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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
MAY 3–JUNE 6, 2021

**SONG 39**

Make a Good Name  
With God

**PREVIEW**

As young brothers mature spiritually, they want to serve Jehovah in additional ways. To qualify as ministerial servants, they need to earn and maintain the respect of those in their congregation. What steps can young brothers take?

## Young Men—How Can You Gain the Trust of Others?

*“You have your company of young men just like dewdrops.”*

—PS. 110:3.

YOUNG brothers, you have a lot to offer. Many of you are strong and full of energy. (Prov. 20:29) You are a real asset to your congregation. You may look forward to the time when you are appointed as a ministerial servant. However, you may feel that others view you as being too young or too inexperienced to be entrusted with important work. Even though you may be young, there are things you can do right now to earn the trust and respect of those in your congregation.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, we will focus on the life of King David. We will also briefly review incidents in the lives of Asa and Jehoshaphat—two kings of Judah. We will examine the types of challenges these three men faced, how they reacted, and what young brothers can learn from their examples.

### LEARN FROM KING DAVID

<sup>3</sup> While young, David developed skills that others valued. He was clearly a spiritual person, and he cultivated his skill as a musician and used that talent to benefit Saul, God’s appointed king. (1 Sam. 16:16, 23) Do you young

1. What is true about our young brothers?
2. What will we consider in this article?
3. What is one way that younger ones can help older ones in the congregation?

men have a skill that could benefit others in the congregation? Many of you do. For example, you may notice that some older ones appreciate being shown how to make the best use of their tablets and other electronic devices for personal study and for meetings. Your knowledge of these devices can be of great benefit to such older ones.

<sup>4</sup> In his daily life, David proved to be responsible and reliable. For example, as a young man, he diligently looked after his father's sheep. That turned out to be a dangerous assignment. David later explained to King Saul: "Your servant became a shepherd of his father's flock, and a lion came, also a bear, and each carried off a sheep from the flock. I went out after it and struck it down and rescued it from its mouth." (1 Sam. 17:34, 35) David felt responsible for the welfare of the sheep, and he courageously fought for them. Young brothers can imitate David by diligently fulfilling any assignment they are given.

4. Like David, what qualities must young brothers develop? (See cover picture.)

<sup>5</sup> Young David developed a close, personal relationship with Jehovah. That relationship was more important than David's courage or his skill with a stringed instrument. Jehovah was not only David's God but also his Friend—his close Friend. **(Read Psalm 25:14.)** Young brothers, the most important thing that you can do is to strengthen your relationship with your heavenly Father, and that may result in your receiving additional privileges.

<sup>6</sup> David had to overcome the negative views that others had of him. For example, when David volunteered to fight Goliath, King Saul tried to dissuade him, saying: "You are but a boy." (1 Sam. 17:31-33) Earlier, David's own brother accused him of being irresponsible. (1 Sam. 17:26-30) However, Jehovah did not view David as being either immature or irresponsible. He knew the young man. And by relying on his Friend, Jehovah, for strength, David

5. According to Psalm 25:14, what is the most important thing that young brothers can do?

6. What negative views did some have of David?



Young brothers can humbly assist others in many ways  
(See paragraphs 8-9)

struck down Goliath.—1 Sam. 17:45, 48-51.

<sup>7</sup> What can you learn from David's experience? We learn that we need to be patient. It may take time for those who have known you as a child to start viewing you as a young adult. You can be sure, however, that Jehovah sees beyond your outward appearance. He knows who you are and what you are capable of doing. (1 Sam. 16:7) Strengthen your relationship with God. David did that by looking closely at Jehovah's creative works. David considered what such works reveal about the Creator. (Ps. 8:3, 4; 139:14; Rom. 1:20) Another thing you can do is to look to Jehovah for strength. For example, do some of your schoolmates make fun of you because you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses? If so, pray for Jehovah to help you deal with this challenge. And apply the practical advice you find in his Word and in our Bible-based publications and videos. Each time you see Jehovah help you deal with a challenge, your confidence in him will grow. Furthermore, as others see that you rely on Jehovah, you will gain their trust.

<sup>8</sup> Consider another challenge that David faced. After he was anointed to be king, David had to wait many years before he was officially enthroned as king of Judah. (1 Sam. 16:13; 2 Sam. 2:3, 4) During that interval, what helped him to wait patiently? Instead of becoming

paralyzed by discouragement, David focused on what he could do. For example, while living as a fugitive in Philistine territory, David seized the opportunity to fight against Israel's enemies. In doing so, he protected the boundaries of the territory of Judah.—1 Sam. 27:1-12.

<sup>9</sup> What can young brothers learn from David's example? Use the opportunities open to you to serve your brothers. Consider the experience of a brother named Ricardo.\* From his early teens, he dreamed of serving as a regular pioneer. But he was not ready. Instead of giving up or becoming bitter, Ricardo increased his share in the ministry. He says: "Looking back, I can see that it was good for me to make needed progress. I focused on following up on any interest I found and on having productive return visits. I even conducted my first Bible study. As I gained experience, my confidence grew." Ricardo now serves as an effective regular pioneer and as a ministerial servant.

<sup>10</sup> Consider another account in David's life. During the time when he and his men were fugitives, they had left their families to go on a mission. While the men were away, an enemy force raided their homes and took their families captive. David could have concluded that with all the experience he had as a warrior, he could surely devise an effective strategy for rescuing the captives. Instead, David looked to Jehovah for guidance. With the help of a priest

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7. What can you learn from one account about David?

8-9. What helped David to wait patiently until he became king, and what can young brothers learn from his example?

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\* Some names have been changed.

10. On one occasion, what did David do before he made an important decision?





Young brothers  
should seek the  
advice of elders  
(See paragraph 11)

named Abiathar, David inquired of Jehovah: “Should I chase after this marauder band?” Jehovah indicated that David should do so and assured him that he would be successful. (1 Sam. 30:7-10) What can you learn from this incident?

<sup>11</sup> Seek advice before you make decisions. Consult your parents. You can also get good advice by talking to experienced elders. Jehovah trusts these appointed men, and you can too. Jehovah views them as “gifts” to the congregation. (Eph. 4:8) You will benefit by imitating their faith and by listening to the wise suggestions they give. Now let us consider what we can learn from King Asa.

#### LEARN FROM KING ASA

<sup>12</sup> As a young man, King Asa was humble and courageous. For example, when he succeeded his father, Abijah, he launched a campaign against idolatry. He also “told Judah to search for Je-

hovah the God of their forefathers and to observe the Law and the commandment.” (2 Chron. 14:1-7) And when Zerah the Ethiopian invaded Judah with 1,000,000 soldiers, Asa wisely turned to Jehovah for help, saying: “O Jehovah, it does not matter to you whether those you help are many or have no power. Help us, O Jehovah our God, for we are relying on you.” This beautiful expression shows how much confidence Asa had in Jehovah’s ability to save him and his people. Asa trusted in his heavenly Father, and “Jehovah defeated the Ethiopians.”—2 Chron. 14:8-12.

<sup>13</sup> You would no doubt agree that facing an army of 1,000,000 soldiers was a huge challenge, and it was one that Asa met successfully. Sadly, however, when a less daunting challenge presented itself, Asa did not consult Jehovah. On being threatened by wicked King Baasha of Israel, Asa turned to the king of Syria for help. That decision led to disaster! Through his prophet Hanani,

11. What can you do before making decisions?

12. What qualities did King Asa have when he began to rule?

13. What later happened to Asa, and why?

Young brothers who are industrious and reliable acquire a fine reputation (See paragraph 16)



Jehovah told Asa: “Because you relied on the king of Syria and did not rely on Jehovah your God, the army of the king of Syria has escaped out of your hand.” In fact, from then on, Asa was constantly at war. (2 Chron. 16:7, 9; 1 Ki. 15:32) What is the lesson?

<sup>14</sup> Remain humble and continue to rely on Jehovah. When you got baptized, you showed great faith and trust in Jehovah. And Jehovah happily entrusted you with the privilege of becoming a member of his family. The key now is to continue to rely on Jehovah. It may seem that it is easy to rely on Jehovah when you must make life-altering decisions, but what about at other times? How important it is that you trust in Jehovah when making decisions, including those regarding entertainment, secular work, and life goals! Do not rely on your own wisdom. Instead, look for Bible principles that apply to your circumstances, and then act in harmony with

14. How can you rely on Jehovah, and according to 1 Timothy 4:12, what will you become if you do so?

that direction. (Prov. 3:5, 6) If you do so, you will make Jehovah happy and you will earn the respect of those in your congregation.—**Read 1 Timothy 4:12.**

#### LEARN FROM KING JEHOShAPHAT

<sup>15</sup> Of course, like all of us, you are imperfect, and at times you will make mistakes. However, this should not prevent you from doing all you can in Jehovah’s service. Consider the example of King Jehoshaphat. He had many fine qualities. As a young man, “he searched for the God of his father and followed his commandment.” Furthermore, he sent princes to travel throughout the cities of Judah to teach the people about Jehovah. (2 Chron. 17:4, 7) As sincere as he was, though, Jehoshaphat sometimes made bad decisions. As a result of one such decision, Jehoshaphat was censured by one of Jehovah’s representatives. (**Read 2 Chronicles 18:1-3; 19:2.**) What lesson can you learn from that account?

15. As recorded at 2 Chronicles 18:1-3; 19:2, what mistakes did King Jehoshaphat make?

<sup>16</sup> Accept and apply counsel. Perhaps, like many young men, you struggle to set proper priorities for yourself. Do not be discouraged. Note the experience of a young brother named Rajeev. Referring to his teenage years, he says: “I sometimes felt lost during those years. Like many other young ones, I was more interested in sports and having fun than in going to the meetings or out in the ministry.” What helped Rajeev? A concerned elder gave him some counsel. Rajeev relates: “He helped me to reason on the principle found at 1 Timothy 4:8.” Rajeev responded humbly to the counsel and reevaluated his priorities in life. He says: “I decided to make spiritual goals a priority.” The result? “A few years after receiving that counsel,” explains Rajeev, “I qualified to serve as a ministerial servant.”

#### MAKE YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER PROUD OF YOU

<sup>17</sup> Older ones deeply appreciate you young men who serve Jehovah “shoul-

der to shoulder” with them! (Zeph. 3:9)

They love your zealous spirit and the energetic, enthusiastic way you do the work you are given. You have found favor in their eyes.—1 John 2:14.

<sup>18</sup> Young brothers, never forget that Jehovah loves and trusts you. He foretold that during the last days, there would be an army of young men who would offer themselves willingly. (Ps. 110:1-3) He knows that you love him and want to serve him to the best of your ability. So be patient with others, and be patient with yourself. When you make mistakes, accept the training and discipline that you receive, viewing it as coming from Jehovah. (Heb. 12:6) Diligently care for any assignments you are given. And above all, in everything you do, make your heavenly Father proud of you.—**Read Proverbs 27:11.**

18. As indicated at Proverbs 27:11, how does Jehovah feel about the young men who serve him?

16. What can you learn from Rajeev’s experience?

17. How do older ones feel about the young men who serve Jehovah?

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#### WHAT DID YOU LEARN FROM THE LIFE OF . . .

■ David?

■ Asa?

■ Jehoshaphat?

**SONG 85**

Welcome One Another

**PREVIEW**

Not all of us presently have the privilege of conducting a Bible study. However, all of us can help someone to progress to baptism. In this article, we will see how each of us can help a student to reach that goal.

## As a Congregation, Help Bible Students to Progress to Baptism

*“Each respective member . . . contributes to the growth of the body.”—EPH. 4:16.*

“I LOVED what I was learning in my Bible study,” says Amy, who lives in Fiji. “I knew that it was the truth. But it was not until I began associating with the brothers and sisters that I made needed changes and progressed to baptism.” Amy’s experience highlights this important truth: A Bible student is more likely to make steady progress toward baptism when he receives help from others in the congregation.

<sup>2</sup> Each publisher can contribute to the increase of the congregation. (Eph. 4:16) A pioneer named Leilani, who lives in Vanuatu, notes: “It has been said that it takes a village to raise a child. I think the same is true about making disciples; it usually takes a congregation to bring someone into the truth.” Family members, friends, and teachers all play a role in helping a child to progress to maturity. They do this by encouraging the child and teaching him important lessons. Similarly, publishers can advise, encourage, and set a good example for Bible students, helping them to progress to baptism.—Prov. 15:22.

<sup>3</sup> Why should the publisher who conducts the Bible study welcome the help that other publishers can give the student? Note what Ana, a special pioneer in Moldova, says, “It is very difficult for one person to fill all the needs that a Bible student has when he starts to

1-2. Who can help a Bible student to progress to baptism?

3. What do you learn from the comments made by Ana, Dorin, and Leilani?





When you are going to sit in on a Bible study, prepare the material that will be considered (See paragraphs 5-7)

progress.” Dorin, a special pioneer serving in that same country, observes, “Often, other publishers say something that touches the student’s heart, something that I would never have thought of.” Leilani mentions another reason, “The love and warmth shown to the student can help him to identify Jehovah’s people.” —John 13:35.

<sup>4</sup> However, you may wonder, ‘How can I personally help a Bible student to progress when I am not the one who conducts the study?’ Let us consider what we can do when we are invited to sit in on a Bible study and what we can do when the Bible student begins to attend meetings. We will also see how elders can help Bible students to progress to baptism.

#### WHEN YOU SIT IN ON A BIBLE STUDY

<sup>5</sup> At a Bible study, the teacher is primarily responsible for helping the student to understand God’s Word. If the teacher invites you to accompany him, you should view yourself as his partner. Your role is to support him. (Eccl. 4: 9, 10) What, specifically, can you do to

help make the Bible study session productive?

<sup>6</sup> ***Prepare for the Bible study.*** First, ask the teacher to tell you a little about the student. (**Read Proverbs 20:18.**) You could ask: “What is the Bible student’s background? What topic will you be studying with him? What is your objective for this session? Is there anything that I should or should not do or say while at the study? What might encourage the student to progress?” Obviously, the teacher would not share any confidential information, but what he does share can be helpful. A missionary named Joy has this type of discussion with those who accompany her on a Bible study. She acknowledges: “This discussion helps my companion to be interested in the student and to know how to contribute to the study.”

<sup>7</sup> If you are invited to sit in on a study, it would be good if you could prepare the material that will be discussed. (Ezra 7:10) Dorin, the brother quoted earlier, says: “I appreciate it when my

4. What will we discuss in this article?
5. What role do you play when you are invited to sit in on a Bible study?

6. When you are going to sit in on a Bible study, how can you apply the principle found at Proverbs 20:18?

7. Why do you as a companion need to prepare for the study?



companion prepares for the study. Then he can participate in a meaningful way.” Additionally, the student will likely notice that both of you are well-prepared, and this will set a good example for him. Even if you are not able to prepare the material thoroughly, at least take some time to get the key points of the lesson in mind.

<sup>8</sup> Prayer is an important part of a Bible study session, so think in advance about what to say if you are asked to offer a prayer. Then your prayer will likely be more meaningful. (Ps. 141:2) Hanae, who lives in Japan, still remembers the prayers offered by a sister who accompanied her Bible teacher. She says: “I felt her strong friendship with Jehovah, and I wanted to be like her. I also felt loved when she included my name in her prayers.”

<sup>9</sup> **Support the teacher during the study.** “A helpful companion follows along in the study,” says Omamuyovbi, a special pioneer in Nigeria. “The companion contributes meaningfully but does not talk too much, realizing that the teach-

er takes the lead.” How can you know when and how to contribute to the study? (Prov. 25:11) Listen attentively while the teacher and the student are talking. **(Read James 1:19.)** Only then will you be ready to assist if fitting. Of course, you must use good judgment. For instance, you would not want to talk too much, interrupt the teacher’s line of reasoning, or introduce a different topic. But with a brief comment, illustration, or question, you could help clarify the point being taught. At times, you may feel that you cannot add much to the study. But if you commend the student and show personal interest in him, you will do much to help him to progress.

<sup>10</sup> **Share your experience.** If it is appropriate, you could briefly tell the student how you learned the truth, how you overcame a challenge, or how you have seen Jehovah’s helping hand in your life. (Ps. 78:4, 7) Your experience could be just what the student needs to hear. It may strengthen his faith or encourage him to continue progressing to baptism. And it might show him how to overcome a trial that he is facing. (1 Pet. 5:9) Ga-

8. How could you make sure that your prayer at a Bible study is meaningful?

9. According to James 1:19, what can you do to be a helpful companion at a Bible study?

10. How might your experience help a Bible student?



All of us can encourage the student to continue attending meetings  
(See paragraph 11)

briel, who lives in Brazil and now serves as a pioneer, remembers how he benefited when he was studying the Bible. He recalls: “When I heard the brothers’ experiences, I learned that Jehovah sees the challenges we face. And if they could overcome them, I could too.”

#### WHEN THE BIBLE STUDENT ATTENDS MEETINGS

<sup>11</sup> For a Bible student to progress to baptism, he must regularly attend congregation meetings and benefit from them. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Likely, the teacher will invite him to his first meeting. When he attends, all of us can encourage him to keep on coming to the Kingdom Hall. How, specifically, can we do that?

<sup>12</sup> **Warmly welcome the student.** (Rom. 15:7) If the student is made to feel welcome at the meetings, he will likely be more inclined to continue coming to the Kingdom Hall. Without overwhelming him, greet the student warmly, and introduce him to others. Do not assume that he is being cared for; the teacher may be delayed or have responsibilities to handle. Pay close attention to what the student says, and show a per-

sonal interest in him. What effect could your warm welcome have? Note the experience of Dmitrii, who was baptized just a few years ago and now serves as a ministerial servant. Recalling his first meeting, he says: “A brother saw me waiting nervously outside the Kingdom Hall and kindly accompanied me inside. Many came up to greet me. I was really surprised. I liked it so much that I wished we had a meeting every day of the week. I felt something I had not experienced anywhere else.”

<sup>13</sup> **Set a good example.** Your conduct can help to convince the Bible student that he has found the truth. (Matt. 5: 16) Vitalii, who now serves as a pioneer in Moldova, says: “I learned how others in the congregation lived, thought, and behaved. This convinced me that Jehovah’s Witnesses truly walk with God.”

<sup>14</sup> To qualify for baptism, the student needs to apply what he is learning. This is not always easy. But when the student observes how you benefit from applying Bible principles, he may well be motivated to imitate you. (1 Cor. 11:1) Consider

11-12. Why should we warmly welcome a Bible student who attends meetings?

13. What effect can your conduct have on a Bible student?

14. How might your example help someone to keep progressing?



Elders, your warm interest can help students to progress  
(See paragraph 17)



the experience of Hanae, mentioned earlier. She comments: “The brothers and sisters were living examples of what I was learning. I saw how I could be encouraging and forgiving and how I could show love. They always spoke favorably about others. I wanted to imitate them.”

<sup>15</sup> ***Make friends with the student.*** As the student continues attending meetings, keep showing personal interest in him. (Phil. 2:4) Why not talk with him? Without being too personal, you could commend him for any positive changes he has made and ask him about his Bible study, his family, and his work. These conversations might draw you closer together. When you befriend the student, you help him to progress to baptism. (**Read Proverbs 27:17.**) Hanae now serves as a regular pioneer. Recalling when she first started to attend meetings, she says: “As I made friends in the congregation, I began looking forward to the meetings, and I attended even when I felt tired. I enjoyed the company of my new friends, and this helped me to end my friendships with those who did not share my beliefs. I wanted to get closer to Jehovah and to

the brothers and sisters. Hence, I decided to get baptized.”

<sup>16</sup> As the student continues to progress and make changes, help him to feel that he *belongs* in the congregation. You can do this by being hospitable. (Heb. 13:2) Looking back on his days as a Bible student, Denis, who serves in Moldova, remembers: “Several times, my wife and I were invited to socialize with the brothers. We heard how they had seen Jehovah help them. That encouraged us. These occasions helped to convince us that we wanted to serve Jehovah and that a wonderful life awaited us.” Once the Bible student qualifies as a publisher, you can also invite him to accompany you in the ministry. Diego, a publisher from Brazil, says: “Many brothers invited me to go out in the ministry. This was the best way to get to know them well. As I did, I learned a lot, and I felt closer to Jehovah and Jesus.”

#### HOW CAN ELDERS HELP?

<sup>17</sup> ***Make time for Bible students.*** Elders, your loving interest can help students to progress to baptism. Could you regu-

15. How does Proverbs 27:17 help us to see why we should make friends with a Bible student as he continues attending meetings?

16. What else can you do to help a Bible student to feel at home in the congregation?

17. How can elders help Bible students?



larly talk to Bible students at the meetings? They will sense your interest if you remember their name, especially when they start commenting. Could you rearrange your schedule every so often to accompany a publisher when he studies the Bible with someone? You may have a bigger impact on the student than you can imagine. A pioneer named Jackie, who lives in Nigeria, relates: “Many students are shocked to learn that the brother who accompanied me to their study is an elder. One Bible student said: ‘My pastor would never do that. He visits only the rich and only if they pay him!’” That student now attends meetings.

<sup>18</sup> ***Train and encourage Bible teachers.*** Elders, you have the weighty responsibility of helping publishers to be effective in their ministry, including their Bible study work. **(Read Acts 20:28.)** If someone is shy about conducting a Bible study in your presence, offer to conduct the study. Jackie, quoted earlier, relates: “Elders regularly inquire about my Bible students. When I face challenges in con-

18. How can elders fulfill the responsibility entrusted to them as recorded at Acts 20:28?

ducting a Bible study, they offer helpful advice.” Elders can do a great deal to encourage and to motivate the teachers to persevere. (1 Thess. 5:11) Jackie adds: “I like it when elders encourage me and tell me that they appreciate my hard work. Such words refresh me like a glass of cold water on a hot day. Their commendation boosts my confidence and increases the joy I get from the Bible study work.”—Prov. 25:25.

<sup>19</sup> Even if we do not presently conduct a Bible study, we can still help someone to grow spiritually. Without taking over, we can with our well-prepared comments support the teacher during a study session. We can befriend the students when they come to the Kingdom Hall, and we can serve as good examples for them. And elders can encourage the students by making time for them and the teachers by training and commending them. Really, what greater joy could we have than knowing that we played even a small part in helping someone come to love and serve our Father, Jehovah?

19. What joy can all of us have?

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## HOW CAN YOU HELP BIBLE STUDENTS TO PROGRESS TO BAPTISM . . .

- |  |                                       |                             |
|--|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| ■ when you are invited to sit in on a Bible study? | ■ when they begin attending meetings? | ■ if you serve as an elder? |
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## SONG 94

Grateful for God's Word

## PREVIEW

Many accounts in the Bible prove that Jehovah loves his servants and will help them through any trial. This article discusses how you can do personal Bible study that will help you to benefit more from the accounts you read.

## How to Gain Strength From the Scriptures

*“God . . . supplies endurance.”*—ROM. 15:5.

ARE you suffering through a difficult trial? Perhaps someone in the congregation has hurt you. (Jas. 3:2) Or maybe your workmates or schoolmates ridicule you for serving Jehovah. (1 Pet. 4:3, 4) Or family members are possibly trying to stop you from attending meetings or from talking to others about your faith. (Matt. 10:35, 36) If a trial is especially painful, you may feel like giving up. But you can be confident that no matter what challenge you face, Jehovah will give you the wisdom to deal with it and the strength to endure it.

<sup>2</sup> In his Word, Jehovah included detailed descriptions of how imperfect individuals dealt with difficult trials. Why? So that we can learn from them. That is what Jehovah moved the apostle Paul to write. **(Read Romans 15:4.)** Reading these accounts can bring us a measure of comfort and hope. However, to benefit, we need to do more than just read the Bible. We must allow the Scriptures to mold our thinking and to touch our hearts. What can we do if we are looking for guidance on how to deal with a specific challenge? We can use this four-step method: **(1) Pray, (2) Imagine, (3) Meditate, and (4) Apply.** Let us discuss what is involved in each of those steps.\* Then we will use this method of study to learn from

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\* The method of study suggested here is just one option you can use. Other suggestions for studying the Bible can be found by consulting the *Research Guide for Jehovah's Witnesses* under the subject “The Bible” and the subheading “Reading and Understanding the Bible.”

1. What types of trials may Jehovah's people face?
2. According to Romans 15:4, what effect can reading God's Word have on us?

incidents in the lives of King David and the apostle Paul.

<sup>3</sup> **(1) Pray.** Before you start reading the Bible, ask Jehovah to help you to see how you can benefit from what you read. For example, if you are looking for counsel on how to deal with a problem, ask Jehovah to help you find principles in his Word that can guide you.—Phil. 4: 6, 7; Jas. 1:5.

<sup>4</sup> **(2) Imagine.** Jehovah has given us the amazing faculty of imagination. To help you bring a Bible account to life, try to imagine the scene and see yourself in the place of the key character. Try to see the things he or she saw and to feel the emotions that the character might have felt.

<sup>5</sup> **(3) Meditate.** Meditation means thinking carefully about what you read and about how the information applies to you. It helps you to connect thoughts and gain a deeper understanding of a subject. Reading the Bible without meditation is like looking at pieces of a jigsaw puzzle on a table without assembling them. Meditation is like putting those pieces together so that you can see the whole picture. To help you meditate, you could ask and answer such questions as these: ‘What did the key character in the account do to help himself? How did Jehovah help him? How can I use the lessons I have learned to help me endure trials?’

<sup>6</sup> **(4) Apply.** Jesus said that if we do not

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3. Before you start reading the Bible, what should you do, and why?

4. What can help you to bring a Bible account to life?

5. What is meditation, and how can you meditate?

6. Why must we apply what we learn?

apply what we learn, we are like a man who builds his house on sand. He works hard, but he is wasting his effort. Why? Because when a storm and flood hit his house, it will collapse. (Matt. 7:24-27) Similarly, if we pray, imagine, and meditate but we do not apply what we learn, we will have wasted our effort. When our faith is tested by trials or persecution, it will not be strong enough. On the other hand, when we study and apply what we learn, we make better decisions, we gain more peace, and we develop stronger faith. (Isa. 48:17, 18) Using the four steps we have just discussed, let us see what we can learn from an incident in the life of King David.

#### WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM KING DAVID?

<sup>7</sup> Has a friend or a family member betrayed your trust? If so, you would benefit by reviewing the account of King David’s son Absalom, who betrayed his father and tried to steal the kingdom from him.—2 Sam. 15:5-14, 31; 18:6-14.

<sup>8</sup> **(1) Pray.** With the account in mind, tell Jehovah how you are feeling about the way you have been mistreated. (Ps. 6:6-9) Be specific. Then ask Jehovah to help you see principles that can guide you as you try to cope with this difficult challenge.

<sup>9</sup> **(2) Imagine.** Think about the events in this account, and imagine how King David was affected. David’s son Absalom works for years to make the

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7. What Bible account will we now consider?

8. What could you do to get Jehovah’s help?

9. How would you summarize the events involving David and Absalom?

If we are looking for guidance on how to deal with a specific challenge, what can we do?

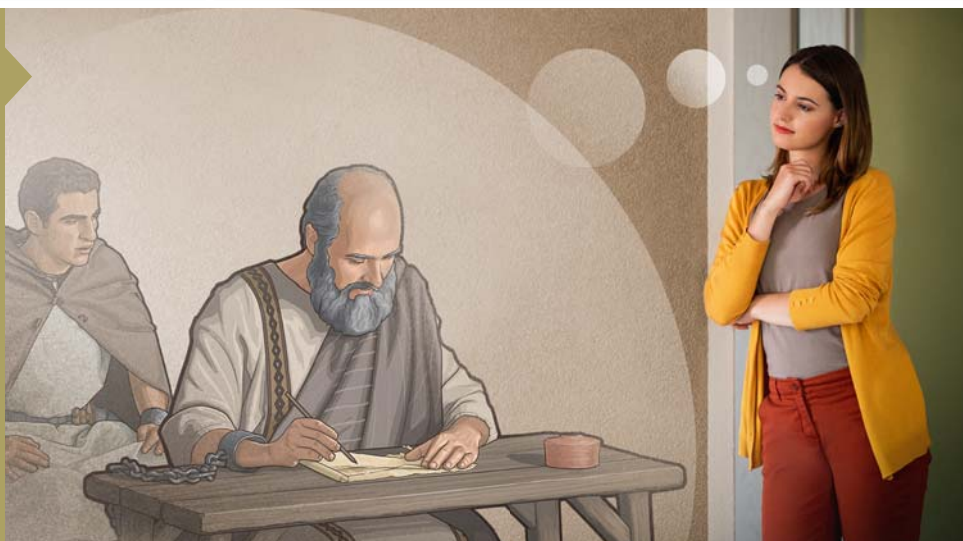
## 1 PRAY

Before you start reading the Bible, ask Jehovah to help you to see how you can benefit  
(See paragraph 3)



## 2 IMAGINE

Try to see yourself in the place of the key character in the Bible account  
(See paragraph 4)



## 3 MEDITATE

Think carefully about what you read and about how the information applies to you  
(See paragraph 5)



## 4 APPLY

Use what you learn in order to make better decisions, to gain more peace, and to strengthen your faith  
(See paragraph 6)





people love him. (2 Sam. 15:7) When Absalom feels that the time is right, he sends spies throughout all of Israel to prepare the people to accept him as their ruler. He even convinces one of David's close friends and advisers, Ahithophel, to join in the rebellion. Absalom declares himself king, and then he tries to capture and kill David, who may have been seriously ill at the time. (Ps. 41:1-9) David learns of the plot and escapes from Jerusalem. Eventually, Absalom's army clashes with forces loyal to David. The rebel army loses, and David's son Absalom is killed.

<sup>10</sup> Next, imagine how David must have felt as all of this was happening to him. He loved Absalom and trusted Ahithophel. Yet, both of these close companions betrayed him. They hurt him deeply and even tried to kill him. David could have lost faith in his other friends, suspecting that they too had joined Absalom. He might have thought only of himself and have wanted to flee the country alone. Or he could just have given up in despair. But David did none of those things. Instead, he overcame this difficult trial. Why was he able to do so?

<sup>11</sup> **(3) Meditate.** What principles can you learn from the account? Answer the question, "What did David do to help himself?" David did not panic and make hasty, unwise decisions. Neither did he procrastinate, seemingly paralyzed by fear. Instead, he prayed to Jehovah for help. He also asked his friends to help him. And he acted quickly to implement

the decisions he made. Although he was deeply hurt, David did not become cynical and bitter. He continued to trust in Jehovah and to trust his friends.

<sup>12</sup> How did Jehovah help David? By doing some research, you will learn that Jehovah gave David the strength he needed to endure this trial. (Ps. 3:1-8; superscription) Jehovah blessed the decisions David made. And he supported David's loyal friends as they fought to protect their king.

<sup>13</sup> **(4) Apply.** Ask yourself, 'How can I imitate David?' You would need to act immediately to solve the problem. Depending on the circumstances, you could apply Jesus' counsel recorded in Matthew chapter 18 either directly or in principle. **(Read Matthew 18:15-17.)** But you should not make hasty decisions that are driven by emotion. You should pray for Jehovah to give you a calm heart and the wisdom you need to deal with the matter. Do not lose faith in your friends. Instead, be willing to accept help that is offered. (Prov. 17:17) Most important, follow the advice Jehovah gives you in his Word.—Prov. 3:5, 6.

#### WHAT CAN YOU LEARN FROM PAUL?

<sup>14</sup> Are you dealing with opposition from members of your family? Or do you live in a country where the work of Jehovah's people is severely restricted or even banned? If so, you might be encouraged

12. What did Jehovah do to help David?

13. How can you imitate David if another person seriously hurts you in some way? (Matthew 18:15-17)

14. What situations might cause you to focus on 2 Timothy 1:12-16; 4:6-11, 17-22?

10. How could King David have reacted?

11. How did David respond to the crisis?

by reading 2 Timothy 1:12-16 and 4:6-11, 17-22.\* Paul wrote this portion of Scripture while he was in prison.

<sup>15</sup> **(1) Pray.** Before you read those passages, tell Jehovah about your problem and how it makes you feel. Be specific. Then ask Jehovah to help you discern principles in the accounts about Paul's trials that will help you to know how you should respond to the challenge you are facing.

<sup>16</sup> **(2) Imagine.** Imagine yourself in Paul's situation. He is bound in chains in a prison in Rome. He had been in prison before, but this time he is certain that he will be executed. Some of his associates have abandoned him, and he is physically exhausted.—2 Tim. 1:15.

<sup>17</sup> Paul could have focused on the past, thinking that if he had made different choices, he might not have been arrested. He could have become bitter with the men in the district of Asia who had abandoned him, and he might have adopted a cynical attitude toward his other friends. But Paul did not do any of those things. Why was he able to stay confident and hopeful?

<sup>18</sup> **(3) Meditate.** Answer the question, "How did Paul help himself?" Even with the threat of death hanging over him, Paul did not lose sight of the big issue—that of bringing glory to Jehovah. And he continued to think about

how he could encourage others. He relied on Jehovah through regular prayer. (2 Tim. 1:3) Rather than focus excessively on those who had abandoned him, he expressed deep gratitude for the loving support of his friends who loyally helped him in practical ways. In addition, Paul continued to study God's Word. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17; 4:13) Most important, he had absolute confidence that Jehovah and Jesus loved him. They had not abandoned him, and they would reward him for his loyal service.

<sup>19</sup> Jehovah had warned Paul that he would have to endure persecution for being a Christian. (Acts 21:11-13) How did Jehovah help Paul? He answered Paul's prayers and over time gave him power. (2 Tim. 4:17) Paul was assured that he would receive the reward that he had worked so hard to gain. Jehovah also moved Paul's loyal friends to give him practical help.

<sup>20</sup> **(4) Apply.** Ask yourself, 'How can I imitate Paul?' Like Paul, we should expect that we will be persecuted for our faith. (Mark 10:29, 30) To maintain our integrity under trial, we need to rely on Jehovah in prayer and maintain a good study routine. And we must always remember that one of the most important things we can do is to bring glory to Jehovah. We can be certain that Jehovah will never abandon us and that there is nothing anyone can do to break his love for us.—**Read Romans 8:38, 39; Heb. 13:5, 6.**

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\* Do not read these accounts during the congregation Watchtower Study.

15. What could you ask Jehovah for?

16. How would you summarize Paul's situation?

17. How could Paul have reacted?

18. How did Paul respond to the trial he faced?

19. How did Jehovah help Paul?

20. With Romans 8:38, 39 in mind, how can you imitate Paul?

## LEARN FROM OTHER BIBLE CHARACTERS

<sup>21</sup> Whatever our circumstances, we can gain strength from Bible examples. For instance, Aya, a pioneer in Japan, says that the story of Jonah helped her to overcome her fear of public witnessing. Hector, a youth in Indonesia whose parents do not serve Jehovah, is motivated by the example of Ruth to learn about Jehovah and serve him.

<sup>22</sup> Where can you find Bible examples that will strengthen you? Our videos and audio dramas and the series “Imitate Their Faith” help bring Bible events to life.\* Before you watch, listen to, or read these well-researched accounts, ask

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\* See “Imitate Their Faith—Men and Women in the Bible” on jw.org. (Go to BIBLE TEACHINGS > FAITH IN GOD.)

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21. What helped Aya and Hector to overcome the challenges they faced?

22. How can you get the most out of Bible dramas or the series “Imitate Their Faith”?

Jehovah to help you find specific points that you can apply. Imagine yourself in the place of the main character. Meditate on what these dear servants of Jehovah did and how he helped them to overcome difficulties. Then apply the lessons to your own situation. Thank Jehovah for the help he is already giving you. And show that you appreciate the help by looking for opportunities to encourage and support others.

<sup>23</sup> Life in this world controlled by Satan can be hard to deal with, even overwhelming at times. (2 Tim. 3:1) But we do not need to be anxious or afraid. Jehovah knows what we are going through. When we fall, he promises to hold on to us with his strong right hand. **(Read Isaiah 41:10, 13.)** With full confidence in his support, we can gain strength from the Scriptures and overcome any challenge.

23. According to Isaiah 41:10, 13, what does Jehovah promise to do for us?

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ■ What four-step method of study can help us to benefit from Bible examples? | ■ What did you learn from the examples of King David and of the apostle Paul? | ■ What Bible character would you like to study in more detail? |
|--|---|--|

**SONG 129**

We Will Keep Enduring

**PREVIEW**

In this article, we will see how love for Jehovah, love for our fellow believers, and even love for our enemies help us to endure the world's hatred. We will also see why Jesus said that we can be happy when we are hated.

## Love Helps Us to Endure Hatred

*“These things I command you, that you love one another. If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you.”—JOHN 15:17, 18.*

JEHOVAH created us to love and to be loved. So when someone hates us, we feel hurt and perhaps even afraid. For example, a sister named Georgina, who lives in Europe, says: “When I was 14, my mother hated me for serving Jehovah. I felt rejected and began doubting that I was a good person.”\* A brother named Danylo writes: “When soldiers hit me, insulted me, and threatened me because I was one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I felt frightened and humiliated.” Such hatred hurts, but it does not surprise us. Jesus foretold that we would be hated. —**Read Matthew 24:9.**

<sup>2</sup> The world hates Jesus’ followers. Why? Because like Jesus, we are “no part of the world.” (John 15:17-19) As a result, while we respect human governments, we refuse to worship them or the emblems that represent them. We give Jehovah our exclusive devotion. We uphold God’s right to rule mankind—a right that Satan and his “offspring” vigorously challenge. (Gen. 3:1-5, 15) We preach that God’s Kingdom is mankind’s only hope and that the Kingdom will soon crush all those who oppose it. (Dan. 2:44; Rev. 19:19-21) That message is good news to the meek but bad news to the wicked.—Ps. 37:10, 11.

<sup>3</sup> We are also hated because we live by God’s righ-

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\* Names have been changed.

1. According to Matthew 24:9, why should we not be surprised if the world hates us?

2-3. Why are Jesus’ followers hated?



teous standards. These standards contrast sharply with the world's degraded morals. For example, many people now openly approve of grossly immoral practices similar to the ones for which God destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah! (Jude 7) Because we hold to the Bible's standards regarding such practices, many people ridicule us and call us intolerant.—1 Pet. 4:3, 4.

<sup>4</sup> What can help us to endure when people hate us and insult us? We need to have strong faith that Jehovah will help us. Like a shield, our faith can “extinguish all the wicked one's burning arrows.” (Eph. 6:16) But we need more than faith. We also need love. Why? Because love “does not become provoked.” It bears and endures all hurtful things. (1 Cor. 13:4-7, 13) Let us now see how love for Jehovah, love for our fellow worshippers, and even love for our enemies help us to endure hatred.

#### LOVE FOR JEHOVAH HELPS US TO ENDURE HATRED

<sup>5</sup> On the night before his enemies put him to death, Jesus said to his loyal followers: “I love the Father, [so] I am doing just as the Father has commanded me to do.” (John 14:31) Jesus' love for Jehovah strengthened him to face the trials that lay ahead. Our love for Jehovah can do the same for us.

<sup>6</sup> Love for God has always helped Je-

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4. What qualities strengthen us when people hate us?

5. How did Jesus' love for his Father strengthen him?

6. According to Romans 5:3-5, how do Jehovah's servants feel about enduring the world's hatred?

hovah's servants to endure persecution. For instance, when the apostles were commanded by the powerful Jewish supreme court to stop preaching, love for God moved them to “obey God as ruler rather than men.” (Acts 5:29; 1 John 5:3) Such unbreakable love also strengthens our brothers today, many of whom are standing firm against cruel and powerful governments. Instead of being discouraged, we count it a privilege to endure the world's hatred.—Acts 5:41; **read Romans 5:3-5.**

<sup>7</sup> Perhaps one of our biggest tests comes from members of our own family. When we begin to show interest in the truth, some family members may think that we have been misled. Others may think that we have lost our mind. (Compare Mark 3:21.) They may even violently oppose us. This negative reaction should not surprise us. Jesus said: “A man's enemies will be those of his own household.” (Matt. 10:36) Of course, regardless of how our relatives view us, we refuse to treat them as our enemies. On the contrary, as our love for Jehovah grows, so does our love for people. (Matt. 22:37-39) But we will never compromise our standards by ignoring Bible laws and principles just to please another human.

<sup>8</sup> Georgina, quoted earlier, managed to stand firm despite severe opposition from her mother. Georgina explains: “My mother and I began studying the Bible with the Witnesses. But six months

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7. How should we react when family members oppose us?

8-9. What helped one sister to stand firm despite severe opposition?



We may suffer for a time,  
but Jehovah will always be  
at our side to comfort and  
strengthen us

(See paragraphs 8-10)

later when I wanted to attend meetings, my mother's attitude changed drastically. I discovered that she was in contact with apostates, and she used their arguments when she talked to me. She would also insult me, pull my hair, choke me, and throw away my literature. After I turned 15, I got baptized. My mother tried to stop me from serving Jehovah by putting me in a home with other teens, some of whom took drugs and committed crimes. Opposition is especially hard to deal with when it comes from someone who should love you and care for you."

<sup>9</sup> How did Georgina cope? She says: "The day my mother turned against me, I had just finished reading the entire Bible. I was now fully convinced that I had found the truth, and I felt very close to Jehovah. I often prayed to him, and he heard me. When I was living in that home, a sister invited me to her house, and we studied the Bible together. All the while, I was strengthened by the brothers and sisters at the Kingdom Hall. They made me part of their families. I saw

firsthand that Jehovah is stronger than our opposers, no matter who they are."

<sup>10</sup> The apostle Paul wrote that nothing can "separate us from God's love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Rom. 8:38, 39) Even though we may suffer for a time, Jehovah will always be at our side to comfort and strengthen us. And as Georgina's experience shows, Jehovah also helps us by means of our precious spiritual family.

#### LOVE FOR FELLOW WORSHIPPERS HELPS US TO ENDURE HATRED

<sup>11</sup> On the night before he died, Jesus reminded his disciples to love one another. **(Read John 15:12, 13.)** He knew that self-sacrificing love would help them to stay united and to endure the world's hatred. Consider the example of the congregation in Thessalonica. From the time it was formed, its members were persecuted. Yet, the brothers and sisters there became examples of integrity and

10. What confidence can we have in Jehovah our God?

11. How would the love Jesus described at John 15:12, 13 help his disciples? Give an example.

love. (1 Thess. 1:3, 6, 7) Paul encouraged them to continue showing love, even “in fuller measure.” (1 Thess. 4:9, 10) Love would move them to console the depressed and support the weak. (1 Thess. 5:14) They followed Paul’s instructions, for in his second letter, written about a year later, Paul could say to them: “The love of each and every one of you is increasing toward one another.” (2 Thess. 1:3-5) Their love helped them to endure hardship and persecution.

<sup>12</sup> Consider the experience of Danylo, mentioned earlier, and his wife. When their town became engulfed in war, they continued to attend the meetings, to preach as best they could, and to share what food they had with their brothers and sisters. Then one day, Danylo was approached by armed soldiers. “They demanded that I renounce my faith,” says Danylo. “When I refused, they beat me and pretended to shoot me, firing over my head. Before leaving, they threatened to return to rape my

12. During a time of war, how did brothers and sisters in one country show love for one another?

wife. But our brothers quickly put us on a train to another town. I will never forget the love of those dear brothers. And when we arrived at the new town, the local brothers gave us food and helped me to find a job and a home! As a result, we were able to provide refuge for other Witnesses fleeing the war zone.” Such experiences show that Christian love can help us to endure hatred.

### LOVE FOR OUR ENEMIES HELPS US TO ENDURE HATRED

<sup>13</sup> Jesus told his followers to love their enemies. (Matt. 5:44, 45) Is that easy to do? By no means! But it is possible with the help of God’s holy spirit. The fruitage of God’s spirit includes love as well as patience, kindness, mildness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) These qualities help us to endure hatred. Many opposers have had a change of heart because a believing husband, wife, child, or neighbor displayed those godly qualities. Many opposers have even become our dear brothers and sisters. So if you

13. How does holy spirit help us to endure in our service to Jehovah even when people hate us?



Christian love  
can help us to  
endure hatred  
(See paragraph 12)



When we show love  
for our persecutors,  
we may soften  
their heart

(See paragraphs 16-17)

find it hard to love those who hate you just because you are serving Jehovah, pray for holy spirit. (Luke 11:13) And be fully convinced that God's way is *always* best.—Prov. 3:5-7.

<sup>14</sup> Consider the example of Yasmeen, who lives in the Middle East. When she became one of Jehovah's Witnesses, her husband thought she had been deceived, and he tried to stop her from serving God. He insulted her and urged relatives as well as a clergyman and a sorcerer to threaten her and accuse her of breaking up her family. Her husband even shouted abuses at the brothers during a congregation meeting! Yasmeen often wept because she was treated so unkindly.

<sup>15</sup> At the Kingdom Hall, Yasmeen's spiritual family comforted and strengthened her. The elders urged her to apply the words found at **Romans 12:17-21**. (**Read.**) "It was hard," says Yasmeen. "But I asked Jehovah to help me, and I did my best to apply what the Bible says.

14-15. How did Romans 12:17-21 help Yasmeen to show love to her husband despite his bitter opposition?

So when my husband spitefully threw dirt in the kitchen, I cleaned it up. When he insulted me, I replied mildly. And when he was sick, I cared for him."

<sup>16</sup> Yasmeen was rewarded for showing love to her husband. She says: "My husband started to trust me more because he knew I would always tell the truth. He began to listen to me respectfully when we talked about religion, and he agreed to make peace at home. Now he tells me to enjoy the congregation meetings. Our family life has improved dramatically, and we enjoy genuine tranquility. My hope is that my husband will open his heart to the truth and join me in serving Jehovah."

<sup>17</sup> Yasmeen's example shows that love "bears all things, . . . hopes all things, endures all things." (1 Cor. 13:4, 7) Hatred can be powerful and hurtful, but love is much stronger. It wins hearts. And it brings joy to Jehovah's heart. But even if opposers continue to hate us, we can still be happy. How so?

16-17. What do you learn from Yasmeen's example?



## HAPPY WHEN HATED

<sup>18</sup> Jesus said: “Happy are you whenever men hate you.” (Luke 6:22) We do not choose to be hated. We are not trying to be martyrs. So why can we be happy when hated? Consider three reasons. First, when we endure, we gain God’s approval. (1 Pet. 4:13, 14) Second, our faith is refined and becomes stronger. (1 Pet. 1:7) And third, we will receive a priceless reward—everlasting life.—Rom. 2:6, 7.

<sup>19</sup> Soon after Jesus’ resurrection, the apostles experienced the happiness he spoke about. After being flogged and ordered to stop preaching, they rejoiced. Why? “Because they had been counted worthy to be dishonored in behalf of [Jesus’] name.” (Acts 5:40-42) They loved their Master more than they feared the hatred of their enemies. And they showed their love by proclaiming the good news “without letup.” Many

18. Why can we be happy when hated?

19. Why were the apostles happy after being flogged?

of our brothers today continue to serve faithfully despite difficulties. They know that Jehovah will not forget their work and their love for his name.—Heb. 6:10.

<sup>20</sup> The world will hate us for as long as this system lasts. (John 15:19) But we do not need to be fearful. As we will see in the next article, Jehovah “will strengthen . . . and protect” his loyal ones. (2 Thess. 3:3) So let us continue to love Jehovah, love our brothers and sisters, and love even our enemies. When we follow this counsel, we will remain united and spiritually strong, we will bring honor to Jehovah, and we will prove that love is far more powerful than hate.

20. What will we consider in the following article?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 23:** After soldiers threatened Danylo, the brothers helped him and his wife to relocate, and they were warmly received. **Page 24:** Yasmeen’s husband opposed her, but the elders gave her good advice. She proved to be a good wife and cared for him when he was sick.

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## TO ENDURE HATRED, WHY MUST WE . . .

■ love Jehovah?

■ love our brothers and sisters?

■ love our enemies?

**SONG 124**

Ever Loyal

**PREVIEW**

The Bible promises that Jehovah will strengthen us and protect us not only from spiritual harm but from any other lasting harm. In this article, we will answer the following questions: Why do we need to be protected? How does Jehovah protect us? And what must we do to benefit from the help Jehovah offers?

## Jehovah Will Protect You —How?

*“The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the wicked one.”—2 THESS. 3:3.*

ON THE last night of his life as a man, Jesus was thinking about the challenges that his disciples would face. Moved by his love for his friends, Jesus asked his Father to “watch over them because of the wicked one.” (John 17:14, 15) Jesus knew that after he returned to heaven, Satan the Devil would continue to wage war against any who wanted to serve Jehovah. Clearly, Jehovah’s people would need protection.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah answered Jesus’ prayer because of His love for His Son. If we try our best to please Jehovah, he will love us too, and he will pay attention to our prayers for help and protection. As a concerned family Head, Jehovah will continue to care lovingly for his children. His very name, or reputation, is at stake!

<sup>3</sup> We need Jehovah’s protection as never before. Satan has been cast out of heaven, “having great anger.” (Rev. 12:12) He has managed to convince some who persecute us that they are offering “a sacred service to God.” (John 16:2) Others, who do not believe in God, persecute us because we do not fit into this world’s mold. Whatever the case, we can be confident. Why? Because God’s Word says: “The Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the wicked one.” (2 Thess. 3:3) How does Jehovah protect us? Let us discuss two ways.

1. Why did Jesus ask Jehovah to watch over his disciples?
2. How can we be sure that Jehovah will answer our prayers?
3. Why do we need Jehovah’s protection today?

## JEHOVAH PROVIDES A SUIT OF ARMOR

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah has made available to us a suit of armor that can protect us from Satan's attacks. (**Read Ephesians 6:13-17.**) This spiritual armor is strong and effective! But it will protect us only if we put on each piece of the armor—and keep it on. What does each piece represent? Let us take a closer look.

<sup>5</sup> **The belt of truth** represents the truths found in God's Word, the Bible. Why must we wear this belt? Because Satan is "the father of the lie." (John 8:44) He has had thousands of years to practice his lying and has misled "the entire inhabited earth"! (Rev. 12:9) But the truths contained in the Bible protect us from being deceived. How do we wear this symbolic belt? We do so by learning the truth about Jehovah, by worshipping him "with spirit and truth," and by conducting ourselves honestly in all things.—John 4:24; Eph. 4:25; Heb. 13:18.

<sup>6</sup> **The breastplate of righteousness** represents Jehovah's righteous standards. Why must we wear the breastplate? Just as a breastplate protects the literal heart of a soldier from being pierced, the breastplate of righteousness protects our figurative heart, or inner person, from the corrupting influences of this world. (Prov. 4:23) Jehovah expects us to love and serve him with our whole heart. (Matt. 22:36, 37) So Satan tries to

divide our heart by getting us to love the things this world offers—things that Jehovah hates. (Jas. 4:4; 1 John 2:15, 16) And if that does not work, he will try to bully us into going against Jehovah's standards.

<sup>7</sup> We wear the breastplate of righteousness by accepting Jehovah's standards of right and wrong and by living according to those standards. (Ps. 97:10) Some may feel that Jehovah's standards are restrictive. But if we were to stop applying Bible principles in our lives, we would be like a soldier who removed his breastplate in the middle of a battle because he thought it was too heavy. How foolish that would be! To those who love Jehovah, his commandments are, "not burdensome," but lifesaving.—1 John 5:3.

<sup>8</sup> Paul also urges us to have our *feet shod in readiness to declare the good news of peace*. In other words, we should always be ready to preach the Kingdom good news. When we share the Bible's message with others, our own faith is strengthened. It is truly encouraging to see how Jehovah's people around the earth are looking for opportunities to declare the good news—when at work, at school, in business territory and when preaching from house to house, shopping, visiting unbelieving relatives, talking to casual acquaintances, and even when confined at home for a time. If we were to give in to fear and stop preaching, we would be like a soldier who

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4. According to Ephesians 6:13-17, what has Jehovah made available to protect us?

5. What is the belt of truth, and why must we wear it?

6. What is the breastplate of righteousness, and why must we wear it?

7. How do we wear the breastplate of righteousness?

8. What does it mean to have our feet shod in readiness to declare the good news?

## The Armor—What Is It?



removed his sandals during the battle; his feet would easily get injured. As a result, he would be more vulnerable to attack, and he would not be able to follow the orders of his commander.

<sup>9</sup> **The large shield of faith** represents the faith we have in Jehovah. We trust that he will fulfill all his promises. That faith will help us “to extinguish all the wicked one’s burning arrows.” Why do we need to carry this large shield? Because it protects us from being swayed by the

9. Why do we need to carry the large shield of faith?

teachings of apostates or from being intimidated by the snide remarks of cynics. Without faith, we will not have the strength to resist when others try to persuade us to ignore Jehovah’s standards. On the other hand, each time we stand up for our faith at work or at school, we are carrying our shield. (1 Pet. 3:15) Each time we turn down a better-paying job that would interfere with our routine of worship, we are carrying our shield. (Heb. 13:5, 6) And each time we serve Jehovah despite opposition, we are being protected by our shield.—1 Thess. 2:2.

<sup>10</sup> *The helmet of salvation* is the hope Jehovah gives us—the hope that he will save us from death and will reward all those who do his will. (1 Thess. 5:8; 1 Tim. 4:10; Titus 1:1, 2) Just as a literal helmet protects a soldier’s head, the hope of salvation protects our thinking ability. In what way? That hope keeps us focused on God’s promises and helps us to see problems in the right perspective. How do we wear this helmet? We do so by keeping our thinking in harmony with God’s thoughts. For example, we place our hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God.—Ps. 26:2; 104:34; 1 Tim. 6:17.

<sup>11</sup> *The sword of the spirit* is God’s Word, the Bible. That sword has the power to cut through deception of all kinds and to liberate people from being enslaved to false teachings and harmful habits. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5; 2 Tim. 3:16, 17; Heb. 4:12) We learn to use that sword properly through personal study and through the training we receive from God’s organization. (2 Tim. 2:15) In addition to the suit of armor, Jehovah gives us another powerful form of protection. What is it?

#### WE DO NOT HAVE TO FIGHT ALONE

<sup>12</sup> An experienced soldier knows that he cannot successfully fight a massive army on his own; he needs the help of his fellow soldiers. Similarly, we cannot successfully resist Satan and his followers on our own; we need the support of our brothers and sisters. Jehovah has pro-

vided us with a worldwide “association of brothers” who are there to help us.—1 Pet. 2:17.

<sup>13</sup> One way we receive support is by attending our meetings. (**Read Hebrews 10:24, 25.**) When we feel discouraged—as we all do at times—meetings can lift our spirits. We are encouraged by the heartfelt comments given by our brothers and sisters. The Bible-based talks and demonstrations that they present strengthen our determination to serve Jehovah. And our upbuilding conversations before and after the meeting encourage us. (1 Thess. 5:14) In addition, our meetings give us the opportunity to have the joy that comes from helping others. (Acts 20:35; Rom. 1:11, 12) Our meetings help us in other ways too. They improve our battle skills, so to speak, by equipping us for the ministry. For example, we learn to use the tools in our Teaching Toolbox effectively. So prepare well for congregation meetings. During the meeting, listen carefully. After the meeting, apply the training you received. By doing such things, you will become “a fine soldier of Christ Jesus.”—2 Tim. 2:3.

<sup>14</sup> We also have the support of myriads of powerful angels. Think of what just one angel can do! (Isa. 37:36) Now consider what a mighty army of angels would be able to accomplish. No man or demon is equal to Jehovah’s powerful fighting force. It has been said that one faithful Witness plus Jehovah equals the

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10. What is the helmet of salvation, and why must we wear it?

11. What is the sword of the spirit, and why do we need to use it?

12. What else do we need, and why?

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13. According to Hebrews 10:24, 25, what benefits come from attending our meetings?

14. What other help do we have available to us?



majority. (Judg. 6:16) How true that is! Keep those thoughts in mind when you feel intimidated by something a workmate, a schoolmate, or an unbelieving relative says or does. Remember, you are not alone in this fight. You are following Jehovah's direction.

#### JEHOVAH WILL CONTINUE TO PROTECT US

<sup>15</sup> The world under Satan's control has many reasons to hate us. We remain strictly neutral politically and do not take up arms. We proclaim God's name, promote his Kingdom as the only hope for peace, and uphold his righteous standards. We expose the world's ruler as a monstrous liar and murderer. (John 8:44) And we announce the imminent destruction of Satan's world. Yet, we will never be silenced by Satan and his followers. On the contrary, we will keep praising Jehovah, using every means at our disposal to do so! As powerful as Satan is, he has not been able to prevent the Kingdom message from reach-

15. According to Isaiah 54:15, 17, why will God's people never be silenced?

ing people around the globe. Only Jehovah's protection can account for that. —**Read Isaiah 54:15, 17.**

<sup>16</sup> What lies ahead? During the great tribulation, Jehovah will save us in two amazing ways. First, he will save his loyal servants during the time when he causes the kings of the earth to destroy Babylon the Great, the empire of false religion. (Rev. 17:16-18; 18:2, 4) Then, he will save his people when he annihilates the remaining elements of Satan's world at Armageddon.—Rev. 7:9, 10; 16:14, 16.

<sup>17</sup> When we remain close to Jehovah, Satan can do us no lasting harm. In fact, he is the one who will suffer permanent harm. (Rom. 16:20) So put on the complete suit of armor—**and leave it on!** Do not try to fight the battle on your own. Support your brothers and sisters. And follow Jehovah's direction. If you do, you can be confident that your loving heavenly Father will strengthen you and protect you.—Isa. 41:10.

16. How will Jehovah save his people during the great tribulation?

17. How do we benefit from remaining close to Jehovah?

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#### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

■ What is each piece in the suit of armor? (See the box "The Armor—What Is It?")

■ How do we show that we are wearing each piece of armor?

■ What other protection has Jehovah given us?

### Why should Christians exercise care regarding the use of electronic messaging applications, such as those for texting?

■ Some Christians use modern technology to keep in touch with family members and fellow Witnesses. Of course, the mature Christian will bear in mind this counsel: “The shrewd person sees the danger and conceals himself, but the inexperienced keep right on going and suffer the consequences.”—Prov. 27:12.

We appreciate that Jehovah wants to protect us. Hence, we do not associate with those who cause division, are disfellowshipped, or bring twisted teachings. (Rom. 16:17; 1 Cor. 5:11; 2 John 10, 11) Some who are associated with the congregation may not conduct themselves in an honorable way. (2 Tim. 2:20, 21) When forming friendships, we bear this in mind. Choosing good associations may not be simple to do via a messaging application.

Being selective about association is especially fitting when it comes to large messaging groups. Some Christians have got involved with large groups, with negative results. How could a brother or a sister exercise due caution if there is a group of hundreds or thousands? It would be impossible to know the true identity and spiritual condition of all in the group. Psalm 26:4 says: “I do not associate with deceitful men, and I avoid those who hide what they are.” Does that not recommend using a messaging application to contact only those whom you know personally?

Even with a smaller messaging group, a Christian needs to evaluate his time and interests. It is not as if we want to interact with others no matter what they chat about or regardless of how much time they spend

on such chats. Paul warned Timothy about individuals who would be “gossipers and meddlers in other people’s affairs.” (1 Tim. 5:13) Today, it is possible to do something similar electronically.

No mature Christian would offer or be open to critical comments or confidential information about fellow believers. (Ps. 15:3; Prov. 20:19) And he would avoid sensationalized or unconfirmed reports. (Eph. 4:25) We certainly receive via our jw.org website and monthly programs on JW Broadcasting® ample spiritual food and reliable updates.

Some Witnesses use electronic messaging to sell, buy, and promote products or to offer employment. Those are commercial efforts, not theocratic matters. Christians who want to be “free of the love of money” resist any temptation to use our brotherhood for commercial purposes.—Heb. 13:5.

What about using messaging applications to solicit funds for believers in need or for disaster relief? We often display loving interest in helping and encouraging one another. (Jas. 2:15, 16) But trying to do so through a large messaging group may actually interfere with better arrangements being made by the local branch office or congregation. (1 Tim. 5:3, 4, 9, 10, 16) And surely none of us would want to imply that we have a unique assignment toward God’s sheep.

We desire to do what will bring God glory. (1 Cor. 10:31) So in deciding whether to use a messaging application or other technology, consider the possible dangers, and be cautious.

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## COVER PICTURE:

David was responsible and reliable when caring for his father's flock, even protecting the sheep from an attacking bear (See study article 9, paragraph 4)

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