

JANUARY 2018

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
FEBRUARY 26–APRIL 1, 2018



COVER IMAGE:

BOLIVIA

At Riberalta, Beni, two pioneer couples load literature onto an airplane. They are going to a remote area of the country to preach

PUBLISHERS

26,081

BIBLE STUDIES

42,568

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE (2016)

75,027

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3 THEY OFFERED THEMSELVES WILLINGLY —In Madagascar

7 WEEK OF FEBRUARY 26–MARCH 4 “He Gives Power to the Tired One”

When we feel overwhelmed by the pressures of life, what can we do? This article discusses our yeartext for 2018 and shows why we need to give Jehovah the opportunity to strengthen us and how he will do so.

12 WEEK OF MARCH 5-11 Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

The annual observance of the Memorial of Christ’s death will be held on Saturday, March 31, 2018. How can we prepare now for this occasion, how will we benefit from attending it, and how does that annual event contribute to the unity of God’s people everywhere? Find the answers in this article.

17 WEEK OF MARCH 12-18 Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

All that we have comes from Jehovah. He still expects us, however, to use our finances to support the work of his organization today. This article will consider why and how we benefit from honoring Jehovah with our valuable things.

22 WEEK OF MARCH 19-25 What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

27 WEEK OF MARCH 26–APRIL 1 See the Difference in People

The first of these articles discusses how true happiness comes from loving God and not from the counterfeit types of love so evident in “the last days.” (2 Tim. 3:1) The second article describes how traits that characterize people of the last days stand in sharp contrast with the qualities found among God’s people.

32 DID YOU KNOW?

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

To make a donation, please visit www.jw.org.



Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 2 January 2018 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2017 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

January 2018

Vol. 139, No. 2 ENGLISH

THEY OFFERED
THEMSELVES
WILLINGLY



in Madagascar



“WHEN I listened to the experiences of my friends who served in areas where there was a great need for pioneers, I longed to taste that joy too,” says **Sylviana**, a pioneer in her mid-20’s. “But,” she adds, “I feared that being a need-greater was beyond my abilities.”

Can you relate to the feelings expressed by Sylviana? Do you too long to serve in a territory where more Kingdom workers are needed, but you wonder whether you will ever reach that goal? If that is the case, take heart! With Jehovah’s help, thousands of brothers and sisters have succeeded in overcoming obstacles that hindered them from expanding their ministry. To find out how Jehovah opened the way for some of them, we will visit Madagascar, the fourth largest island on earth.

Over the past ten years, more than 70 zealous publishers and pioneers from 11 countries* have come to serve in this fruitful field in Africa, where many people respect the Bible. Also, numerous local publishers have been willing to move so as to help in spreading the Kingdom message throughout this vast island territory. Let us get acquainted with some of them.

OVERCOMING FEAR AND DISCOURAGEMENT

Louis and **Perrine**, a couple in their 30’s, moved

* The need-greater came from Canada, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Guadeloupe, Luxembourg, New Caledonia, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

from France to Madagascar. For years, they had been thinking about expanding their ministry by moving abroad, but Perrine hesitated to move. She explains: “I feared going into the unknown. I was anxious about leaving behind our family, congregation, apartment, all the familiar places, and our routine. Really, my own worries were the greatest obstacle I had to overcome.” In 2012, Perrine mustered up the courage, and she and Louis moved. How does she feel about their decision? “Looking back, I can say that it has been a faith-strengthening experience to see Jehovah’s hand

Perrine and Louis





Nadine
and Didier

Far left: Nadia and Marie-Madeleine
Far right: Thierry



at work in our lives.” Adds Louis, “Imagine, at our first Memorial in Madagascar, ten of our Bible students attended!”

What gave the couple the strength to stay in their assignment when problems arose? They supplicated Jehovah in prayer to give them the power needed to endure. (Phil. 4:13) Louis relates: “We experienced that Jehovah answered our prayers and gave us ‘the peace of God.’ We were able to focus on the joys that our service was bringing us. Also, friends from home sent us e-mails and letters to encourage us not to give up.”—Phil. 4:6, 7; 2 Cor. 4:7.

Jehovah richly rewarded the endurance shown by Louis and Perrine. “In October 2014, we attended the Bible School for Christian Couples* in France,” says Louis. “Attending that school was an unforgettable gift from Jehovah.” Upon graduating, the couple were delighted to be reassigned to Madagascar.

“WE WILL BE PROUD OF YOU!”

When **Didier** and **Nadine**, a couple from France, moved to Madagascar in 2010, they were middle-aged. Didier relates: “We pioneered when we were younger, and then we raised three children. When they reached adulthood, we considered the pos-

sibility of serving abroad.” Nadine admits: “The thought of being separated from the children made me hesitate, but they told us: ‘If you move abroad to serve as need-greater, we will be proud of you!’ Their words encouraged us to make the move. Although we now live far away from our children, we are glad that we are able to have frequent conversations with them.”

For Didier and Nadine, learning the Malagasy language was a challenge. “We’re not 20-year-olds anymore,” says Nadine with a smile. How did they succeed? First, they joined a French-speaking congregation. Later, when they felt ready to tackle the local language, they moved to a Malagasy-speaking congregation. Says Nadine: “Many people we meet in the preaching work love to study the Bible. They often thank us for visiting them. At first, I thought I was dreaming. I love pioneering in this territory. When I get up in the morning, I say to myself, ‘It’s great—I’m going preaching today!’”

Didier smiles as he recalls the time when he began to learn Malagasy. “I was conducting a congregation meeting but did not understand any of the answers given by the brothers and sisters. All I could say was, ‘Thank you.’ After I thanked one sister for her answer, those seated behind her started gesturing to me to alert me that the answer was not correct. I quickly called on a brother who gave the right answer—at least, I hope he did.”

* Now replaced by the School for Kingdom Evangelizers. Full-time ministers serving abroad who meet the requirements may apply to attend this school in their country of origin or in another country where the school is held in their mother tongue.

SHE GLADLY ACCEPTED THE INVITATION

At a convention in 2005, **Thierry** and his wife, **Nadia**, watched the drama “Pursue Goals That Honor God.” That Bible drama about Timothy touched their hearts and deepened their desire to serve where the need for Kingdom workers was greater. Says Thierry: “At the conclusion of that drama, while we were applauding, I leaned over to my wife and asked, ‘Where are we going?’ My wife said that she was thinking about the same thing.” Soon thereafter, they began to take steps to reach their goal. Nadia relates, “Gradually, we downsized our belongings until all we had left fitted into four suitcases!”

They arrived in Madagascar in 2006 and enjoyed their ministry from the start. Says Nadia, “The people we meet give us so much joy.”

Six years later, though, the couple faced a challenge. Nadia’s mother, **Marie-Madeleine**, who lived in France, fell and broke her arm and injured her head. After the couple had consulted Marie-Madeleine’s doctor, they asked their mother to come and live with them in Madagascar. Though 80 years of age at the time, she gladly accepted the invitation. How does she feel about living abroad? She says: “Sometimes it is challenging to adapt, but despite my limited abilities, I feel so useful in the congregation. And what makes me really happy is that this living arrangement allows my children to continue their fruitful ministry here.”

“I FELT JEHOVAH’S HELPING HAND”

Riana is a brother in his early 20’s. He grew up in Alaotra Mangoro, a fertile region in eastern Madagascar. He did well in school and wanted to pursue higher education. Yet, after studying the Bible, he changed his mind. He relates: “I strove to finish my secondary schooling earlier and promised Jehovah, ‘If I pass my final exam, I will start pioneering.’” After graduating, Riana kept his promise. He moved in with a pioneer brother, got a part-time

job, and began to pioneer. He says, “It was the best decision I ever made.”

However, Riana’s relatives did not understand why he did not pursue a secular career. He relates: “My father, uncle, and grandaunt all encouraged me to pursue higher education. But I did not want to stop pioneering for anything.” Before long, Riana wanted to serve where the need for workers was greater. What contributed to that desire? He relates: “Thieves broke into our living quarters and stole many of my belongings. That burglary made me reflect on Jesus’ words about storing up ‘treasures in heaven.’ I decided to work harder at acquiring spiritual riches.” (Matt. 6:19, 20) He moved to the southernmost part of the country—a drought-stricken region 800 miles (1,300 km) from where he had been living. That region is home to the Antandroy people. Why did he go there?

A month before the burglary took place, Riana had started a Bible study with two Antandroy men. He learned some expressions in their language and thought about the many Antandroy people who had not yet been reached with the Kingdom message. He says, “I prayed to Jehovah to help me move to the Tandroy-speaking region.”

Riana moved, and right away he faced an obstacle. He could not get a job. One man told him: “Why did you come here? To find jobs, people from this place go to where you came from!” After two weeks, Riana left the area almost penniless to attend a regional convention, wondering what to do. On the last day of the convention, a brother slipped something into Riana’s coat pocket. It was a sum of money large enough for him to travel back to the Antandroy area and to start a small business selling yogurt. Says Riana: “I felt Jehovah’s helping hand just in time. I could continue to help those who had not had a chance to learn about Jehovah!” There was also much work to do in the congregation. Riana adds: “I was assigned to give a public talk every other week. Jehovah was training me through his organization.” Today,



How Can You Encourage Those Who Serve as Need-Greaters?

- Keep in touch with need-greaters who moved away from your congregation. Inquire about their ministry and their well-being. —Prov. 17:17; 25:25.
- Could you help them find a job as a remote worker to enable them to stay in their assignment? Or could you offer them a job when they return temporarily to their country of origin?—Acts 18:1-3.
- Could you provide them with accommodations when they return to their country of origin to work or to visit?—3 John 5-8.
- If need-greaters serve in your congregation, let them know how much you appreciate them. Commend them for their efforts to learn your language. Inquire about their family. Include them in your social activities. Help them to feel at home.—Matt. 19:29.

Riana is still sharing the Kingdom message with the many Tandroy-speaking people who want to learn about Jehovah.

“BLESSED BY THE GOD OF TRUTH”

Jehovah assures us that “anyone who seeks a blessing for himself in the earth will be blessed by the God of truth.” (Isa. 65:16) When we work hard to overcome obstacles to expand our ministry, we do experience Jehovah’s blessing. Consider **Sylviana**, mentioned in the introduction to this article. Remember, she feared that being a need-greater would be beyond her abilities. Why did she think so? She explains: “My left leg is about three-and-a-half inches (9 cm) shorter than my right leg. So I walk with a limp and tire out quickly.”

In 2014, Sylviana nevertheless teamed up with **Sylvie Ann**, a young pioneer sister in her congregation, and they moved to a small village 53 miles (85 km) from their hometown. Despite the obstacles, Sylviana’s dream had come true—and what a fine blessing she received!

Sylviana (left) and Sylvie Ann (right) with Doratine on the day of her baptism



“After just one year serving in my new assignment,” she relates, “**Doratine**, a young mother with whom I studied the Bible, got baptized at our circuit assembly.”

“I WILL HELP YOU”

As the expressions of faith from these need-greaters show, when we strive to overcome an obstacle to expand our ministry, we experience in a very personal way the truthfulness of Jehovah’s promise to his servants: “I will fortify you, yes, I will help you.” (Isa. 41:10) As a result, our relationship with Jehovah deepens. In addition, offering ourselves willingly—in the area where we live or in a foreign country—prepares us for the theocratic activities that are awaiting us in the new world. As Didier, mentioned before, puts it, “serving where the need is greater is good training for the future!” May many more willing workers start that training soon!

Riana giving a talk in the Tandroy language





“He Gives Power to the Tired One”

Our yeartext for 2018:

“Those hoping in Jehovah will regain power.”—ISA. 40:31.

AS YOU know, life in this system of things is by no means trouble-free. Many of you dear brothers and sisters are coping with serious illness. Others, although well along in years themselves, are caring for elderly relatives. Still others are struggling to provide, not luxury items, but just the basic necessities for their families. And we know that many are dealing with, not one, but several of such problems all at once! This requires a tremendous expenditure of time and emotional energy—to say nothing of the financial burden. Nevertheless, your confidence in God’s promises is absolute; your faith in a better future, unwavering. How pleased Jehovah must be!

² Do you sometimes feel, though, that the pressures of life are driving you to the limit? If you do, you are not alone. The Bible reveals that faithful servants in the past often felt that they could not go on. (1 Ki. 19:4; Job 7:7) However, rather than give up, they looked to Jehovah for strength. They were

1. What pressures must we deal with, but what reason does Jehovah have to be pleased with his faithful servants? (See opening pictures.)
2. What encouragement can we draw from Isaiah 40:29, but what serious mistake could we make?

SONGS: 3, 47

WHAT BEARING DO THESE SCRIPTURES HAVE ON OUR YEARTEXT?

Isaiah 40:26

Matthew 11:28-30

2 Corinthians 12:9, 10

not disappointed, for our God “gives power to the tired one.” (Isa. 40:29) Sadly, some of God’s people in our day have concluded that the best way to cope with the pressures of life is to ‘take a break from the truth,’ as they say, as if our Christian activities were a burden rather than a blessing. So they stop reading God’s Word, attending congregation meetings, and engaging in the field ministry—just as Satan hopes they will do.

³ The Devil well knows that our being fully engaged in Christian activities can strengthen us, and he does not want us to be strong. When you feel physically and emotionally drained, then, do not cut yourself off from Jehovah. Draw ever closer to him, for “he will make you firm, he will make you strong.” (1 Pet. 5:10; Jas. 4:8) In this article, we will consider two situations that could cause us to slow down in our service to God and we will discuss how applying Bible principles can help us to cope. But first, let us focus on Jehovah’s ability to strengthen us, as shown at Isaiah 40:26-31.

THOSE HOPING IN JEHOVAH WILL REGAIN POWER

⁴ **Read Isaiah 40:26.** No one has been able to count all the stars in the universe. Scientists believe that our Milky Way galaxy alone may contain up to 400 billion stars. Yet, Jehovah gives a name or a designation to each star. The lesson for us? If Jehovah takes a personal interest in his inanimate creation, imagine how he feels about you who serve him, not

because you have been programmed to do so, but because you love him! (Ps. 19:1, 3, 14) Our dear Father knows you through and through. “Even the hairs of your head are all numbered” by him. (Matt. 10:30) And the psalmist assures us: “Jehovah is aware of what the blameless go through.” (Ps. 37:18) Yes, he takes notice of the trials you face, and he can give you the strength to endure each one of them.

⁵ **Read Isaiah 40:28.** Jehovah is the Source of dynamic energy. Consider, for example, the amount of energy that he supplies just to our sun. Science writer David Bodanis observed: “The mass our Sun is exploding into energy each second is equivalent to [billions of atomic] bombs.” Another researcher calculated that the sun “currently radiates . . . sufficient energy in one second to meet mankind’s needs for 200,000 years”! Can anyone doubt that the One who “fuels” the sun can give us the strength we need to cope with any problem?

⁶ **Read Isaiah 40:29.** Serving Jehovah brings much joy. Jesus said to his disciples: “Take my yoke upon you.” And he added: “You will find refreshment for yourselves. For my yoke is kindly, and my load is light.” (Matt. 11:28-30) How true that statement is! At times, we may feel exhausted when we leave home to attend a congregation meeting or to engage in the field ministry. But how do we feel when we return? Refreshed—and better prepared to deal with life’s trials. Jesus’ yoke is kindly indeed!

3. (a) How can we frustrate Satan’s goal to weaken us? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

4. What lesson can we learn from Isaiah 40:26?

5. How can we be sure that Jehovah is able to strengthen us?

6. In what sense is Jesus’ yoke kindly, and how should knowing that affect us?

⁷ A sister whom we will call Kayla has had to battle with chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, and migraine headaches. Understandably, she has sometimes found it difficult to attend congregation meetings. However, after she made the effort to attend a public meeting, she wrote: “The talk was about discouragement. The information was presented in such an empathetic and concerned way that I was moved to tears. I was reminded that the meetings are where I need to be.” How happy she was that she made the effort to attend!

⁸ **Read Isaiah 40:30.** No matter how qualified we may be, we are limited in what we can accomplish in our own strength. That is a lesson we all must learn. Although he was a capable man, the apostle Paul had limitations that prevented him from doing everything he wanted to do. When he expressed his concerns to God, he was told: “My power is being made perfect in weakness.” Paul got the point. He concluded: “When I am weak, then I am powerful.” (2 Cor. 12:7-10) What did he mean by that?

⁹ Paul realized that there was only so much he could do without help from a higher source. God’s holy spirit could supply the power that Paul lacked. Not only that, but God’s spirit could empower Paul to perform tasks that he would never have been able to complete in his own power. The same is true of us. If the strength we have comes from Jehovah, we will be strong indeed!

7. Relate an experience that illustrates the truthfulness of Matthew 11:28-30.

8, 9. What did the apostle Paul mean when he wrote: “When I am weak, then I am powerful”?

¹⁰ The psalmist David often experienced the power of God’s holy spirit. He sang: “With your help I can charge against a marauder band; by God’s power I can scale a wall.” (Ps. 18:29) There are some walls—some problems—that we cannot “scale” in our own strength; we need a boost from Jehovah.

¹¹ **Read Isaiah 40:31.** The eagle does not soar and glide long distances solely in its own power. A draft of warm air gives it the lift it needs, enabling the eagle to conserve energy. So when you are faced with a daunting task, remember the eagle. Beg Jehovah to give you a “lift” by means of “the helper, the holy spirit.” (John 14:26) Happily, we can have access to it whenever we need it—24 hours a day. And we may most keenly feel the need for divine help when we have a disagreement with a member of the congregation. But why do such differences arise?

¹² Differences between individuals occur because we are all imperfect. Accordingly, there will be times when we will be irritated by the words or actions of fellow believers—or when they will be annoyed by ours. This can be a serious test. As with other tests, Jehovah allows us to prove our integrity by learning to work unitedly with dedicated men and women whom he loves despite their imperfections.

¹³ That Jehovah does not prevent his servants from being tested is illustrated

10. How did Jehovah help David to cope with the challenges he faced?

11. Describe the role of holy spirit in helping us to cope with our problems.

12, 13. (a) Why do differences between Christians occur? (b) What does the account of Joseph teach us about Jehovah?

Jehovah did not
abandon Joseph;
neither will he
abandon you
(See paragraph 13)



by the account of Joseph. As a young man, Joseph was sold into slavery by his jealous half brothers and taken to Egypt. (Gen. 37:28) Jehovah saw what was happening and no doubt was grieved to observe the way his friend, righteous Joseph, was being treated. Still, He did not intervene. Later, when Joseph was accused of trying to rape Potiphar's wife and was thrown into prison, Jehovah still did not step in. But did God ever abandon Joseph? On the contrary: "Jehovah made whatever [Joseph] did successful."—Gen. 39:21-23.

¹⁴ Here is another example. Few people have been treated as badly as David was. Still, that friend of God did not allow resentment to gnaw away at him. Rather, he wrote: "*Let go of anger and abandon rage; do not become upset and turn to doing evil.*" (Ps. 37:8) The most important reason to "let go" of anger is to imitate Jehovah, who "has not dealt with us according to our sins." (Ps. 103:10) But there are also practical benefits to 'letting go' of anger. Anger can cause such physical problems as high blood pressure and respiratory trouble. It can affect the liver and the pancreas, and it

14. What spiritual and physical benefits can we derive by 'letting go' of anger?

can cause digestive problems. When we are angry, we do not always think clearly. And at times a fit of anger may be followed by a prolonged period of depression. On the other hand, "a calm heart gives life to the body," says the Bible. (Prov. 14:30) How, then, can we deal with hurt feelings and gain our brother? We can do so successfully by applying the Bible's wise advice.

WHEN WE ARE DISAPPOINTED BY OUR BROTHERS

¹⁵ **Read Ephesians 4:26.** We are not surprised when we have to endure harsh treatment from the world. But when a fellow believer or a family member says or does something that hurts us deeply, we may be devastated. Suppose we cannot simply forget the incident. Will we allow resentment to fester for years? Or will we follow the Bible's wise advice to settle matters quickly? The longer we put off dealing with the situation, the harder it will be for us to make peace with our brother.

¹⁶ Suppose you have been offended by a brother and you cannot put it behind you. What positive steps can you take to make peace? First, approach Jeho-

15, 16. How should we approach someone who has offended us?

vah in earnest prayer. Ask him to help you to have an upbuilding conversation with your brother. Remember, he is one of Jehovah's friends. (Ps. 25:14) God loves him. Jehovah treats his friends with kindness, and he expects no less from us. (Prov. 15:23; Matt. 7:12; Col. 4:6) Next, review in your mind what you are going to say. Do not assume that your brother set out deliberately to hurt you; give him the benefit of the doubt. And be open to the possibility that in some way you may have contributed to the rift. You might begin the conversation by saying something like this, "Perhaps I am being overly sensitive, but when you spoke to me yesterday, I felt . . ." If the discussion does not produce the results you desire, look for another opportunity to make peace. In the meantime, pray for your brother; ask Jehovah to bless him. Ask God to help you focus on your brother's positive qualities. Whatever the outcome, you can be sure that Jehovah will be pleased with your sincere efforts to gain your brother—God's friend.

WHEN WE ARE TORMENTED BY OUR PAST

¹⁷ Some feel unworthy of serving Jehovah because they have committed a serious sin. Guilt can be a harsh taskmaster. King David, who struggled with guilt, put it this way: "When I kept silent, my bones wasted away because of my groaning all day long. For day and night your hand was heavy upon me." Happily, David dealt with the problem like a man—a spiritual man. "Finally I confessed my sin to you," he wrote, "and you par-

17. What means can Jehovah use to help us recover when we have committed a sin, and why should we take advantage of the provision?

doned the error of my sins." (Ps. 32:3-5) If you have sinned seriously, Jehovah is ready to *help you* recover. But you must accept the help he provides through the congregation. (Prov. 24:16; Jas. 5:13-15) Do not delay—your everlasting future is at stake! But suppose that long after a transgression was forgiven, you still have pangs of conscience over past mistakes?

¹⁸ There were evidently times when the apostle Paul was distressed over past misdeeds. He acknowledged: "I am the least of the apostles, and I am not worthy of being called an apostle, because I persecuted the congregation of God." Nevertheless, Paul added: "But by God's undeserved kindness *I am what I am.*" (1 Cor. 15:9, 10) Jehovah accepted Paul for what he was, and He expected Paul to realize that about himself. If you are sincerely repentant of past sins and have confessed them to the extent necessary, you can rest assured that Jehovah will be merciful. So take Jehovah at his word, and accept his forgiveness!—Isa. 55:6, 7.

¹⁹ As this system nears its end, we can expect the pressures of life to increase. Be assured, however, that the One who "gives power to the tired one and full might to those lacking strength" can give you whatever you need to carry on. (Isa. 40:29; Ps. 55:22; 68:19) During 2018, we will be reminded of this important truth every time we attend a meeting at the Kingdom Hall. It is embodied in the words displayed there from our yeartext: "*Those hoping in Jehovah will regain power.*"—Isa. 40:31.

18. How can Paul's example help those who struggle with feelings of unworthiness?

19. What is the yeartext for 2018, and why is it appropriate?



Pleasant Unity and the Memorial

*“How good and how pleasant it is . . . to dwell together
in unity!”—PS. 133:1.*

SONGS: 18, 14

HOW DOES THE MEMORIAL . . .

benefit us personally?

influence the unity
of God’s people?

motivate us
to promote unity?

ON March 31, 2018, as the sun begins to set, God’s people and many interested ones will assemble for the annual observance of the Lord’s Evening Meal. As the planet turns on its axis, millions will gather to observe the Memorial of Christ’s death. Each year, this observance is the most amazing unifying event that takes place on planet Earth!

² We can only try to imagine how Jehovah and Jesus must rejoice as they observe hour after hour millions of earth’s inhabitants attending this special event until that day ends. The Bible foretold that “a great crowd, which no man [would be] able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues” would shout: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” (Rev. 7:9, 10) How wonderful that Jehovah and Jesus are honored in this way by means of the annual Memorial observance!

1, 2. What is the most unifying event of 2018, and why? (See opening picture.)

³ Some questions have arisen that this article will answer. (1) How can we individually prepare for the Memorial and benefit from attending it? (2) In what ways does the Memorial influence the unity of God's people? (3) How can we personally contribute to that unity? (4) Will there ever be a final Memorial? If so, when?

HOW TO PREPARE FOR AND BENEFIT FROM ATTENDING

⁴ Reflect on the importance of attending the Memorial. Remember, congregation meetings are part of our worship. Surely Jehovah and Jesus take note of who makes the effort to attend this most important meeting of the year. Frankly, we want them to see that unless it is physically or circumstantially impossible, we will be present at the Memorial. When we show by our actions that meetings for worship are important to us, we give Jehovah added reason to keep our name in his “book of remembrance”—“the book of life”—in which the names of those who are in line to attain to everlasting life are inscribed.—Mal. 3:16; Rev. 20:15.

⁵ In the days leading up to the Memorial, we can set aside time to examine prayerfully and carefully our personal relationship with Jehovah. (**Read 2 Corinthians 13:5.**) How can we do that? By ‘testing whether we are in the faith.’ To do that, we do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do I really believe that I am part of the only organization that Jehovah has approved to accomplish his will? Am I doing my utmost to preach and teach the good news

of the Kingdom? Do my actions show that I truly believe that these are the last days and that the end of Satan's rule is near? Do I have the same confidence in Jehovah and Jesus now that I had when I dedicated my life to Jehovah God?’ (Matt. 24:14; 2 Tim. 3:1; Heb. 3:14) Pondering the answers to such questions will help us to keep proving what we ourselves are.

⁶ Read and meditate on Scriptural material that discusses the significance of the Memorial. (**Read John 3:16; 17:3.**) The only path to everlasting life involves “coming to know” Jehovah and “exercising faith” in Jesus, His only-begotten Son. To prepare for the Memorial, why not choose some study projects that will help you to draw closer to Jehovah and Jesus? Consider what one longtime elder has been doing. Over the years, he has collected *Watchtower* articles that particularly discuss the Memorial and the love that Jehovah and Jesus have shown us. In the weeks prior to the Memorial, he re-reads these articles and meditates on the importance of this observance. On occasion, he updates his collection with an article or two. This elder has found that by rereading these articles and by reading and meditating on the Memorial Bible reading, he learns new things each year. Most important, he feels that his love for Jehovah and Jesus deepens each and every year. Such a study project may help you to deepen your love and appreciation for Jehovah and Jesus and thus may help you to benefit more fully from the Memorial.

3. What questions will this article answer?

4. Why is it important for us to be present at the Memorial if at all possible?

5. In the days before the Memorial, how can we ‘test whether we are in the faith’?

6. (a) What is the only path to life? (b) How does one elder prepare for the Memorial each year, and how might you do something similar?

THE MEMORIAL'S INFLUENCE ON OUR UNITY

⁷ On the night of the first Lord's Evening Meal, Jesus prayed that his followers would all be united and that they would enjoy the same unity that he and his Father treasure. **(Read John 17:20, 21.)** Jehovah has indeed answered that prayer of his dear Son, and now millions believe that Jehovah sent his Son. The Memorial, like no other meeting of God's people, provides undeniable evidence of the unity of Jehovah's Witnesses. People of many nations and skin colors gather together in meeting places around the earth. In some areas, the gathering of these different races at a religious meeting is unheard of or is looked down on by others. But such unity is beautiful in the eyes of Jehovah and Jesus!

⁸ As Jehovah's people, we are not surprised at the unity we enjoy. Jehovah, in fact, foretold it. Consider the message he gave to the prophet Ezekiel regarding the joining together of two sticks, the stick "for Judah" and the stick "for Joseph." **(Read Ezekiel 37:15-17.)** The "Questions From Readers" published in *The Watchtower* of July 2016 explained: "Jehovah gave Ezekiel a message of hope promising the unification of the nation of Israel after its being restored to the Promised Land. That message also foretells the unification of God's people that started to take place during the last days."

⁹ From the year 1919 onward, Jehovah

first gradually reorganized and reunited the anointed, who were symbolically like the stick "for Judah." Then, as more and more of those with the earthly hope—symbolically like the stick "for Joseph"—joined the anointed, the two groups became "one flock." (John 10:16; Zech. 8:23) Jehovah promised to join these two sticks and make them one in his hand. (Ezek. 37:19) Now both groups serve unitedly under one King—the glorified Jesus Christ, who is prophetically spoken of as God's "servant David." (Ezek. 37:24, 25) The precious unity described in Ezekiel is clearly evident each year as the anointed remnant and the "other sheep" gather to observe the Memorial of Christ's death! What, though, can we individually do to preserve and promote that unity?

WAYS WE INDIVIDUALLY CAN PROMOTE UNITY

¹⁰ One way we can promote the unity of God's people is by cultivating humility. When on earth, Jesus admonished his disciples to humble themselves. (Matt. 23:12) If we are lowly in heart, we will not give in to the worldly spirit of self-exaltation. Rather, our humility will help us to be submissive to those taking the lead, and such an obedient spirit is essential for unity in the congregation. Above all, our humility will please God, for he "opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—1 Pet. 5:5.

¹¹ A second way we can promote unity is by reflecting on the meaning of the emblems used at the Memorial. Pri-

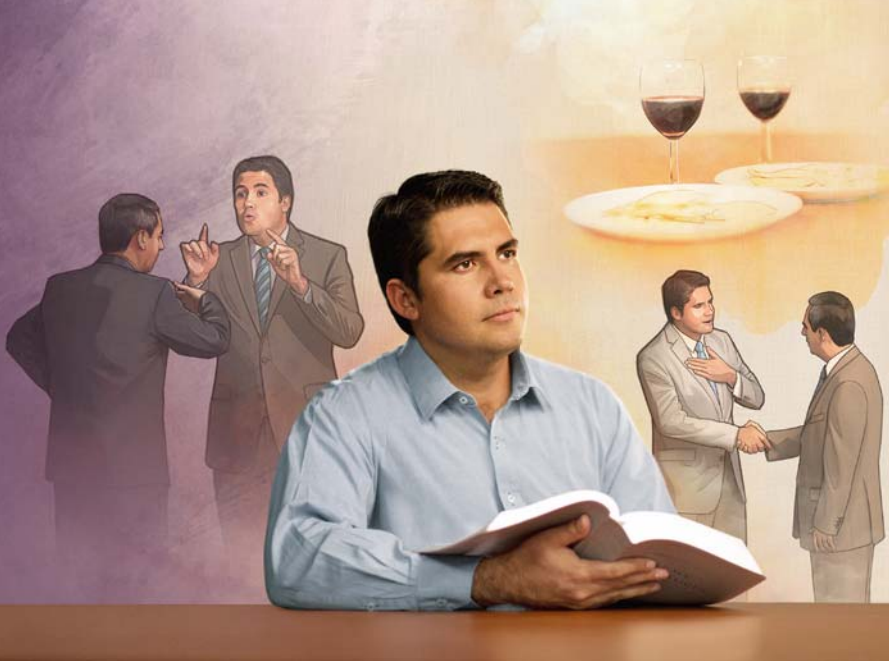
7. (a) What did Jesus pray for on the night of the first Lord's Evening Meal? (b) What shows that Jehovah has answered Jesus' prayer?

8. What message did Jehovah give Ezekiel regarding unity?

9. How is the fulfillment of Ezekiel's prophecy in evidence each year at the Memorial?

10. How can we promote unity among God's people?

11. How can reflecting on the meaning of the Memorial emblems help us to promote unity?



When we are forgiving,
we promote unity
(See paragraphs 12, 13)

or to that special night—and especially on that night—give serious thought to the significance of the unleavened bread and the red wine. (1 Cor. 11:23-25) The bread represents the sinless body of Jesus offered in sacrifice, and the wine pictures his shed blood. But we need more than just an intellectual understanding of what those emblems mean. Remember that the ransom sacrifice of Christ involved the two greatest expressions of love—the love that Jehovah showed in giving his Son in our behalf, and the love that Jesus showed by willingly offering up his life for us. Reflecting on their love should move us to love them in return. And the love for Jehovah that we and our fellow worshippers share is like a cord that ties us together and strengthens our bond of unity.

¹² A third way we can promote unity is by freely forgiving others. When we for-

12. In his illustration of the king settling accounts, how did Jesus make it clear that Jehovah expects us to be forgiving?

give those who have offended us, we show that we appreciate the forgiveness of our own sins made possible by Christ's ransom sacrifice. Consider one of Jesus' illustrations as recorded at Matthew 18:23-34. Ask yourself: 'Am I moved to apply what Jesus taught? Do I show patience and understanding to my fellow servants? Am I ready to forgive those who sin against me personally?' Granted, there are degrees of sin, and some offenses are very hard for imperfect humans to forgive. Yet, this illustration teaches us what Jehovah expects. (**Read Matthew 18:35.**) Jesus makes it clear that Jehovah will not forgive us if we do not forgive our brothers when there is a sound basis for doing so. What a sobering thought! We protect and preserve our precious unity when we forgive others as Jesus taught us to do.

¹³ When we forgive others, we prove ourselves to be peacemakers. Recall the

13. How does proving ourselves to be peacemakers promote unity?

apostle Paul's counsel that we should be "earnestly endeavoring to maintain the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace." (Eph. 4:3) During this Memorial season and especially on the night of the Memorial, think deeply about how you treat others. Ask yourself: 'Do I give clear evidence of being one who does not hold grudges? Am I known for going out of my way to promote peace and unity?' These are serious questions to ponder at this time of the year.

¹⁴ A fourth way to promote unity is by showing love in imitation of Jehovah, the God of love. (1 John 4:8) Never would we want to say regarding fellow worshippers, "I may have to love them, but I do not have to like them"! To think that way is contrary to Paul's counsel that we should be "putting up with one another in love." (Eph. 4:2) Note that he did not simply say that we should be "putting up with one another." He added that we should do so "in love." There is a difference. In our congregations are found all sorts of people whom Jehovah has drawn to him. (John 6:44) Since Jehovah has drawn them to him, he must find them lovable. How, then, could any of us judge a fellow worshipper as being unworthy of our love? We must not hold back the love that Jehovah commands us to display! —1 John 4:20, 21.

A FINAL MEMORIAL—WHEN?

¹⁵ One day the Memorial will be observed for the last time. How do we know? In his first inspired letter to the Corinthians, Paul wrote to anointed

14. How can we show that we are "putting up with one another in love"?

15. How do we know that there will be a final Memorial?

Christians that by commemorating Jesus' death each year, they "keep proclaiming the death of the Lord, *until he comes*." (1 Cor. 11:26) The word "comes" here refers to the same event as the "coming" that Jesus mentioned in his prophecy about the time of the end. Regarding the great tribulation just ahead of us, he said: "The sign of the Son of man will appear in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief, and they will see *the Son of man coming* on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And [Jesus] will send out his angels with a great trumpet sound, and they will gather his chosen ones together from the four winds, from one extremity of the heavens to their other extremity." (Matt. 24:29-31) This 'gathering of chosen ones' refers to the time when all anointed Christians who still remain on earth will receive their heavenly reward. It will happen after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed but before the battle of Armageddon. Then all of the 144,000 will share with Jesus in conquering the kings of the earth. (Rev. 17:12-14) The last Memorial that is observed prior to this gathering of the anointed to heaven will be the final one, for Jesus will have 'come.'

¹⁶ May we be determined to benefit ourselves by attending the Memorial on March 31, 2018. And let us ask Jehovah to help us keep contributing to the unity of his people! **(Read Psalm 133:1.)** Remember, someday the Memorial we observe will be the final one. Meanwhile, may we do our utmost to be in attendance, and may we treasure the pleasant unity experienced at the Memorial.

16. Why are you determined to be present at this year's Memorial?



Why Give to the One Who Has Everything?

“O our God, we thank you and praise your beautiful name.”—1 CHRON. 29:13.

JEHOVAH is a generous God. Everything we have is from him. Jehovah owns all the gold and silver along with all other natural resources of the earth, and he uses them to provide what is needed to sustain life. (Ps. 104:13-15; Hag. 2:8) The Bible contains numerous accounts of how Jehovah used his resources miraculously to provide for his people.

² For 40 years, Jehovah supplied manna and water for the nation of Israel while they were in the wilderness. (Ex. 16:35) As a result, “they lacked nothing.” (Neh. 9:20, 21) Through the prophet Elisha, Jehovah performed the miracle of multiplying the small quantity of oil for a faithful widow. God’s gift enabled her to pay off her debts and after that to have enough money for her and her sons to live on. (2 Ki. 4:1-7) With Jehovah’s support, Jesus miraculously provided food and even money when needed.—Matt. 15:35-38; 17:27.

³ Jehovah has access to unlimited resources that can sustain his earthly creation. However, he still invites his servants

- 1, 2. How does Jehovah generously use his material resources?
3. What will we consider in this article?

SONGS: 80, 50

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Why does Jehovah expect us to use our valuable things to give back to him?

How did faithful ones in the past support the activities of Jehovah’s representatives financially?

How does the organization use the money that is donated today?

to use their material things to support the work of his organization. (Ex. 36:3-7; **read Proverbs 3:9.**) Why does Jehovah expect us to use our valuable things to give back to him? How did faithful ones in the past support the activities of Jehovah's representatives financially? How does the organization use the money that is donated today? The answers to these questions will be discussed in this article.

WHY DO WE GIVE TO JEHOVAH?

⁴ We give to Jehovah because of our love and appreciation for him. We are overwhelmed when we consider all that Jehovah has done in our behalf. When explaining the needs of the upcoming project to build the temple, King David acknowledged that everything we receive comes from Jehovah and that whatever we give to Jehovah is from what he has already given us.—**Read 1 Chronicles 29:11-14.**

⁵ Giving is also an expression of our worship of Jehovah. In vision, the apostle John heard Jehovah's servants in heaven say: "You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they came into existence and were created." (Rev. 4:11) Would you not agree that Jehovah is worthy of all the glory and honor that we can give him by offering the best that we have? Through Moses, Jehovah commanded the nation of Israel to appear before Jehovah at three annual festivals. As part of their worship at those festivals, the Israelites were

not to "appear before Jehovah empty-handed." (Deut. 16:16) Likewise today, unselfish giving in appreciation for and in support of the work of the earthly part of Jehovah's organization is a fundamental aspect of worship.

⁶ Giving is good for us. It is healthy for us to be generous givers and not just receivers. (**Read Proverbs 29:21.**) We may think of a child who gives a gift to his parents from the small allowance they have given him. How the parents appreciate this gift! A son or a daughter who may be pioneering and living at home may rightly give the parents some funds to assist with household expenses. Though the parents may not expect this, they may accept these gifts because it is a way for the child to show appreciation for all that they do for him. Likewise, Jehovah realizes that giving from our valuable things is good for us.

GIVING IN BIBLE TIMES

⁷ The aspect of giving from personal resources is well-established in the Scriptures. In some cases, Jehovah's people contributed for specific projects. For example, Moses called for donations for the construction of the tabernacle, as did King David for the building of the temple. (Ex. 35:5; 1 Chron. 29:5-9) During the time of King Jehoash, the priests used money that was collected to repair the house of Jehovah. (2 Ki. 12:4, 5) When the brothers in the early Christian congregation were made aware of the need that arose because of a fam-

4. What do we show Jehovah when we support his work?

5. How do the Scriptures show that unselfish giving is a fundamental aspect of true worship?

6. Why is giving good for us? (See opening picture.)

7, 8. How did Jehovah's people in Bible times set an example in contributing (a) for specific projects? (b) for the general support of the work?

ine, they “determined, each according to what he could afford, to send relief to the brothers living in Judea.”—Acts 11:27-30.

⁸ In other cases, Jehovah’s people gave financial support to those taking the lead in the work. Under the Mosaic Law, the Levites did not receive an inheritance as the other tribes did. Rather, the Israelites gave them a tithe, or a tenth part, that allowed the Levites to focus on their work at the tabernacle. (Num. 18:21) Similarly, Jesus and his apostles later benefited from the generosity of the women “who were ministering to them from their belongings.”—Luke 8:1-3.

⁹ Of course, the sources of such donations varied. When contributing for the building of the tabernacle in the wilderness, what the Israelites gave likely included what they had brought with them from Egypt. (Ex. 3:21, 22; 35:22-24) In the first century, some Christians sold items that they owned, such as fields or houses, and brought the money to the apostles. The apostles distributed these funds to those in need. (Acts 4:34, 35) Others set aside money and gave regular donations to support the work. (1 Cor. 16:2) Thus, people of all walks of life—from the very wealthy to the very poor—had a share.—Luke 21:1-4.

GIVING TODAY

¹⁰ Today, we too may be asked to make donations for a specific purpose. For example, are there plans to build a new

9. What were some sources of contributions in times past?

10, 11. (a) How can we imitate the generous servants of Jehovah in Bible times? (b) How do you feel about the privilege you have to support the Kingdom work?

Kingdom Hall that your congregation will use? Or is your current Kingdom Hall being renovated? We may be made aware of financial needs with regard to renovations to our local branch office, a convention we are attending, or assistance to our brothers after a natural disaster. We also donate to support those caring for the work at world headquarters and at branch offices around the earth. Our donations support missionaries, special pioneers, and those in the circuit work. Your congregation also no doubt has a standing resolution to assist financially with the worldwide program of building Assembly Halls and Kingdom Halls, which benefits our brothers throughout the earth.

¹¹ All of us can have a share in supporting the work that Jehovah is accomplishing in these last days. Most donations are anonymous. We discreetly place funds in the contribution boxes at the Kingdom Hall, or we may make donations online through jw.org. We may feel that our small donations do not mean much. Yet, the majority of donated funds today come from many small gifts rather than from a few large ones. Our brothers, even those who are in poor economic situations, are like the Macedonians who were in “deep poverty” and yet begged for the privilege to give and did so generously.—2 Cor. 8:1-4.

¹² With prayerful consideration, the Governing Body strives to be faithful and discreet with regard to how the organization’s funds are used. (Matt. 24:45) The funds that are received are budgeted and spent accordingly. (Luke

12. How does the organization strive to make the best use of donated funds?



Your donations help our worldwide work
(See paragraphs 14-16)

14:28) In Bible times, stewards of dedicated funds followed procedures to make sure that donations were used only for their intended purposes. For example, Ezra traveled back to Jerusalem with donated items from the Persian king—gold, silver, and other materials worth well over \$100 million (U.S.) in today’s values. Ezra considered these funds to be voluntary offerings to Jehovah and put detailed procedures in place to protect these treasures on the perilous journey through hostile territory. (Ezra 8:24-34) The apostle Paul collected funds as a relief ministration for the brothers in Judea. He took steps to ensure that those delivering the funds cared for “everything honestly, not only in the sight of Jehovah but also in the sight of men.” **(Read 2 Corinthians 8: 18-21.)** Imitating the examples of Ezra and Paul, our organization today follows strict procedures when it comes to handling and spending donated funds.

¹³ A family may make adjustments as they seek to balance income with expenses or as they consider how to simplify their life and reduce expenses in order

13. How should we view recent simplifications in the organization?

to do more for Jehovah. The same is true of Jehovah’s organization. In recent years, there have been many exciting new initiatives. At times, this resulted in more money going out than coming in for a period of time. Thus, the organization looks for ways to reduce expenses and simplify the work so as to be able to accomplish the most that it can with your generous donations.

BENEFITS FROM YOUR DONATIONS

¹⁴ Many longtime servants of Jehovah have been heard to say that they have never seen a time like this with so many spiritual provisions. Just think! In recent years, we have seen the start of jw.org and JW Broadcasting. The *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is published in many more languages. In 2014/2015, some of the largest stadiums in 14 cities around the world became home for the three-day “Keep Seeking First God’s Kingdom!” International Conventions. Those who attended were thrilled to be present.

¹⁵ Many have expressed appreciation

14-16. (a) What are some of the things being accomplished with your donations? (b) In what ways have you benefited from these provisions?

for the outstanding benefits they are receiving from Jehovah's organization. For example, regarding the provision of JW Broadcasting, one couple serving in a country in Asia wrote: "Our assignment is in a small city. As a result, we sometimes feel isolated, and we easily forget the scope of Jehovah's work. But as soon as we watch the various programs on JW Broadcasting, we remember that we are part of an international brotherhood. Our dear local brothers and sisters are very excited about JW Broadcasting. We often hear them say that after watching the monthly programs, they feel close to the members of the Governing Body. Now they are prouder than ever to be part of God's organization."

¹⁶ Worldwide, nearly 2,500 Kingdom Halls are currently in the process of being built or extensively renovated. After beginning to use their new Kingdom Hall, the members of one congregation in Honduras wrote: "We feel truly happy to be part of Jehovah's universal family and to enjoy our wonderful worldwide brotherhood, both of which helped to make our dream of having a Kingdom Hall in our community a reality." Many express similar appreciation after receiving the Bible and other publications translated into their own language, after benefiting from relief work, or after seeing the results of metropolitan and public witnessing in their communities.

¹⁷ Onlookers cannot understand how it is possible for us to do all this work using only voluntary donations. After touring one of our printing facilities, an

17. How does the way the organization operates today give evidence of Jehovah's backing?

executive from a large company was amazed that all the work was accomplished by volunteers, with voluntary donations, and without any sales or fund drives. He said that it should not be possible to do what we do. We agree! We know that it is possible only because Jehovah is backing the work.—Job 42:2.

BLESSINGS FOR GIVING BACK TO JEHOVAH

¹⁸ Jehovah dignifies us with the opportunity to support the grand work taking place today. He guarantees that we will receive blessings when we give in support of the Kingdom. (Mal. 3:10) Jehovah promises that the one who gives generously will prosper. **(Read Proverbs 11:24, 25.)** Giving also makes us happy, for "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) By word and example, we have the privilege of training our children and new ones to appreciate how they can have a share and how they, as a result, can enjoy many blessings.

¹⁹ Everything we have is from Jehovah. Giving back to him shows that we love him and appreciate all that he has done in our behalf. (1 Chron. 29:17) When donating for the construction of the temple, "the people rejoiced over making these voluntary offerings, for they made the voluntary offerings to Jehovah with a complete heart." (1 Chron. 29:9) May we likewise continue to find joy and satisfaction in giving back to Jehovah what has come to us from his own hand.

18. (a) What blessings do we receive when we give in support of the Kingdom? (b) How can we train our children and new ones to have a share?

19. How has this article encouraged you?



What Kind of Love Brings True Happiness?

“Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!”—PS. 144:15.

SONGS: 111, 109

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can we avoid loving ourselves excessively?

Why are lovers of money not truly happy?

How might we evaluate our pursuit of pleasure?

WE LIVE in a time of human history that is truly unique. As the Bible foretold, Jehovah is gathering “a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” Those gathered constitute “a mighty nation” of more than eight million happy people who “are rendering [God] sacred service day and night.” (Rev. 7:9, 15; Isa. 60:22) Never before have there been so many who have come to love both God and their fellow man.

² Yet, the inspired Scriptures also foretold that in our day, a misdirected kind of love characterized by selfishness would be shown by people who are alienated from God. The apostle Paul wrote: “In the last days . . . , men will be *lovers of themselves, lovers of money, . . . lovers of pleasures* rather than lovers of God.” (2 Tim. 3:1-4) This self-centered kind of love is inconsistent with Christian love; it stands in contrast with it. Pursuing selfish goals does not bring people the happiness

1. Why is the time that we live in unique?
2. What misdirected kind of love characterizes people who are alienated from God? (See opening picture.)

that they expect. Indeed, such love fosters a selfish world that is “hard to deal with.”

³ Paul recognized that widespread, selfish love would pose dangers for Christians. Hence, he gave the warning to “turn away” from those whose love is misdirected. (2 Tim. 3:5) However, we cannot avoid all contact with such people. So how can we turn away from the worldly attitudes that surround us and strive to please Jehovah, the God of love? Let us contrast godly love with the love described at 2 Timothy 3:2-4. Doing so will help us evaluate and refine the love that we should show, the kind of love that brings true satisfaction and happiness.

LOVE OF GOD OR LOVE OF SELF?

⁴ ***“Men will be lovers of themselves,”*** wrote the inspired apostle. Is it wrong for us to love ourselves? No, it is normal, even necessary, to have a healthy love of self. Jehovah designed us that way. Jesus said: “You must love your neighbor *as yourself*.” (Mark 12:31) If we do not love ourselves, we cannot love our neighbor. We also read in the Scriptures: “Husbands should love their wives *as their own bodies*. A man who loves his wife loves *himself*, for no man ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cherishes it.” (Eph. 5:28, 29) So a proper love of self is desirable.

⁵ The love of self mentioned at 2 Timothy 3:2 is not a normal, healthy love. It is

a distorted, selfish love. People who love themselves excessively think more of themselves than it is necessary for them to think. **(Read Romans 12:3.)** Their main interest in life is themselves. They care little about others. When things go wrong, they tend to blame others rather than accept responsibility. One Bible commentary likens those who are lovers of themselves to “the hedgehog which . . . rolls itself up in a ball, keeping the soft, warm wool for itself . . . and . . . presents the sharp spines to those without.” Such self-centered people are not truly happy.

⁶ Bible scholars suggest that love of self is put at the top of the apostle Paul’s list of negative qualities that would be prevalent during the last days because the other qualities result from it. In contrast, people who love God produce a much different kind of fruitage. The Bible associates godly love with joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control. (Gal. 5:22, 23) “Happy is the people whose God is Jehovah!” wrote the psalmist. (Ps. 144:15) Jehovah is a happy God, and his people reflect that quality. Furthermore, unlike those who are lovers of themselves and who are interested only in receiving, Jehovah’s servants find delight in giving of themselves for the welfare of others.—Acts 20:35.

⁷ How can we determine if our love of God is being eclipsed by love of self? Consider the admonition found at Philippians 2:3, 4: “Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with humility consider others superior

3. What will we analyze in this article, and why?

4. Why is it not wrong to have a balanced love of self?

5. How would you describe those who have an excessive love of self?

6. What results come from a love of God?

7. What questions will help us to analyze our love of God?

to you, as you look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.” We might ask ourselves: ‘Do I apply that counsel in my life? Am I genuinely seeking to do God’s will? Do I reach out to help others, both in the congregation and in the field ministry?’ Giving of ourselves is not always easy. It requires effort and self-sacrifice. But what could make us happier than knowing that we have the approval of the Sovereign of the universe?

⁸ Love of God has moved some to give up potentially lucrative careers to serve Jehovah more fully. Ericka, who lives in the United States, is a physician. But instead of pursuing a prestigious position in medicine, she became a regular pioneer and has served in several countries with her husband. Thinking back, she says: “The many experiences we have had in helping out in a foreign-language field, along with the friendships we have made, have truly enriched our lives. I still practice medicine, but being able to focus most of my time and energy on helping to heal people spiritually and on caring for the needs of the congregation brings me heartfelt joy and inner satisfaction.”

RICHES IN HEAVEN OR RICHES ON EARTH?

⁹ Paul wrote that people would be “**lovers of money.**” Some years ago, a pioneer in Ireland spoke to a man about God. The man took out his wallet, removed some paper money, held it up, and proudly said, “This is my god!” Though not many would be so open

about the matter, the world is full of people who love money and the things it can buy. Yet, the Bible cautions: “A lover of silver will never be satisfied with silver, nor a lover of wealth with income.” (Eccl. 5:10) Such people will always want more money, and striving to amass it, they will bring on themselves “many pains.”—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

¹⁰ We all need money, of course. It provides a measure of protection. (Eccl. 7:12) But can a person be truly happy if he has only enough for his basic needs? Absolutely! (**Read Ecclesiastes 5:12.**) Agur son of Jakeh wrote: “Give me neither poverty nor riches. Just let me consume my portion of food.” We can readily understand his reason for not wanting to be extremely poor. As he went on to explain, he did not want to be tempted to steal because theft would dishonor God. But why did he pray not to have riches? He wrote: “So that I do not become satisfied and deny you and say, ‘Who is Jehovah?’” (Prov. 30:8, 9) Likely you can think of people who trust in their wealth rather than in God.

¹¹ Those who love money cannot please God. Jesus said: “No one can slave for two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will stick to the one and despise the other. You cannot slave for God and for Riches.” He prefaced that by saying: “Stop storing up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal. Rather, store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes, and where thieves

8. What has the love of God moved some to do?

9. Why does a love of money not bring happiness?

10. What does the Bible say about riches and poverty?

11. What counsel did Jesus give about money?



How can we avoid becoming lovers of ourselves, of money, or of pleasures?
(See paragraphs 7, 13, 18)

do not break in and steal.”—Matt. 6:19, 20, 24.

¹² Many have found that living a simple life not only makes them happier but also gives them more time to serve Jehovah. Jack, who lives in the United States, sold his large home and business because he knew that doing so would make it possible for him to pioneer with his wife. He reflects: “It was hard to give up our beautiful home and property in the country. Yet, for years, I would come home frustrated because of problems at work. My wife, a regular pioneer, was always so happy. She would say, ‘I have the greatest boss ever!’ Now that I too am pioneering, we both work for the same Person, Jehovah.”

¹³ To analyze our view of money, we might honestly consider how we would answer these questions: ‘Do I really believe and live in harmony with what the Bible says about money? Does making

money come first in my life? Do I value material things more than my relationship with Jehovah and with people? Do I really trust in Jehovah to care for my needs?’ We can be sure that he will never disappoint those hoping in him.—Matt. 6:33.

SEEKING JEHOVAH OR SEEKING PLEASURES?

¹⁴ As foretold, many people today are “**lovers of pleasures.**” Just as there is nothing wrong with a healthy, reasonable view of self and money, there is nothing wrong with a balanced view of pleasures. Jehovah does not want us to practice severe self-denial or to abstain from wholesome activities that bring enjoyment. The Bible encourages faithful ones: “Go, eat your food with rejoicing, and drink your wine with a cheerful heart.”—Eccl. 9:7.

¹⁵ Second Timothy 3:4 refers to a pursuit of pleasures that excludes God.

12. How may a simple life make it easier to serve God? Give an example.

13. How might we analyze our view of money?

14. What is a reasonable view of pleasures?

15. What type of pleasures is referred to at 2 Timothy 3:4?

Notice that the verse does not say that people would love pleasures *more* than God, implying that they would have some love for him. It says ‘*rather* than God.’ One scholar wrote: “This [verse] definitely does not mean that they also love God to some extent. It means that they do not love God at all.” What a sobering warning to those who are nurturing an inordinate love of pleasures! The phrase “lovers of pleasures” aptly describes those who are “carried away by . . . pleasures of this life.”—Luke 8:14.

¹⁶ Jesus displayed a perfectly balanced view of pleasures. He attended “a marriage feast” and “a big reception feast.” (John 2:1-10; Luke 5:29) At the wedding, he miraculously changed water into wine, adding to the supply, which had run short. And on another occasion, he rejected the self-righteous views of those who criticized him for eating and drinking.—Luke 7:33-36.

¹⁷ Yet, Jesus did not immerse himself in a life of pleasure. He put Jehovah first and expended himself tirelessly in behalf of others. So that many might live, he willingly endured a painful death on a stake. Addressing those who would follow in his footsteps, Jesus said: “Happy are you when people reproach you and persecute you and lyingly say every sort of wicked thing against you for my sake. Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.”—Matt. 5:11, 12.

¹⁸ How might we analyze how much we

16, 17. What example did Jesus set in the matter of pleasures?

18. What questions will help us to analyze how much we love pleasures?

love pleasures? We do well to ask ourselves: ‘Do meetings and field service take second place to entertainment? Am I willing to practice self-denial because I want to serve God? In seeking pleasurable activities, do I consider how Jehovah will view my choices?’ If we truly love God, we will be careful to avoid not only the things we know will displease him but also the things we merely suspect may displease him.—**Read Matthew 22:37, 38.**

THE WAY OF HAPPINESS

¹⁹ After some 6,000 years of human misery, Satan’s world is coming to its end. The earth is filled with those who have an inordinate love of self, money, and pleasures. They are people who are eager for what they can get, people who place their own wishes at the center of their life. Such people can never be truly happy. Instead, it is as the psalmist wrote: “Happy is the one who has the God of Jacob as his helper, whose hope is in Jehovah his God.”—Ps. 146:5.

²⁰ The love of God flourishes among Jehovah’s people, and our ranks are growing every year. This is evidence that God’s Kingdom reigns and will soon bring to earth unimaginable blessings. True and lasting joy comes from doing God’s will, from knowing that we are pleasing the Supreme One. And those who love Jehovah will be joyful forever! In the next article, we will consider some of the qualities that result from selfish love and see how these contrast with the qualities found in Jehovah’s servants.

19. Who can never be truly happy?

20. How has the love of God brought you happiness?



See the Difference in People

“You will . . . see the distinction between a righteous person and a wicked person.”—MAL. 3:18.

MANY health-care professionals work among those infected with contagious diseases. They care for their patients because they want to help them. In doing so, however, they need to protect themselves so that they do not become infected with the disease they are seeking to treat. Likewise, many of us live and work with those who are infected with attitudes and characteristics that run counter to godly qualities. This presents a challenge for us.

² These last days are a time of moral chaos. The apostle Paul’s second letter to Timothy describes the characteristics of people who are alienated from God, characteristics that will become more pronounced in the days ahead. (**Read 2 Timothy 3:1-5, 13.**) Though we may be shocked by the prevalence of such qualities, we could be influenced by the behavior and attitudes of those who display them. (Prov. 13: 20) In this article, we will consider how the qualities that characterize people of the last days stand in contrast with the qualities of God’s people. We will also see how we can protect

1, 2. What challenge faces God’s people today? (See opening pictures.)

SONGS: 127, 101

HOW MAY WE IMPROVE IN . . .

the way we view ourselves?

the way we relate to others?

the way we strive to improve our personality?

ourselves from being infected with negative traits while at the same time helping others spiritually.

³ “The last days,” wrote the apostle Paul, would bring “critical times hard to deal with.” He then listed 19 negative traits, or qualities, that would characterize people in this time period. The list is similar to the one found at Romans 1:29-31, though the list in Paul’s letter to Timothy includes terms that are not mentioned elsewhere in the Christian Greek Scriptures. Paul introduces his list of ungodly qualities with the words “for men will be . . .” The term “men” should be understood to mean “people,” since both men and women display such qualities. However, these are not qualities exhibited by *all* people. Christians have far different traits.—**Read Malachi 3:18.**

HOW WE VIEW OURSELVES

⁴ After stating that many would be lovers of themselves and of money, Paul wrote that people would also be *boastful*, *haughty*, and *puffed up with pride*, traits that often reflect a feeling of superiority because of one’s abilities, appearance, wealth, or rank. People with such traits crave to be admired and adored. One scholar wrote the following about the person who has an all-consuming pride: “In his heart there is a little altar where he bows down before himself.” Some have said that inordinate pride is so distasteful that even the proud dislike it in others.

⁵ Jehovah certainly detests pride. He

hates “haughty eyes.” (Prov. 6:16, 17) Pride hinders approach to God. (Ps. 10:4) It is a characteristic of the Devil. (1 Tim. 3:6) Sadly, though, even some loyal servants of Jehovah have become infected with pride. Uzziah, a king of Judah, proved faithful for years. “However,” the Bible states, “as soon as he was strong, his heart became haughty to his own ruin, and he acted unfaithfully against Jehovah his God by entering the temple of Jehovah to burn incense on the altar of incense.” Later, King Hezekiah too fell prey to haughtiness, though only temporarily.—2 Chron. 26:16; 32:25, 26.

⁶ Some people become proud because of their good looks, popularity, musical ability, physical prowess, or exalted position. David had not just one of these assets but all of them; yet, he remained humble throughout his life. After he killed Goliath and was offered the daughter of King Saul to be his wife, David said: “Who am I and who are my relatives, my father’s family in Israel, for me to become son-in-law to the king?” (1 Sam. 18:18) What helped David remain humble? The qualities, abilities, and privileges David had were because God ‘stooped down,’ or humbled himself, to pay attention to him. (Ps. 113:5-8) David knew that he did not possess anything good that he had not received from Jehovah.—Compare 1 Corinthians 4:7.

⁷ Like David, Jehovah’s people today strive to show humility. We are awed by the knowledge that Jehovah, the greatest Person in the universe, manifests the

3. To whom does the list of qualities found at 2 Timothy 3:2-5 apply?

4. How would you describe those who are puffed up with pride?

5. How have even faithful ones been overtaken by pride?

6. What could have caused David to become proud, but why did he not?

7. What will help us to show humility?

appealing quality of humility. (Ps. 18:35) We take to heart the inspired counsel: “Clothe yourselves with the tender affections of compassion, kindness, humility, mildness, and patience.” (Col. 3:12) We also know that love “does not brag, does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) When we show humility, people may be drawn to Jehovah. Just as husbands can be won without a word by the conduct of their wives, others can be drawn to God by the humility shown by his people.—1 Pet. 3:1.

HOW WE RELATE TO OTHERS

⁸ Paul described how people living in the last days would relate to one another. He wrote that in the last days, children would be *disobedient to parents*. While such behavior is sometimes accepted and even encouraged in books, movies, and television programs today, disobedience undermines the stability of the most important social unit in society—the family. This principle has long been understood. Interestingly, in ancient Greece, if a man struck his parents, he would lose all his civil rights; in Roman law, to strike a father was as serious as murder. Both the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures admonish children to honor their parents.—Ex. 20:12; Eph. 6:1-3.

⁹ Children can protect themselves from being infected with the spirit of disobedience by reflecting on what their parents have done for them. An appreciative attitude is bolstered by the understanding that obedience is re-

quired by God, the Father of us all. By speaking positively about their parents, young ones can help other youths view their own parents in a positive light. Of course, if parents *have no natural affection* for their children, it might be difficult for those children to obey from the heart. On the other hand, when a youngster senses his parents’ genuine love, he is moved to please them even when he is tempted to disobey. “Though I often felt inclined to try to get away with things,” admits Austin, “my parents set reasonable guidelines, explained the reasons for rules, and kept the lines of communication wide open. This helped me to be obedient. I could see that they cared for me, and that made me want to please them.”

¹⁰ Paul lists other negative qualities that show that people lack love for one another. Fittingly, *unthankful* follows “disobedient to parents” because it describes the attitude of those who lack appreciation for the kindnesses shown to them by others. People would also be *disloyal*. They would *not be open to any agreement*, displaying an unwillingness to become reconciled to other people. They would be *blasphemers* and *betrayers*, directing abusive, injurious speech against humans and even against God. And there would be *slanders*, people who voice damaging reports meant to destroy the good reputation of others.*

¹¹ In contrast with the people who show

* The Greek word for “slanderer” or “accuser” is *di-a’bo·los*, a term used in the Bible as a title for Satan, the wicked slanderer of God.

8. (a) How is disobedience to parents viewed by some today? (b) What do the Scriptures admonish children to do?

9. What will help young ones to be obedient to their parents?

10, 11. (a) What negative qualities show that people lack love for one another? (b) To what extent do true Christians love their fellow man?

the widespread lack of love today, those who worship Jehovah have genuine love for their fellow man. This has always been true. Jesus said that love of neighbor, a form of *a-ga'pe*, was the second most important commandment in the Mosaic Law, second only to love of God. (Matt. 22:38, 39) Jesus also said that love for one another would be the quality that would identify true Christians. **(Read John 13:34, 35.)** Such Christian love would even be extended to one's enemies. —Matt. 5:43, 44.

¹² Jesus showed great love for others. He went from city to city, telling people the good news about the Kingdom of God. He cured the blind, the lame, the lepers, and the deaf. He raised the dead. (Luke 7:22) Jesus even gave his own life in behalf of mankind, though many hated him. Jesus' love perfectly reflected the love his Father shows. Throughout the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses express godly love toward others.

12. How did Jesus show love for others?

¹³ The love we show for others draws people to our heavenly Father. A man in Thailand, for example, was touched by the love he saw among the brothers at a regional convention. Upon returning home, he asked to have a Bible study twice a week. He preached to all his relatives, and just six months after the convention, he gave his first Bible reading at the Kingdom Hall. To analyze how well we are doing in showing love for others, we might ask ourselves: 'Am I reaching out to help others in my family, in my congregation, and in my ministry? Do I strive to see others as Jehovah sees them?'

WOLVES AND LAMBS

¹⁴ Other qualities displayed by people in the last days provide additional reasons for Christians to keep their dis-

13. How may the love we show for others help them to draw close to Jehovah?

14, 15. What animalistic qualities do many display, but how have some changed for the better?

Applying Bible principles transforms lives!
(See paragraph 16)



tance from such people. Godless ones would be *without love of goodness*, or as some translations render the expression, “haters of good” or “hostile to all goodness.” They would be *without self-control, fierce*. Some would be *headstrong*, or impulsive and reckless.

¹⁵ Many who formerly displayed such animalistic qualities have changed for the better. This transformation was beautifully foretold in a Bible prophecy. **(Read Isaiah 11:6, 7.)** There we read about wild animals, such as wolves and lions, that live in peace with domestic animals, such as lambs and calves. Notice that this tranquil state of affairs will prevail “because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah.” (Isa. 11:9) Since animals cannot learn about Jehovah, the spiritual fulfillment of this prophecy applies to people.

¹⁶ There are many who were once as fierce as wolves but who now live in peace with others. You can read some of their experiences in the series “The Bible Changes Lives,” found on jw.org. Those who have come to know and serve Jehovah are not like those who *have an appearance of godliness but prove false to its power*, who behave as if they worship God but belie that claim by their conduct. Rather, formerly fierce people have “put on the new personality that was created according to God’s will in true righteousness and loyalty.” (Eph. 4: 23, 24) As people learn about God, they see the need to conform to his standards. They are then moved to make changes in their beliefs, attitudes, and conduct. Such changes are not easy but can be made because God’s spirit will

16. How has the Bible helped people to transform their personalities?

help those who sincerely desire to do God’s will.

“FROM THESE TURN AWAY”

¹⁷ The distinction between those serving God and those not serving him is becoming increasingly evident. We who serve God must be careful that we do not become influenced by the unrighteous attitudes of others. Wisely, we heed the inspired counsel to *turn away from* those described at 2 Timothy 3:2-5. Of course, we cannot completely avoid people with ungodly traits. We might have to work with them, go to school with them, or live with them. But we can avoid being drawn into their thinking and imitating their characteristics. We do this by strengthening our spirituality through Bible study and close association with those who are determined to serve Jehovah.

¹⁸ We should also strive to help others spiritually. Look for opportunities to witness, asking Jehovah to help you say the right thing at the right time. We should let others know that we are Jehovah’s Witnesses. That way, our fine conduct will bring glory to God and not to us. We have been trained “to reject ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.” (Titus 2:11-14) If we conduct ourselves in a godly way, others will observe us, and some may even say: “We want to go with you, for we have heard that God is with you people.”—Zech. 8:23.

17. How may we avoid being influenced by those who display ungodly qualities?

18. How may our speech and conduct benefit others spiritually?

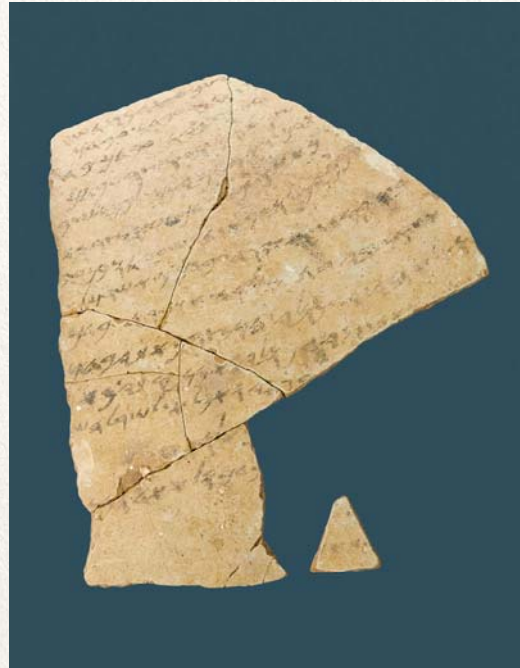
DID YOU KNOW?

Were the principles of the Mosaic Law actually applied in settling everyday legal disputes in ancient Israel?

AT TIMES, yes. Consider one example. Deuteronomy 24:14, 15 states: “You must not defraud a hired worker who is in need and poor, whether one of your brothers or a foreign resident in your land . . . Otherwise, he will cry out to Jehovah against you, and you will be guilty of sin.”

The record of a plea in such a case dated to the seventh century B.C.E. It was found near Ashdod. Possibly penned for a field worker who allegedly failed to deliver a set quota of grain, this document, written on a pottery shard, says: “After your servant [the petitioner] had finished storing the harvest a few days ago, Hoshaya-hu son of Shobay came and took your servant’s garment. . . . All my companions who were harvesting with me in the heat of the sun will testify . . . that what I have said is true. I am innocent of any offense. . . . If the governor does not consider it his obligation to have your servant’s garment sent back, do it out of pity! You must not remain silent when your servant is without his garment.”

This plea “speaks to us of more than just the desperation of a labourer to get back [his garment],” says historian Simon Schama. “It also presupposes that the petitioner knew something about the biblical law code, especially the injunctions in Leviticus and Deuteronomy against harsh treatment of the poor.”



COURTESY OF THE ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY;
Photographers: Miki Koren and Harel Gradin

**The pottery shard on which
the farmworker’s plea was written**

