compassionate, humble in mind." (1 Peter 3:8) How vital that we too conquer pride with humili-

ty! We are wise not to get caught up in the pursuit of fame, power, or position. "God opposes the haughty ones," states the Bible, "but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (James 4:6) Likewise, an ancient wise proverb states: "The result of humility and the fear of Jehovah is riches and glory and life."—Proverbs 22:4.

Conquer Hatred—How?

Consider another trait common in the world—hatred. Whether caused by fear, ignorance, prejudice, oppression, injustice, nationalism, tribalism, or racism, hatred seems to be all around us. (2 Timothy 3:1-4) Hatred was also rampant in Jesus' day. Tax collectors were hated outcasts in Jewish society. Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. (John 4:9) And Gentiles, or non-Jews, were also scorned by the Jews. Eventually, however, the way of worship Jesus instituted was to embrace people from all nations. (Acts 10:34, 35; Galatians 3:28) So he lovingly gave his disciples something new.

Jesus declared: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another." They had to learn to display this love, for he continued: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) The commandment was new in that it went beyond loving "your fellow as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18) In what way? Jesus clarified the matter, saying: "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you. No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:12, 13) They had to be willing to sacrifice their very lives for one another and for others.

How can imperfect humans eliminate malicious hatred from their lives? By replacing it with self-sacrificing love. Millions of sincere individuals from all ethnic, cultural,

religious, and political backgrounds are doing just that. They are now being integrated into one united, hate-free community—the global brotherhood of Jehovah's Witnesses. They take to heart the inspired words of the apostle John: "Everyone who hates his brother is a manslayer, and you know that no manslayer has everlasting life remaining in him." (1 John 3:15) True Christians not only refuse to take up arms in any conflict but also work hard to show love for one another.

What, though, should be our mental attitude toward those who are not our fellow believers and who might show hatred toward us? While hanging upon a stake, Jesus prayed in behalf of his executioners, saying: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." (Luke 23:34) When hate-filled men stoned the disciple Stephen to death, his final words were: "Jehovah, do not charge this sin against them." (Acts 7:60) Jesus and Stephen wanted the best even for those who hated them. There was no bitterness in their hearts. "Let us work what is good toward all," the Bible admonishes us.—Galatians 6:10.

'A Helper Forever'

As the meeting with his 11 faithful apostles progressed, Jesus informed them that soon he would no longer be with them in the flesh. (John 14:28; 16:28) But he assured them: "I will request the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever." (John 14:16) The promised helper is God's holy spirit. It would teach them deep things of the Scriptures and bring back to their minds what Jesus had taught them during his earthly ministry.—John 14:26.

How can the holy spirit help us today? Well, the Bible is God's inspired Word. The men who were used to utter prophecies and to write the Bible "were borne along by holy spirit." (2 Peter 1:20, 21; 2 Timothy 3:16) Our studying the Scriptures and applying

what we learn gives us knowledge, wisdom, understanding, insight, discernment, and thinking ability. Are we then not better prepared to face the pressures of the wicked world?

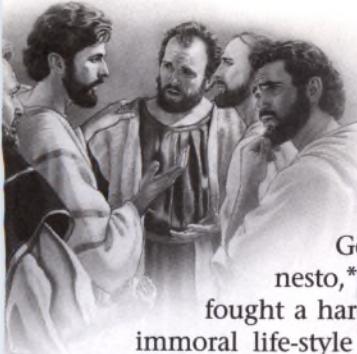
The holy spirit is a helper in yet another way. God's holy spirit is a powerful force for good, enabling those under its influence to display godly qualities. "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control," says the Bible. Are these not the very qualities we need in order to conquer fleshly inclinations toward immorality, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, and the like?—Galatians 5:19-23.

By relying on God's spirit, we can also receive "power beyond what is normal" to deal with any trouble or distress. (2 Corinthians 4:7) While the holy spirit may not remove trials or temptations, it can surely help us to endure them. (1 Corinthians 10:13) "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me," wrote the apostle Paul. (Philippians 4:13) God imparts such power by means of his holy spirit. How grateful we can be for the holy spirit! It is promised to those who 'love Jesus and keep his commandments.'—John 14:15.

"Remain in My Love"

On his final night as a human, Jesus also told his apostles: "He that has my commandments and observes them, that one is he who loves me. In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father." (John 14:21) "Remain in my love," he urged them. (John 15:9) How does remaining in the love of the Father and of the Son help us in our battle with sinful inclinations within us and with the wicked world outside?

Well, can we really control bad tendencies if we lack strong motivation to do so? What greater incentive can there be than the desire to have a good relationship with Jehovah



"Remain in my love," Jesus urged his apostles

God and his Son? Ernesto,* a young man who fought a hard battle against the immoral life-style that he had lived since his early teens, explains: "I wanted to please God, and I learned from the Bible that he did not approve of the way I was living. So I decided to be a different sort of person, to abide by God's guidelines. Every day, I had to fight against negative, dirty thoughts that still came flooding into my mind. But I was determined to win this battle, and I prayed incessantly for God's help. After two years the worst was over, although I am still strict with myself."

As to the battle with the world outside, consider the closing prayer Jesus offered before leaving that upper room in Jerusalem. In behalf of his disciples, he prayed to his Father and asked: "I request you, not to take them

out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one. They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:15, 16) How reassuring! Jehovah watches over those whom he loves and strengthens them as they keep separate from the world.

"Exercise Faith"

Observing Jesus' commandments can indeed help us come off victorious in our struggle against the wicked world and our sinful tendencies. Important as such victories are, though, they can eliminate neither the world nor inherited sin. But we need not despair.

"The world is passing away and so is its desire," declares the Bible, "but he that does the will of God remains forever." (1 John 2:17) Jesus gave his life to rescue from sin and death "everyone exercising faith in him." (John 3:16) As we grow in our knowledge of God's will and purposes, then, let us take to heart Jesus' admonition: "Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me."—John 14:1.

*Freedom from sin and its effects
will soon become a reality*



* A substitute name is used here.

BEFORE AND AFTER

Her Life Turned Around

HOW unpleasant and pointless life had become for Matsepang! She was a young girl in Lesotho, a country in the heart of South Africa. Matsepang was raised a Catholic. Instead of being helped to draw close to God, however, for years she was abused by nuns who used money to entice her to engage in immoral acts.

As a result, Matsepang was disillusioned with religion and could not come to terms with belief in a loving Creator who genuinely cares for his human creation. Because of the neglect and abuse she suffered, Matsepang had deep emotional scars and feelings of utter worthlessness. She grew up to be very violent and aggressive. This led to criminal behavior.

Matsepang eventually became part of a gang that robbed people aboard trains. She was arrested and sentenced to prison in South Africa. Later, she was deported to her homeland, Lesotho, where she continued a life of crime, drunkenness, violence, and immorality.

At a very low point in her life, Matsepang desperately prayed to God for help. She promised, "God, if I survive, I will do what I can to serve you."

Soon, Matsepang was approached by missionaries who were Jehovah's Witnesses. They offered to study the Bible with her. From her study, she came to realize that God is not indifferent and uncaring. In fact, she discerned that Satan, "the father of the lie," uses crafty and deceptive tactics to foster in some the feeling that they are worthless and to make them



believe that Jehovah could never find them lovable.—John 8:44; Ephesians 6:11.

On the contrary, how comforting it was to Matsepang when she learned that we can have healthy self-respect if we repent of our sinful past, seek God's forgiveness, and strive to please him! She was helped to understand that "God is greater than our hearts" and views us in a way that may be quite different from how we see ourselves.

—1 John 3:19, 20.

Matsepang was thrilled to read these words of the psalmist David: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves." (Psalm 34:18) As one of those "crushed in spirit," she came to realize that Jehovah does not abandon his servants, even if some of them



become dejected or feel unimportant. It warmed her heart to learn that God cares for all his sheep and sustains them through hard times. (Psalm 55:22; 1 Peter 5:6, 7) Especially was she touched by the words: "Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you."—James 4:8.

The power of God's Word, the Bible, soon became evident in Matsepang's life. She began to attend Christian meetings regularly and abandoned her unscriptural practices. The result? She no longer feels unworthy of God's love and favor. Since her baptism as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, she has spent thousands of hours in the Christian ministry as a proclaimer of the good news of the Kingdom. Despite the wounds of the past, Matsepang now leads a happy and meaningful life. What a demonstration of the Bible's power to improve lives!

—Hebrews 4:12.

► "God, if I survive,
I will do what I can
to serve you"

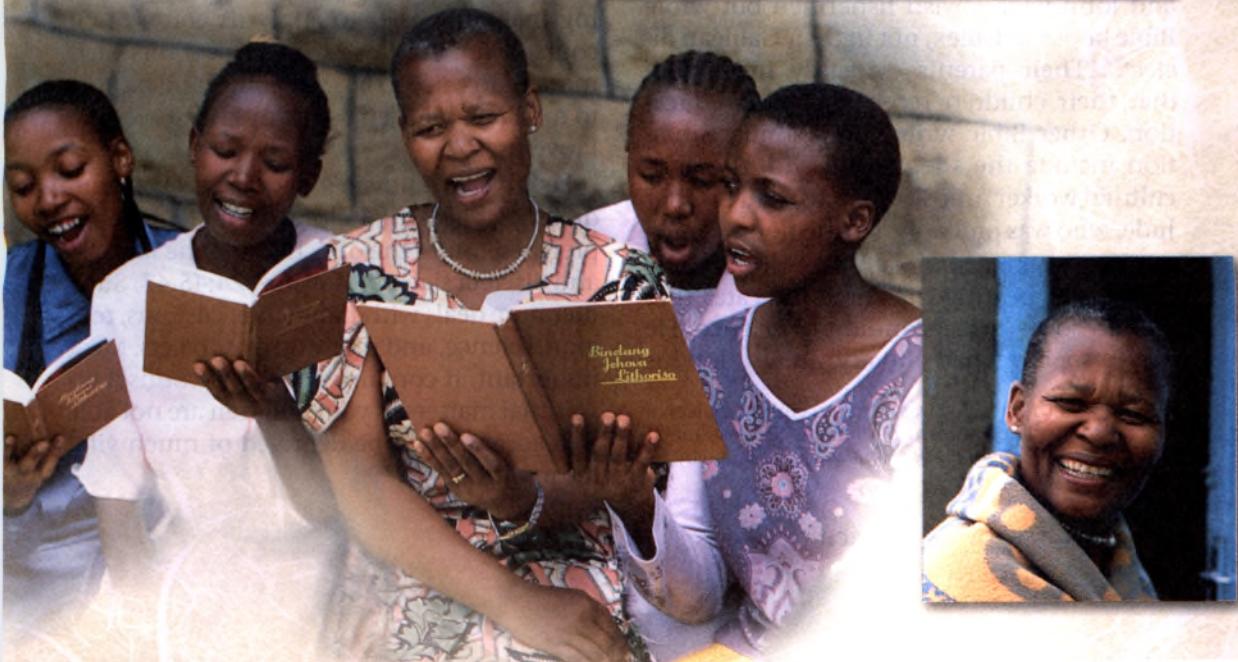
◀ Bible Principles at Work ▶

Bible principles that have comforted victims of mistreatment include the following:

"When my disquieting thoughts became many inside of me, your [God's] own consolations began to fondle my soul." (Psalm 94:19) The "consolations" of Jehovah found in his Word are a source of great comfort. Reflecting on them during meditation and prayer helps to allay disquieting thoughts and builds trust in God as an understanding Friend.

"He [Jehovah] is healing the brokenhearted ones, and is binding up their painful spots." (Psalm 147:3) If we appreciate Jehovah's mercy and his provision to cover our sins by means of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, we can confidently approach God without feeling further condemned at heart. This can bring unparalleled comfort and peace of mind.

"No man can come to me [Jesus Christ] unless the Father, who sent me, draws him; and I will resurrect him in the last day." (John 6:44) By means of his holy spirit and through the Kingdom-preaching work, Jehovah personally draws us to his Son and gives us the hope of everlasting life.



SHOULD MY CHILD GO TO SCHOOL?

CAN you imagine being unable to read the words on this page? What if you could not speak your country's official language? Suppose you were not able to point to your homeland on a map of the world? Countless children will grow up in that very situation. What about your child?

Should your child go to school? In many countries, primary and secondary education is compulsory and often free. The Convention on the Rights of the Child considers formal education to be a fundamental right. So does the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. In some lands, though, schooling may not be free and may be a financial burden on parents. Let us look at this matter through the eyes of Christian parents who want their children to be literate, either through formal schooling or by other means.

Bible Examples of Literacy

Most servants of God mentioned in the Bible could read and write. Jesus' apostles Peter and John were Jewish fishermen but wrote Bible books in Greek, not in their Galilean dialect.* Their parents evidently made sure that their children received a basic education. Other Bible writers in a similar situation include the shepherd David, the agricultural worker Amos, and Jesus' half brother Jude, who was probably a carpenter.

The man Job could read and write, and the Bible book bearing his name indicates that he had some understanding of science. He may also have had literary ability, for his

* Their mother tongue was either a Galilean dialect of Aramaic or a dialectal form of Hebrew. See Volume 1, pages 144-6, of *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



statements quoted in the book of Job are in poetic form. And we know that the early Christians were literate because what may have been their Scriptural notes have been found on potsherds, pieces of broken pottery.

Education Is Important for Christians

All Christians need to advance in Bible knowledge if they are to please God. (Philippians 1:9-11; 1 Thessalonians 4:1) Diligent use of the Scriptures and Bible-based study aids can promote spiritual progress. Since God has provided his written Word, he expects his worshipers to be as literate as possible. Reading the Bible with understanding makes it easier to apply its counsel. Of course, we may have to read portions of it more than once to absorb points and be able to meditate on them.—Psalm 119:104; 143:5; Proverbs 4:7.

Each year, Jehovah's people receive hundreds of pages of helpful written material prepared under the direction of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45-47) Such literature deals with family life, customs, religion, science, and many other subjects. Most important, it contains Scriptural counsel on spiritual matters. If your children are not able to read, they will be deprived of much vital information.

Learning the history of mankind is important because it helps us to understand why there is a need for God's Kingdom. A basic knowledge of geography is also desirable. The Bible speaks of many places, such as Israel, Egypt, and Greece. Is your child able to locate them on a world map? Can he find his own country? Being unable to read a map may even limit a person's ability to accomplish his ministry in an assigned area.

—2 Timothy 4:5.

Privileges in the Congregation

Christian elders and ministerial servants have many responsibilities that involve reading. For instance, there are parts to prepare for congregation meetings. There is a need to keep records regarding literature supplies and donations. Without a basic education, a person would find it very difficult to handle these responsibilities effectively.

Volunteer workers serve in Bethel homes around the world. In order for these volunteers to communicate well and to carry out their duties, such as translating literature and repairing machinery, they must be able to read and write in the official language of the country in which they live. If your children are ever to enjoy privileges like these, a basic education is usually a necessity. What are some other practical reasons for your child to go to school?

Poverty and Superstition

People living in poverty may be virtually helpless in certain circumstances. In other cases, however, a reasonable education may help us and our children to avoid needless suffering. Very few illiterate people manage to have more than a precarious existence. Children and even parents sometimes die because a meager income makes it impossible for them to obtain medical help. Malnutrition and poor housing are often the lot of

people who have had little or no schooling. Education or at least the ability to read and write may be of some help in these respects.

Literacy also reduces the tendency to be superstitious. Of course, superstitions are prevalent among both educated and uneducated people. But those lacking an education may be more easily deceived and exploited than others, since they cannot read material that exposes such deceptions. Hence, they tend to be more superstitious and to believe that a spiritistic healer can perform miraculous cures.—Deuteronomy 18:10-12; Revelation 21:8.

Education Is Not for Employment Only

Many feel that the main purpose of education is to earn money. Yet, some educated people are unemployed or do not earn enough to meet basic needs. Some parents may therefore think that it is not beneficial to send a child to school. But schooling does more than prepare someone to make money; it equips children for life in general. (Ecclesiastes 7:12) If a person can speak, read, and write the official language of the country in which he lives, dealing



with medical personnel, civil authorities, or bank employees becomes easier, even routine, rather than frightening.

In some places, uneducated children may be handed over to someone for an apprenticeship in bricklaying, fishing, sewing, or some other trade. Learning a trade is a good thing, but if these children never attend school, they probably will not learn to read and write correctly. No doubt they would be more likely to avoid exploitation and would have a more satisfying life if they first received a basic education and then learned a trade.

Jesus of Nazareth was a carpenter and apparently underwent some sort of apprenticeship with his adoptive father, Joseph. (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3) Jesus was also literate, for even at the age of 12, he was capable of having meaningful discussions with educated men at the temple. (Luke 2:46, 47) In Jesus' case, learning a trade did not interfere with other types of education.

Educate Daughters As Well?

Parents sometimes send their sons to school but not their daughters. Perhaps some parents think that it is too expensive to educate their daughters and believe that girls can be more useful to their mother by staying at home all day. But illiteracy will handicap a daughter. A United Nations Children's

IF IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO ATTEND SCHOOL

Attending school is impossible in some situations. For example, the magazine *Refugees* reported that only 1 eligible child in 5 can attend school in refugee camps. In some cases, strikes close schools for an extended period. Schools may be too far away or may be nonexistent in a certain region. Persecution of Christians may result in the expulsion of children from school.

How can you help your children in such circumstances? What may be done if you have a number of children and live in an area where expense makes it impossible for all of them to attend a formal school? Well, can you afford to send one or two of your children to school without putting them in spiritual danger? If so, they

may be able to help teach your other children what they are learning at school.

Some countries have what is called home schooling.* In this arrangement, one of the parents generally spends a few hours teaching the child each day. In patriarchal times, parents were quite successful in teaching their children. Apparently because of good parental training, Jacob's son Joseph was capable of oversight at a young age.

A formal curriculum, or program for teaching, may be difficult to obtain in such places as a refugee camp, but parents may be able to use liter-

* See the article "Home Schooling—Is It for You?" in *Awake!* of April 8, 1993, pages 9-12.

Fund (UNICEF) publication states: "Study after study has demonstrated that providing education for girls is one of the best strategies for breaking the hold of poverty." (*Poverty and Children: Lessons of the 90s for Least Developed Countries*) Educated girls are better equipped for life and make wiser decisions, thus benefiting all in the family.

A study involving infant mortality in Benin, West Africa, indicated that illiterate mothers as a group lose children under the age of five years at the rate of 167 per 1,000, whereas women with a secondary school education lose 38. UNICEF concludes: "The level of education is hence a determining factor in the infant mortality rate in Benin, as it is

all over the world." So, then, educating your daughters can have various benefits.

Are Literacy Classes Enough?

Where needed, Jehovah's Witnesses hold literacy classes for congregation members who cannot read.* This useful provision helps people to learn to read, usually in their local language. Is this a suitable substitute for a formal education? Should the congregation be expected to provide an education for your children even if regular schools are available?

Although literacy classes are a kind arrangement made by congregations of

* See *Awake!* of December 22, 2000, pages 8 and 9.

ature published by Jehovah's Witnesses as a basis for instruction. For example, *My Book of Bible Stories* may be helpful in teaching young children. The magazine *Awake!* contains articles on a wide range of subjects. The book *Life—How Did It Get Here? By Evolution or by Creation?* could be used in teaching scientific subjects. The *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses* has a small world map and tells about life and preaching activities in various lands.

Much good can be accomplished if instruction is well-prepared and tailored to the children's level of understanding. If they continue reading and learning, they will more easily adjust to regular schooling should it become available. With initiative and effort, you can help your children to be well educated. How rewarding that can be!



What may be done if you live where your children cannot attend a formal school?

Jehovah's Witnesses, they are intended for disadvantaged adults who never went to school as children. Possibly, their parents were not aware of the importance of literacy, or there were no schools available. Such individuals can be helped by attending literacy classes conducted in congregations. But these classes are no substitute for regular schooling and are not designed to provide a primary education. Such subjects as science, mathematics, and history are not dealt with in these literacy classes. However, they may be covered in the regular school curriculum.

In Africa, literacy classes are conducted mostly in tribal languages and less often in a country's official language. Formal schooling, though, usually is conducted in the official language. This provides additional benefits for children because more books and various other reading materials are available in the official language. While congregation literacy classes may complement a child's formal education, they cannot take its place. If at all practical, then, should not children be given a formal education?

A Parental Responsibility

Men who take the lead in serving the spiritual needs of the congregation are to be exemplary Christians. They are to preside over their households and children in "a fine manner." (1 Timothy 3:4, 12) Presiding in "a fine manner" would include doing everything possible to help our children to avoid future handicaps.

God has given a great responsibility to Christian parents. They should bring up their children according to his Word and help them to become 'lovers of knowledge.'

(Proverbs 12:1; 22:6; Ephesians 6:4) The apostle Paul wrote: "Certainly if anyone does not provide for those who are his own, and especially for those who are members of his household, he has disowned the faith and is worse than a person without faith." (1 Timothy 5:8) Appropriate education should also be provided for our children.

A school system sometimes proves to be lacking in educational proficiency because of overcrowding, poor funding, or perhaps an unhappy, underpaid teaching staff. Therefore, it is important that parents

take an active interest in what their children are learning at school. It is wise to become acquainted with the teachers, especially at the beginning of each semester, even asking their advice on how the children can become better students. Teachers may thus feel appreciated and be motivated to make a greater effort to meet the educational needs of the children.

Education is a vital part of a child's development. "The wise are the ones that treasure up knowledge," says Proverbs 10:14. Especially is this true of Bible knowledge. Jehovah's people—young and old alike—must be as knowledgeable as possible in order to help others spiritually and 'in order to present themselves approved to God with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright.' (2 Timothy 2:15; 1 Timothy 4:15) So, then, should your children go to school? Doubtless you will conclude that they should, although much will depend on what is practical in your country. But Christian parents need to answer this more important question, 'Should my children be educated?' No matter where you live, do you not agree that the answer should be a resounding yes?



TRY TO SEE OTHERS AS JEHOVAH SEES THEM

"Not the way man sees is the way God sees." —1 SAMUEL 16:7.

IN THE 11th century B.C.E., Jehovah sent the prophet Samuel on a secret mission. He commanded the prophet to go to the house of a man named Jesse and anoint one of Jesse's sons to be the future king of Israel. When Samuel caught sight of Jesse's first-born, Eliab, he felt sure that he had found the one whom God had chosen. But Jehovah said: "Do not look at his appearance and at the height of his stature, for I have rejected him. For not the way man sees is the way God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is." (1 Samuel 16:6, 7) Samuel had failed to see Eliab as Jehovah saw him.*

² How easy it is for humans to err in their assessment of others! On the one hand, we may be taken in by individuals who are outwardly appealing but inwardly unscrupulous. On the other hand, we may be stern and unbending in our evaluation of sincere individuals whose personality traits annoy us.

³ Problems can arise when we are quick to judge others—even those we have known for years. Perhaps you have had a serious quarrel

* It later became apparent that handsome Eliab did not have the makings of a suitable king of Israel. When the Philistine giant Goliath challenged the Israelites in combat, Eliab, along with the other men of Israel, cowered in fear.—1 Samuel 17:11, 28-30.

1, 2. How did Jehovah's view of Eliab differ from that of Samuel, and what can we learn from this?

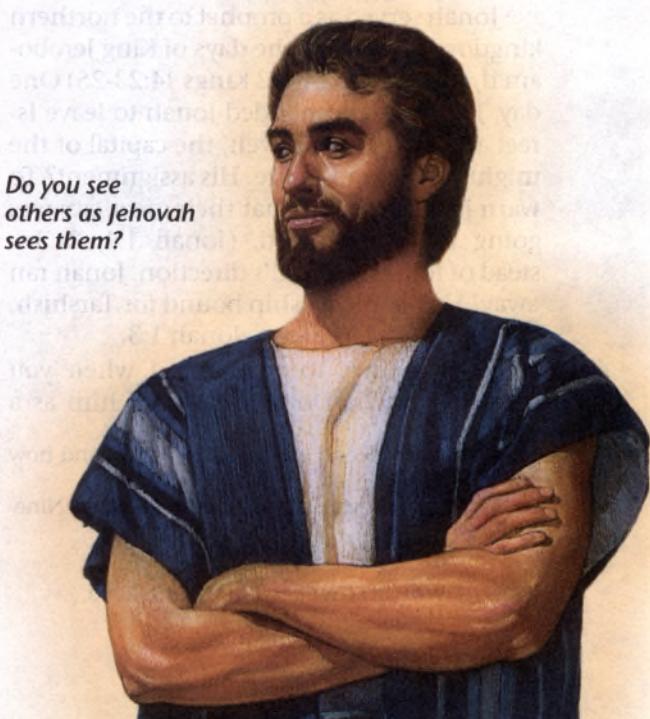
3, 4. (a) If a problem arises between two Christians, what should each one be determined to do? (b) What questions should we ask ourselves when we have a serious disagreement with a fellow believer?

with a Christian who was once a close friend. Would you like to heal the breach? What will help you to accomplish this?

⁴ Why not take a good, long, positive look at your Christian brother or sister? And do this in the light of Jesus' words: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) Then ask yourself: 'Why did Jehovah draw this person to His Son? What desirable qualities does the individual possess? Have I been overlooking or undervaluing these traits? Why did we become friends in the first place? What drew me to this person?' At first, you may find it difficult to think of good points, particularly if you have been nursing hurt feelings for some time. However, this is a vital step toward repairing the rift between the two of you. To illustrate how this might be done, let

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*Do you see
others as Jehovah
sees them?*





Jesus found something positive to say about Jonah's experience

us look for positive characteristics in two men who are at times cast in a negative light. They are the prophet Jonah and the apostle Peter.

A Candid Look at Jonah

⁵ Jonah served as a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel in the days of King Jeroboam II, son of Jehoash. (2 Kings 14:23-25) One day, Jehovah commanded Jonah to leave Israel and travel to Nineveh, the capital of the mighty Assyrian Empire. His assignment? To warn its inhabitants that their great city was going to be destroyed. (Jonah 1:1, 2) Instead of following God's direction, Jonah ran away! He boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, far away from Nineveh.—Jonah 1:3.

⁶ What comes to your mind when you think of Jonah? Do you think of him as a

5. What commission was given to Jonah, and how did he react?

6. Why did Jehovah choose Jonah to go to Nineveh?

disobedient prophet? A superficial look at him might yield such a conclusion. But did God appoint Jonah as a prophet because he was disobedient? Of course not! Jonah must have had some desirable qualities. Consider his record as a prophet.

⁷ Jonah had actually labored faithfully in Israel, a very unreceptive territory. The prophet Amos, who lived at about the same time as Jonah, described the Israelites of the day as materialistic pleasure-lovers.* Bad things were taking place in the land, but the Israelites were totally indifferent to them. (Amos 3:13-15; 4:4; 6:4-6) Yet, day after day Jonah faithfully carried out his commission

* Because of some key conquests and restoration of former territory and the tribute likely collected as a result, Jeroboam II evidently did much to increase the wealth of the northern kingdom.—2 Samuel 8:6; 2 Kings 14:23-28; 2 Chronicles 8:3, 4; Amos 6:2.

7. Under what circumstances had Jonah been serving Jehovah in Israel, and how does knowing this affect your view of him?

to preach to them. If you are a proclaimer of the good news, you know how difficult it is to speak to people who are self-satisfied and apathetic. So, then, while acknowledging Jonah's weaknesses, let us not overlook his qualities of faithfulness and endurance as he preached to the faithless Israelites.

⁸ The assignment to go to Nineveh involved an even more difficult challenge. To reach that city, Jonah had to travel some 500 miles on foot—an arduous journey that would take about a month. Once there, the prophet would have to preach to the Assyrians, who were noted for their cruelty. Sadistic torture was a frequent feature of their warfare. They even boasted about their savagery. No wonder Nineveh was called "the city of bloodshed"!—Nahum 3:1, 7.

⁹ Reluctant to obey Jehovah's command, Jonah boarded a ship that carried him farther and farther away from his assignment. Nevertheless, Jehovah did not give up on his prophet or arrange for someone to replace him. Instead, Jehovah acted to bring Jonah to his senses. God caused a violent storm to come up at sea. The ship carrying Jonah was tossed about by the waves. Innocent men were about to perish, all because of Jonah! (Jonah 1:4) How would Jonah react? Not wanting the sailors aboard the vessel to lose their lives on his account, Jonah told them: "Lift me up and hurl me into the sea, and the sea will become still for you." (Jonah 1:12) He had no reason to think that when the mariners finally did throw him overboard, Jehovah would rescue him from the sea. (Jonah 1:15) However, Jonah was willing to pay the ultimate price so that the sailors would not perish. Do we not see displayed here the qualities of courage, humility, and love?

8. What challenges would confront an Israelite prophet in Nineveh?

9. When a violent storm threatened the mariners, what qualities did Jonah display?

¹⁰ At length, Jehovah rescued Jonah. Did Jonah's recent actions disqualify him from ever again serving God in an official capacity? No, Jehovah mercifully and lovingly renewed the prophet's commission to preach to the Ninevites. When Jonah arrived in Nineveh, he courageously told its inhabitants that their great badness had come to God's attention and that their city was going to be destroyed in 40 days. (Jonah 1:2; 3:4) After hearing Jonah's straightforward message, the Ninevites repented, and their city was spared.

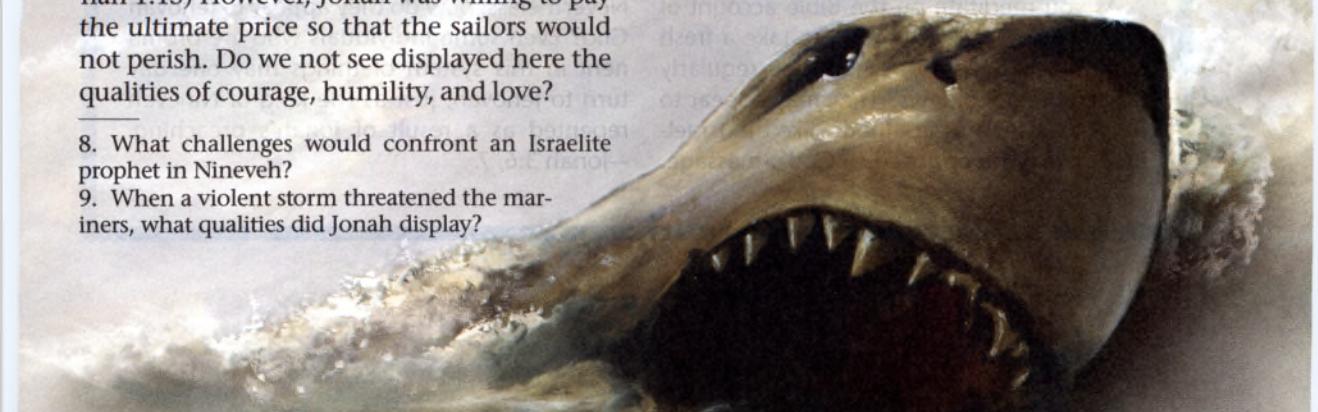
¹¹ Jonah still did not have the right viewpoint. By means of an object lesson, though, Jehovah patiently helped Jonah to learn that He sees beyond mere appearance. He examines the heart. (Jonah 4:5-11) That Jonah learned a valuable lesson is evident by the candid account that he himself recorded. His willingness to report his shortcomings in embarrassing detail gives further proof of his humility. It takes courage to admit a mistake!

¹² Centuries later, Jesus Christ made a positive statement about an event in Jonah's life. He said: "Just as Jonah was in the belly of the huge fish three days and three nights, so the Son of man will be in the heart of the earth three days and three nights." (Matthew 12:

10. What happened after Jehovah renewed Jonah's assignment?

11. What indicates that Jonah learned a valuable lesson?

12. (a) How do we know that Jesus shares Jehovah's view of people? (b) We are encouraged to maintain what view of the people to whom we preach the good news? (See box on page 18.)



40) After Jonah is resurrected, he will learn that Jesus compared His own time in the tomb to this dark period in the prophet's life. Are we not glad to serve a God who does not give up on his servants when they make mistakes? The psalmist wrote: "As a father shows mercy to his sons, Jehovah has shown mercy to those fearing him. For he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:13, 14) Indeed, this "dust"—including imperfect people today—can accomplish a great deal with the backing of God's holy spirit!

A Balanced View of Peter

¹³ Now let us briefly consider a second example, that of the apostle Peter. If you were asked to describe Peter, would you immediately think of such characteristics as rash, impetuous, even presumptuous? Peter did manifest such traits at times. However, would Jesus have selected Peter as one of his 12 apostles if Peter was really a rash, impetuous, or presumptuous man? (Luke 6:12-14) Of course not! Jesus clearly saw past these flaws and perceived Peter's positive qualities.

¹⁴ Peter at times acted as a spokesman for the other apostles. Some might view this as

13. What traits of Peter may come to mind, but why did Jesus select him as an apostle?

14. (a) What might explain Peter's seeming outspokenness? (b) Why should we be grateful that Peter frequently asked questions?

evidence of a lack of modesty. But is that necessarily so? It has been suggested that Peter may have been older than the other apostles—perhaps older than Jesus himself. If that is correct, this might help to explain why Peter was so often the first to speak. (Matthew 16:22) However, there is another factor to consider. Peter was a spiritual man. His thirst for knowledge moved him to ask questions. This has been to our benefit. Jesus made a number of precious statements in response to Peter's questions, and these have been preserved in the Bible. For example, it was in response to a statement by Peter that Jesus spoke about "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:41-44) And give thought to Peter's question: "We have left all things and followed you; what actually will there be for us?" This led to Jesus' strengthening promise: "Everyone that has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive many times more and will inherit everlasting life."—Matthew 15:15; 18:21, 22; 19:27-29.

¹⁵ Peter had another fine quality—he was loyal. When many of the disciples left off following Jesus because they did not understand one of his teachings, it was Peter who spoke up in behalf of the 12 apostles and said: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You

15. Why can it be said that Peter was truly loyal?

Think About How Others Appear to God

As you meditate on the Bible account of Jonah, do you see the need to take a fresh look at the people to whom you regularly preach the good news? They may appear to be self-satisfied or apathetic, like the Israelites, or may be opposed to God's message.

Nevertheless, how do they appear to Jehovah God? Even some individuals who are prominent in this system of things may one day turn to Jehovah, just as the king of Nineveh repented as a result of Jonah's preaching.
—Jonah 3:6, 7.

have sayings of everlasting life." (John 6:66-68) How those words must have warmed Jesus' heart! Later, when a mob came to arrest the Master, most of his apostles fled. However, Peter followed the crowd at a distance and entered right into the courtyard of the high priest. Courage, not cowardice, took him there. While Jesus was interrogated, Peter joined a group of Jews who were warming themselves by the bright fire. One of the slaves of the high priest recognized him and accused him of having been with Jesus. Yes, Peter denied his Master, but let us not forget that it was loyalty and concern for Jesus that put Peter in that dangerous situation, one that most of the apostles did not dare face.—John 18:15-27.

¹⁶ Peter's positive qualities far outweighed his shortcomings. The same is true of Jonah. Just as we have taken a more positive view of Jonah and Peter than we normally might, we must similarly train ourselves to be more positive in our assessment of our present-day spiritual brothers and sisters. Doing so will lead to better relations with them. Why is there a real need for this?

Applying the Lesson Today

¹⁷ Men, women, and children of all economic levels as well as educational and racial backgrounds are unitedly serving Jehovah today. (Revelation 7:9, 10) What a wide variety of personalities we see in the Christian congregation! Since we are serving God in close association, it is inevitable that friction will develop at times.—Romans 12:10; Philippians 2:3.

¹⁸ While we are not blind to the shortcomings of our brothers, we do not fo-

16. For what practical reason have we considered the positive qualities of Jonah and Peter?

17, 18. (a) Why might friction develop between Christians? (b) What Bible counsel can help us to resolve difficulties with fellow believers?

cus on these. We strive to imitate Jehovah, of whom the psalmist sang: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) Instead of dwelling on personality traits that might divide us, we "pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:19) We endeavor to see individuals as Jehovah sees them, looking past the flaws and focusing on the good qualities. When we do this, it helps us to "continue putting up with one another."—Colossians 3:13.

¹⁹ What if misunderstandings arise that we simply cannot resolve in our heart? (Psalm 4:4) Has this happened between you and a fellow believer? Why not try to settle the matter? (Genesis 32:13-15) First, approach Jehovah in prayer, asking for his guidance. Then, with the person's fine characteristics in mind, approach him with the "mildness that belongs to wisdom." (James 3:13) Tell him that you want to make peace. Remember the inspired counsel: "Be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) The advice to be "slow about wrath" implies that the other person may do or say something that could make you angry. If that occurs, ask Jehovah for

19. Outline practical steps a Christian might take in resolving serious disagreements.

How Would You Answer?

- How does Jehovah view the shortcomings of his faithful servants?
- What positive qualities of Jonah and Peter can you enumerate?
- What view of your Christian brothers are you determined to maintain?

help in maintaining self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) Let your brother have his say, and listen carefully. Do not interrupt him, even if you do not agree with everything he says. His viewpoint may be wrong, but it is his viewpoint nonetheless. Try to see the problem from his perspective. That may well include seeing yourself through your brother's eyes. —Proverbs 18:17.

²⁰ When it is your turn to speak, be gracious. (Colossians 4:6) Tell your brother what you appreciate about him. Apologize for any part that you have played in the misunderstanding. If your humble efforts result in rec-

20. When settling differences, what further steps are likely to result in a reconciliation?

onciliation, give thanks to Jehovah. If they do not, keep asking Jehovah for guidance while you look for additional opportunities to make peace.—Romans 12:18.

²¹ Jehovah loves all his servants. He is pleased to use all of us in his service despite our imperfections. As we learn more about his view of others, our love for our brothers and sisters will grow. If our love for a fellow Christian has grown cold, it can be rekindled. What a blessing will be ours if we make a determined effort to display a positive view of others—yes, to see them as Jehovah sees them!

21. How has this discussion helped you to see others as Jehovah sees them?

THE EARLY CHRISTIANS AND THE MOSAIC LAW

"The Law has become our tutor leading to Christ."—GALATIANS 3:24.

IN 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah gave the Israelites a code of laws. He told the people that if they obeyed his voice, he would bless them and they would enjoy happy, satisfying lives. —Exodus 19:5, 6.

² That Law code, called the Mosaic Law, or simply "the Law," was "holy and righteous and good." (Romans 7:12) It promoted such virtues as kindness, honesty, morality, and neighborliness. (Exodus 23:4, 5; Leviticus 19:14; Deuteronomy 15:13-15; 22:10, 22) The Law also incited the Jews to love one another. (Leviticus 19:18) Furthermore, they were not to mix with or take wives from among Gentiles who had not submitted to the Law.

1, 2. What were some of the benefits that came to Israelites who carefully observed the Mosaic Law?

(Deuteronomy 7:3, 4) As a "wall" of separation between Jews and Gentiles, the Mosaic Law kept God's people from becoming contaminated by pagan thinking and practices. —Ephesians 2:14, 15; John 18:28.

³ However, even the most conscientious Jews could not observe God's Law perfectly. Was Jehovah expecting too much of them? No. One of the reasons why the Law was given to Israel was "to make transgressions manifest." (Galatians 3:19) The Law made sincere Jews conscious of their desperate need for a Redeemer. When that One arrived, faithful Jews rejoiced. Their deliverance from the curse of sin and death was at hand!—John 1:29.

3. Since no one could observe the Law perfectly, what effect did it have?

⁴ The Mosaic Law was to be a temporary arrangement. Writing to fellow Christians, the apostle Paul described it as a "tutor leading to Christ." (Galatians 3:24) A tutor of ancient times accompanied children to and from school. He was generally not the teacher; he merely led the children to the teacher. Similarly, the Mosaic Law was designed to lead God-fearing Jews to Christ. Jesus promised that he would be with his followers "all the days until the conclusion of the system of things." (Matthew 28:20) Once the Christian congregation was formed, therefore, the "tutor"—the Law—served no further purpose. (Romans 10:4; Galatians 3:25) But some Jewish Christians were slow to grasp this vital truth. As a result, they continued observing features of the Law even after Jesus' resurrection. Others, though, adjusted their thinking. In doing so, they set a fine example for us today. Let us see how.

Exciting Developments in Christian Doctrine

⁵ In 36 C.E., the Christian apostle Peter had a remarkable vision. At that time a heavenly voice commanded him to slaughter and eat birds and animals that were considered unclean under the Law. Peter was shocked! He had never "eaten anything defiled and unclean." But the voice told him: "You stop calling defiled the things God has cleansed." (Acts 10:9-15) Instead of rigidly clinging to the Law, Peter adjusted his view. This led him to an amazing discovery concerning God's purposes.

⁶ This is what happened. Three men went to the house where Peter was staying to ask

4. In what sense was the Law a "tutor leading to Christ"?

5. What instructions did Peter receive in a vision, and why was he shocked?

6, 7. What enabled Peter to conclude that he could now preach to Gentiles, and what further conclusions did he likely draw?

him to go with them to the home of a devout uncircumcised Gentile named Cornelius. Peter invited these men into the house and entertained them there. Having grasped the significance of this vision, Peter accompanied them the next day to the home of Cornelius. There Peter bore thorough witness concerning Jesus Christ. At that time, Peter stated: "For a certainty I perceive that God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him." Not only Cornelius but also his relatives and close friends exercised faith in Jesus, and "holy spirit fell upon all those hearing the word." Recognizing Jehovah's hand in the matter, Peter "commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ."—Acts 10:17-48.

⁷ What enabled Peter to conclude that Gentiles who had not submitted to the Mosaic Law could now become followers of Jesus Christ? Spiritual discernment. Since God had shown his approval of uncircumcised Gentiles, pouring out his spirit upon them, Peter discerned that they could be accepted for baptism. At the same time, Peter apparently realized that God did not expect Gentile Christians to observe the Law of Moses as a condition for baptism. If you had lived back then, would you have been as willing as Peter to adjust your viewpoint?

Some Kept Following the "Tutor"

⁸ After leaving the home of Cornelius, Peter went to Jerusalem. News that uncircumcised Gentiles had "received the word of God" had reached the congregation there, and a number of Jewish disciples were disturbed about the matter. (Acts 11:1-3) While acknowledging that Gentiles could become Jesus' followers, "the supporters of

8. What view of circumcision that was different from Peter's was promoted by some Christians living in Jerusalem, and why?

circumcision" insisted that these people of the non-Jewish nations must observe the Law in order to be saved. On the other hand, in predominantly Gentile areas, where there were few Jewish Christians, circumcision was not necessarily an issue. The two viewpoints persisted for about 13 years. (1 Corinthians 1:10) What a test that must have been for those early Christians—especially the Gentiles living in Jewish areas!

⁹ The issue finally came to a head in 49 C.E. when Christians from Jerusalem came to Syrian Antioch, where Paul was preaching. They began teaching that Gentile converts had to get circumcised according to the Law. And there occurred no little dissension and disputing among them and Paul and Barnabas! If the issue was not settled, some Christians, whether from Jewish or from Gentile backgrounds, were bound to be stumbled. Thus, arrangements were made for Paul and a few others to go to Jerusalem and ask the Christian governing body to resolve the issue once and for all.—Acts 15:1, 2, 24.

An Honest Difference of Opinion —Then, Unity!

¹⁰ At a meeting that was convened, some apparently argued in favor of circumcision, while others presented the opposing view. But emotion did not rule the day. After much disputing had taken place, the apostles Peter and Paul described the signs that Jehovah had performed among the uncircumcised. They explained that God had poured out holy spirit upon uncircumcised Gentiles. In effect, they asked, 'Can the Christian congregation rightly reject those whom God has embraced?' Then the disciple James read a

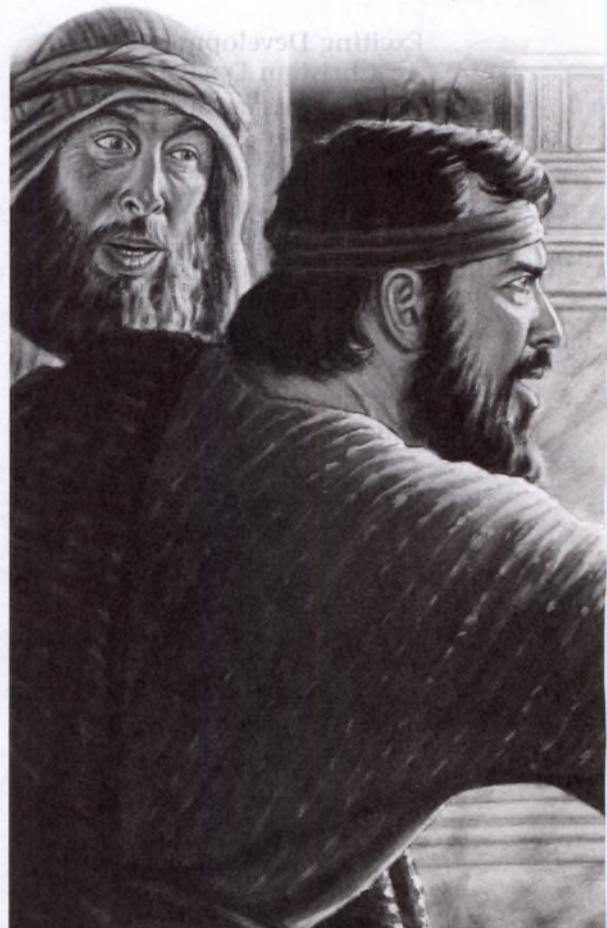
9. Why was it vital that the issue of circumcision be settled?

10. What were some of the points that the governing body considered before making the decision regarding the status of Gentiles?

passage of Scripture that helped all in attendance to discern Jehovah's will in the matter.
—Acts 15:4-17.

¹¹ All eyes were now on the governing body. Would their Jewish heritage slant their decision in favor of circumcision? No. These faithful men were determined to follow the Scriptures and the leadings of God's holy spirit. After hearing all the pertinent testimony, the governing body unanimously agreed that there was no need for Gentile Christians to get circumcised and come under the Mosaic Law. When word reached the brothers, they rejoiced, and the congregations began to "increase in number from day to

11. What factor was not involved in making the decision regarding circumcision, and what shows that Jehovah's blessing was upon the decision?



day." Those Christians who submitted to clear theocratic direction were blessed with a solid, Scriptural answer. (Acts 15:19-23, 28, 29; 16:1-5) Yet, an important question remained to be answered.

What About Jewish Christians?

¹² The governing body had clearly indicated that Gentile Christians did not need to be circumcised. But what about *Jewish* Christians? The governing body's decision had not specifically covered that aspect of the question.

¹³ Some Jewish Christians who were "zealous for the Law" continued circumcising

their children and observing certain features of the Law. (Acts 21:20) Others went further, even insisting that it was necessary for Jewish Christians to observe the Law in order to be saved. In this, they were seriously mistaken. For example, how could any Christian offer an animal sacrifice for the remission of sins? Christ's sacrifice had made such offerings obsolete. What about the Law's requirement that Jews avoid close fellowship with Gentiles? It would have been very difficult for zealous Christian evangelizers to observe those restrictions and still carry out the commission to teach the Gentiles all the things that Jesus had taught. (Matthew 28:19, 20)

12. What question was left unresolved?

13. Why was it wrong to assert that observance of the Mosaic Law was necessary for salvation?

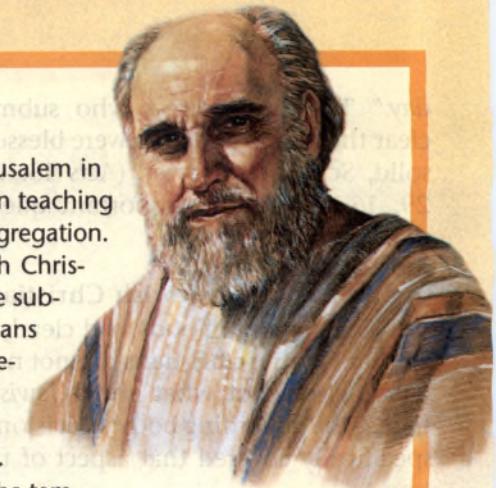
*For some years, differing views
of the Mosaic Law persisted
among Christians*



Paul Humbly Meets a Test

After a successful missionary tour, Paul arrived in Jerusalem in 56 C.E. There a test awaited him. News that he had been teaching that the Law had been set aside had reached the congregation. The older men were afraid that newly converted Jewish Christians would be stumbled by Paul's outspokenness on the subject of the Law and that they might conclude that Christians lacked respect for Jehovah's arrangements. In the congregation, there were four Jewish Christians who had taken a vow, perhaps a Nazirite vow. They had to go to the temple in order to complete the requirements of the vow.

The older men asked Paul to accompany the four to the temple and to care for their expenses. Paul had written at least two inspired letters in which he argued that observance of the Law was not required for salvation. However, he was considerate of the consciences of others. He had previously written: "To those under law I became as under law . . . that I might gain those under law." (1 Corinthians 9:20-23) While never compromising where vital Scriptural principles were involved, Paul felt that he could go along with the suggestion of the older men. (Acts 21:15-26) It was not wrong for him to do so. There was nothing unscriptural about the arrangement for vows, and the temple had been used for pure worship, not for idolatry. With a view to giving no cause for stumbling, then, Paul did as requested. (1 Corinthians 8:13) No doubt this took considerable humility on Paul's part, a fact that deepens our appreciation for him.



Acts 1:8; 10:28)* There is no evidence that this matter was clarified at a meeting of the governing body. Still, the congregation was not left without help.

¹⁴ Guidance came, not in the form of a letter from the governing body, but in additional inspired letters written by the apostles. For example, the apostle Paul sent a powerful message to Jews and Gentiles living in Rome. In his letter to them, he explained that a real Jew "is one on the inside, and his circumci-

sion is that of the heart by spirit." (Romans 2:28, 29) In the same letter, Paul used an illustration to prove that Christians were no longer under the Law. He argued that a woman could not be married to two men at once. But if her husband died, she was free to remarry. Paul then applied the illustration, showing that anointed Christians could not be subject to the Mosaic Law and belong to Christ at the same time. They had to become "dead to the Law" so that they could be united with Christ.—Romans 7:1-5.

* When Peter visited Syrian Antioch, he enjoyed warm association with Gentile believers. However, when Jewish Christians arrived from Jerusalem, Peter "went withdrawing and separating himself, in fear of those of the circumcised class." We can imagine how hurt those Gentile converts must have been when the respected apostle refused to eat with them.—Galatians 2:11-13.

14. What guidance regarding the Law did Paul's inspired letters provide?

Slow to Grasp the Point

¹⁵ Paul's reasoning regarding the Law was unassailable. How was it, then, that some

15, 16. Why did some Jewish Christians fail to get the point regarding the Law, and what does this show about the need to remain spiritually alert?

Jewish Christians failed to get the point? For one thing, they lacked spiritual discernment. For example, they neglected taking in solid spiritual food. (Hebrews 5:11-14) They were also irregular in attendance at Christian meetings. (Hebrews 10:23-25) Another reason why some did not get the point may have had to do with the nature of the Law itself. It was centered on things that could be seen and felt and touched, such as the temple and the priesthood. It was easier for someone lacking spirituality to accept the Law than to embrace the deeper tenets of Christianity, which were centered on unseen realities.

—2 Corinthians 4:18.

¹⁶ Still another reason why certain professed Christians were eager to observe the Law was outlined by Paul in his letter to the Galatians. He explained that these men wanted to be viewed as respectable, as members of a mainstream religion. Rather than standing out in the community, they were willing to make almost any compromise in order to blend in. They were more interested in gaining the approval of men than in gaining the approval of God.—Galatians 6:12.

¹⁷ Discerning Christians who carefully studied the divinely inspired writings of Paul

17. When did the proper viewpoint regarding observance of the Law become perfectly clear?

How Would You Respond?

- In what sense was the Mosaic Law like a “tutor leading to Christ”?
- How do you account for differences in the ways Peter and “supporters of circumcision” responded to adjustments in understanding of the truth?
- What have you learned about the way in which Jehovah reveals the truth today?

and others drew accurate conclusions concerning the Law. However, it was not until the year 70 C.E. that the proper view of the Mosaic Law became unmistakably clear to all Jewish Christians. That occurred when God allowed Jerusalem, its temple, and the records pertaining to its priesthood to be destroyed. This made it impossible for anyone to observe all the features of the Law.

Applying the Lesson Today

¹⁸ After considering these events of long ago, perhaps you are wondering: ‘If I had lived at that time, how would I have responded as God’s will was progressively revealed? Would I have rigidly held to traditional views? Or would I have been patient until the proper understanding became clear? And when it did, would I have wholeheartedly supported it?’

¹⁹ Of course, we cannot be sure how we would have reacted if we had lived back then. But we can ask ourselves: ‘How do I respond to clarifications in Bible understanding when they are presented today? (Matthew 24:45) When Scriptural direction is provided, do I try to apply it, observing not only the letter of the law but the spirit of it? (1 Corinthians 14:20) Do I patiently wait on Jehovah when answers to lingering questions seem slow in coming?’ It is vital that we make good use of the spiritual food that is available today, so that “we may never drift away.” (Hebrews 2:1) When Jehovah provides direction by means of his Word, his spirit, and his earthly organization, let us listen carefully. If we do so, Jehovah will bless us with endless life that is both happy and satisfying.

^{18, 19. (a)} What attitudes must we adopt and what attitudes must we avoid in order to remain spiritually healthy? (b) What does Paul’s example teach us about following the direction we receive from responsible brothers? (See box on page 24.)

'THE LIPS OF TRUTH WILL Endure Forever'

LIKE a little fire that can set aflame and destroy a whole forest, it is capable of contaminating an individual's entire life. It can be full of venom, but it can also be "a tree of life." (Proverbs 15:4) Death and life are in its power. (Proverbs 18:21) Such is the strength of this little member, our tongue, that can spot up all the body. (James 3:5-9) Wise we are to guard the tongue.

In the second part of the 12th chapter of the Bible book of Proverbs, King Solomon of ancient Israel provides valuable counsel that helps us safeguard our speech. By means of concise but meaningful proverbs, the wise king shows that spoken words bear consequences as well as reveal a great deal about the qualities of the one speaking them. Solomon's inspired advice is indispensable to anyone desiring to 'set a watch over the door of his lips.'—Psalm 141:3.

'The Transgression That Ensnares'

"By the transgression of the lips the bad person is ensnared, but the righteous one gets out of distress," says Solomon. (Proverbs 12:13) Lying is a transgression of the lips that becomes a death-dealing trap for the one prac-



ticing it. (Revelation 21:8) Dishonesty may seem like an easy way to escape punishment or to get out of an unpleasant situation. But does not one lie often lead to other lies? Just as a person who starts gambling with small amounts is drawn into making bigger and bigger bets as he attempts to recover losses, a liar soon finds himself enmeshed in a vicious cycle.

The transgression of the lips further ensnares in that the one lying to others can end up lying to himself. For example, a liar can easily convince himself that he is very knowledgeable and brilliant, while in reality he knows very little. He thus begins to live a lie. Indeed, "he has acted too smoothly to himself in his own eyes to find out his error so as to hate it." (Psalm 36:2) What a snare lying proves to be! The righteous one, on the other hand, will not get himself into such a difficult situation. Even under distress, he will not resort to a false tongue.

'The Fruitage That Satisfies'

"Do not be misled: God is not one to be mocked," warns the apostle Paul. "For whatever a man is sowing, this he will

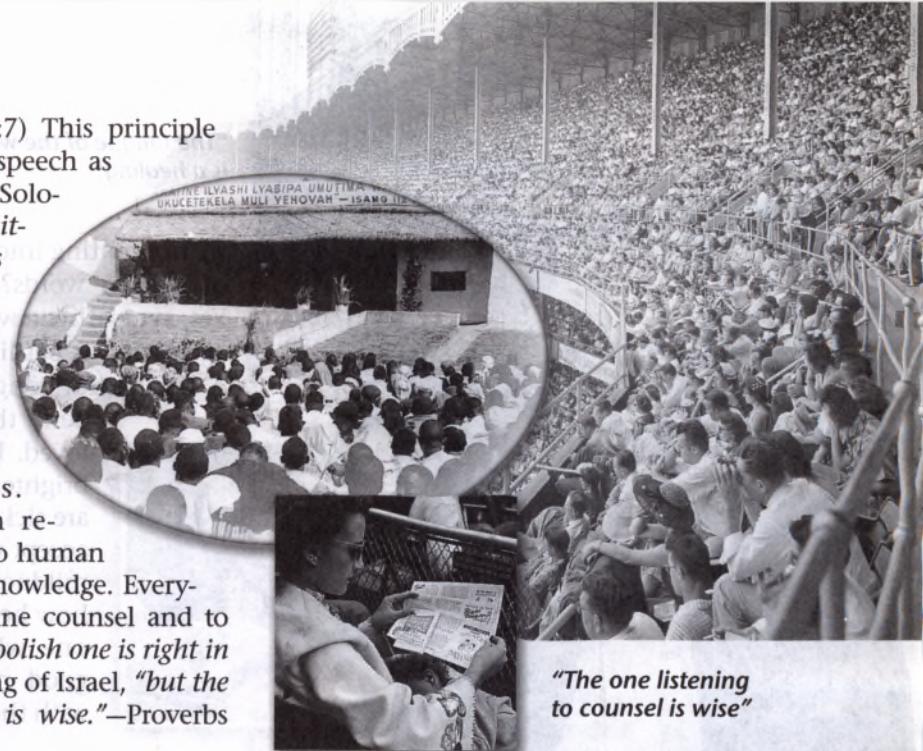
also reap." (Galatians 6:7) This principle certainly applies to our speech as well as to our actions. Solomon states: "From the fruitage of a man's mouth he is satisfied with good, and the very doing of a man's hands will come back to him."—Proverbs 12:14.

A mouth that "utters wisdom" produces the fruitage that satisfies. (Psalm 37:30) Wisdom requires knowledge, and no human is the repository of all knowledge. Everyone needs to listen to fine counsel and to heed it. "*The way of the foolish one is right in his own eyes,*" says the king of Israel, "*but the one listening to counsel is wise.*"—Proverbs 12:15.

Jehovah gives us sound counsel through his Word and through his organization, using the publications provided by "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matthew 24:45; 2 Timothy 3:16) How foolish to reject good advice and insist on our own way! We "must be swift about hearing" when Jehovah, "the One teaching men knowledge," counsels us through his channel of communication.—James 1:19; Psalm 94:10.

How do the wise and the foolish respond to insults or unjust criticisms? Solomon answers: "It is a foolish person that makes known his vexation in the same day, but the shrewd one is covering over a dishonor."—Proverbs 12:16.

When he is slighted, a foolish person gives an angry response quickly—"in the same day." But a prudent individual prays for God's spirit so as to exercise self-control. He takes time to meditate on the advice of God's Word and appreciatively ponders Jesus' words: "Whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him." (Matthew



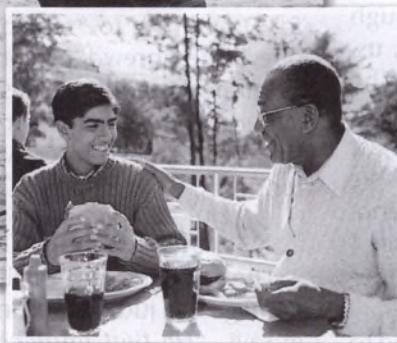
"The one listening to counsel is wise"

5:39) Desiring to "return evil for evil to no one," the shrewd person restrains his lips from speaking thoughtlessly. (Romans 12:17) When we similarly cover over any dishonor that we may encounter, we avoid further contention.

'The Tongue That Heals'

The transgression of lips can cause much damage in a judicial setting. The king of Israel says: "He that launches forth faithfulness will tell what is righteous, but a false witness, deception." (Proverbs 12:17) The true witness launches forth faithfulness because his testimony is reliable and trustworthy. His words contribute toward having justice done. The false witness, on the other hand, is full of deceit and promotes the miscarriage of justice.

"There exists the one speaking thoughtlessly as with the stabs of a sword," continues Solomon, "but the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) Words can pierce like a sword, killing friendships and stirring up trouble. Or they can be delightful and



*"The tongue of the wise ones
is a healing"*

we not putting into effect the healing power of spoken words? (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Yes, sympathetic words can encourage teenagers who are battling harmful peer pressure. A thoughtful tongue can reassure the el-

derly that they are needed and loved. Kind words can certainly brighten the day of those who are sick. Even reproof is easier to accept when given "in a spirit of mildness." (Galatians 6:1) And how healing is the tongue of the one who uses it to share the good news of God's Kingdom with those who listen!

'The Lip That Endures'

Using the word "lip" as synonymous with "tongue," Solomon states: "*It is the lip of truth that will be firmly established forever, but the tongue of falsehood will be only as long as a moment.*" (Proverbs 12:19) The expression "the lip of truth" is singular in Hebrew and has a deeper meaning than just truthful speech. "It implies such qualities as durability, permanence and reliability," says one reference work.

"Speech which has this quality will endure . . . for ever because it will be found to be reliable, in contrast with the lying tongue . . . which may deceive for a moment but cannot prevail when put to the test."

"Deception is in the heart of those fabricating mischief," states the wise king, *"but those counseling peace have rejoicing."* He adds: *"Nothing hurtful will befall the righteous one, but the wicked are the ones that will certainly be filled with calamity."*—Proverbs 12:20, 21.

pleasant, preserving friendships. And what are name-calling, shouting, constant criticism, and degrading insults if not the stabs that cause deep emotional wounds? How good it is to correct any slipups we may make in this area with healing words of sincere apology!

During the difficult times that we live in, it is not surprising that many are "broken at heart" and "crushed in spirit." (Psalm 34:18) When we "speak consolingly to the depressed souls" and "support the weak," are

The plotters of mischief can cause only pain and suffering. On the other hand, the counselors of peace reap contentment from doing what is right. They also have the joy of seeing good results. Most important, they enjoy God's approval, for "*false lips are something detestable to Jehovah, but those acting in faithfulness are a pleasure to him.*"—Proverbs 12:22.

'Speech That Covers Over Knowledge'

Describing yet another difference between the one who is careful about words and the one who is not, the king of Israel says: "A shrewd man is covering knowledge, but the heart of the stupid ones is one that calls out foolishness."—Proverbs 12:23.

A shrewd, or prudent, man knows when to speak and when not to. He is covering over knowledge by restraining himself from making a showy display of what he knows. This does not mean that he always hides his knowledge. Rather, he is discreet in his display of it. On the contrary, the stupid one is quick to speak and make his foolishness known. Let our words, therefore, be few and our tongue refrain from bragging.

Continuing to draw contrasts, Solomon makes a dramatic point regarding diligence and slothfulness. He states: "*The hand of the diligent ones is the one that will rule, but the slack hand will come to be for forced labor.*" (Proverbs 12:24) Hard work can lead to advancement and financial independence, laziness to forced labor and servitude. "Given enough time," says one scholar, "the lazy man will become a slave to the diligent one."

'The Word That Causes Rejoicing'

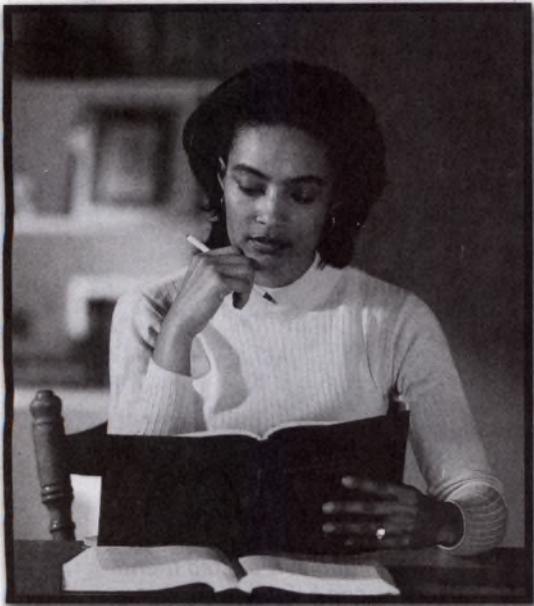
King Solomon returns to the matter of speech with a keen observation about human nature. "*Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down,*" he says, "*but the good word is what makes it rejoice.*"—Proverbs 12:25.



**Confiding in a trusted friend
can bring comfort**

Many are the anxieties and concerns that can cause the heart to be weighed down with sadness. What is needed to lighten the burden and make the heart rejoice is a good word of encouragement from an understanding person. But how would others know the intensity of the anxious care in our heart unless we open up and talk about it? Yes, when experiencing distress or depression, we need to confide in an empathetic person who can help. Moreover, putting feelings into words relieves some of the heart's anguish. Therefore, it is good to confide in a marriage mate, a parent, or a compassionate and spiritually qualified friend.

What better words of encouragement are there than those found in the Bible? We must then draw close to God by appreciatively meditating on his inspired Word. Such reflection can certainly bring joy into a troubled heart and light to sad eyes. The psalmist attests to this, saying: "The law of Jehovah is perfect, bringing back the soul. The reminder of Jehovah is trustworthy, making the



Appreciatively meditating on God's Word causes the heart to rejoice

inexperienced one wise. The orders from Jehovah are upright, causing the heart to rejoice; the commandment of Jehovah is clean, making the eyes shine."—Psalm 19:7, 8.

The Path That Is Rewarding

Contrasting the way of the upright with that of the wicked, the king of Israel says: "*The righteous one spies out his own pasturage, but the very way of wicked ones causes them to wander about.*" (Proverbs 12:26) The righteous one is cautious about his own pasturage—the associates and friends whom he chooses. He selects them wisely, endeavoring to avoid dangerous contacts. Not so with the wicked, who refuse counsel and insist on their own way. Misled, they wander about.

King Solomon next presents the difference between the slack and the diligent from yet another perspective. "*Slackness will not start up one's game animals,*" he says, "*but the diligent one is a man's precious wealth.*" (Proverbs

12:27) A slack person—"the lazy man"—does not "start up," or "roast," his game. (*New International Version*) For that matter, he cannot finish what he starts. Diligence, on the other hand, is synonymous with riches.

So harmful is laziness that the apostle Paul found it necessary to write to fellow Christians in Thessalonica and correct certain individuals there who were "walking disorderly"—not working at all but meddling with what did not concern them. Such ones imposed an expensive burden on the rest. So Paul openly counseled them, exhorting them to 'work with quietness so that they could eat food they themselves earned.' And if they would not respond to this firm counsel, Paul admonished others in the congregation to "withdraw" from them—to avoid them, evidently in social matters.—2 Thessalonians 3:6-12.

We must take to heart not only Solomon's counsel on being industrious but also his advice on the proper use of our tongue. Let us endeavor to use that little organ to cause healing and rejoicing as we avoid the transgression of the lips and pursue an upright course. "*In the path of righteousness there is life,*" Solomon assures us, "*and the journey in its pathway means no death.*"—Proverbs 12:28.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Youths—Are You Making Spiritual Advancement?

High Court Upholds True Worship in "the Land of Ararat"

Mildness—An Essential Christian Quality

Questions From Readers

Can anything be done if an infirm anointed Christian finds it impossible to attend the congregation's commemoration of the Lord's Evening Meal?

Yes. Something can and should be done out of consideration for an anointed Christian who is infirm and perhaps bedridden and therefore unable to be present when the congregation observes the Memorial of Christ's death. In such a case, the body of elders can arrange for an elder or other mature Christian male to take portions of the emblematic bread and wine to that fellow believer on the same night before sunrise.

Depending on the circumstances, the visiting elder or other brother could make brief comments and read appropriate scriptures. He can follow the pattern established by Jesus when He instituted the Lord's Evening Meal.

For instance, Matthew 26:26 might be read and the unleavened bread presented after a prayer. Next, the visiting brother could read Matthew chapter 26, verses 27 and 28, with the wine then being presented after another prayer. Brief comments could be made on the significance of each emblem, and a closing prayer would be appropriate.

Of course, every reasonable effort should be made to be present for the congregation's observance of the Lord's Evening Meal. But what may be done in an extreme situation involving an anointed Christian who is gravely ill, hospitalized, or otherwise prevented from observing the Memorial after sundown on Nisan 14? Such an anointed one can avail himself of a precedent in the Mosaic Law and commemorate it privately 30 days later.—Numbers 9:9-14.



WILL POVERTY EVER END?

LOOK! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter," said wise King Solomon of ancient Israel. (Ecclesiastes 4:1) Without doubt, many of the oppressed whom he had in mind were poor as well.

Poverty cannot be measured solely in monetary terms. According to data provided by the World Bank in June 2002, "it has been estimated that in 1998 1.2 billion people worldwide had consumption levels below \$1 a day . . . and 2.8 billion lived on less than \$2 a day." It was noted that although such figures were lower than earlier estimates, "they still remain too high in terms of human suffering."

Will poverty ever end? Jesus Christ told his disciples: "You have the poor always with you." (John 12:8) But does this mean that poverty and its bitter consequences will continue for all time? No, for although Jesus did not promise his followers that all of them would become materially rich, we should not conclude from his words that there is no hope for the poor.

Despite human efforts and the fact that promises to end poverty have often failed, God's Word, the Bible, assures us that soon there will no longer be needy people. In fact, Jesus declared "good news to the

poor." (Luke 4:18) This good news includes the promise that poverty will be eradicated. This will happen when God's Kingdom introduces righteous conditions on earth.

What a different world that will be! The heavenly King Jesus Christ "will feel sorry for the lowly one and the poor one, and the souls of the poor ones he will save." Indeed, "from oppression and from violence he will redeem their soul."—Psalm 72:13, 14.

Regarding that time, Micah 4:4 says: "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it." God's Kingdom will solve all the problems that afflict mankind, even eliminating sickness and death. God "will actually swallow up death forever, and the Sovereign Lord Jehovah will certainly wipe the tears from all faces."—Isaiah 25:8.

You can trust in these promises because they are inspired by God himself. Why not examine the evidence proving that Bible prophecies are reliable?