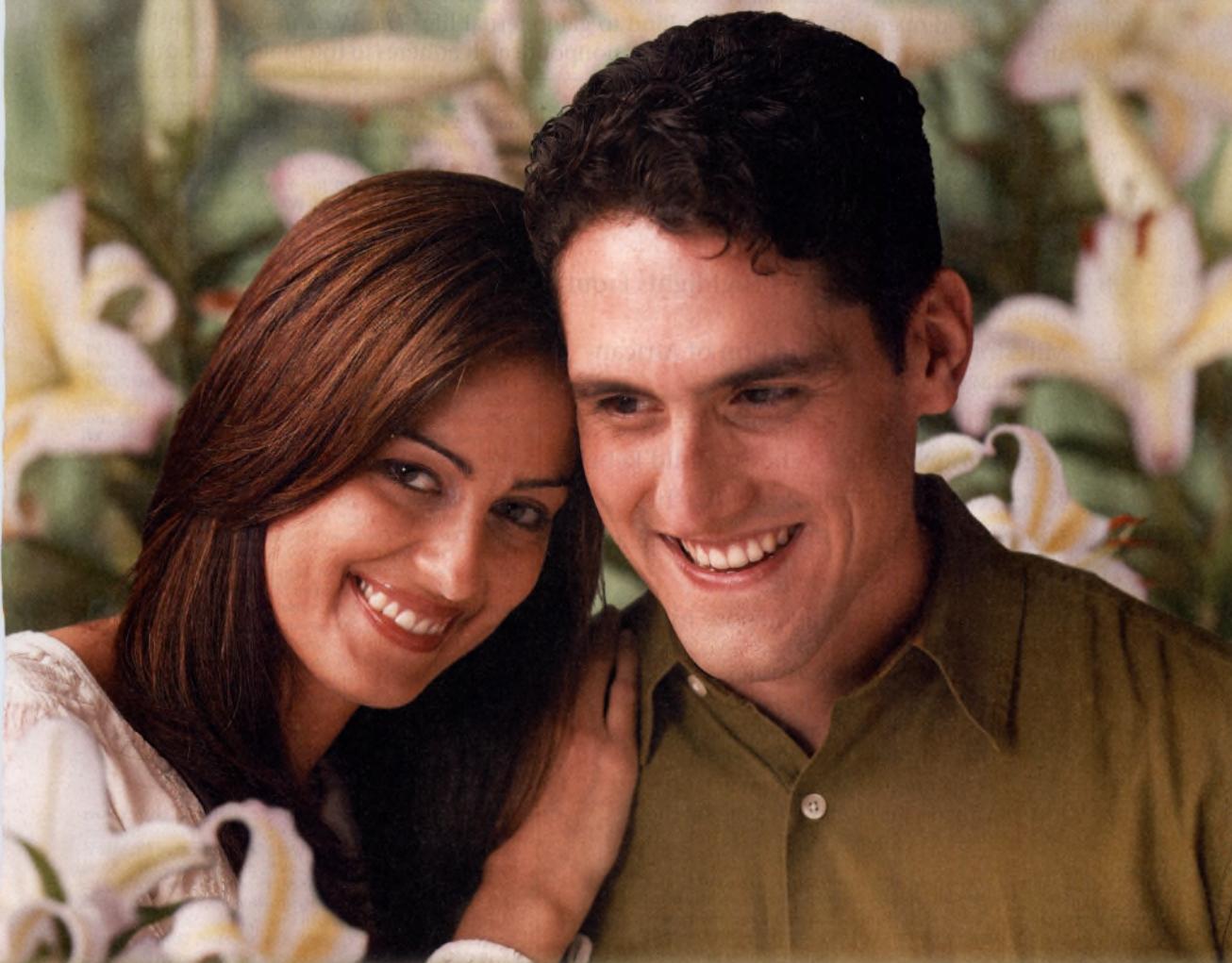


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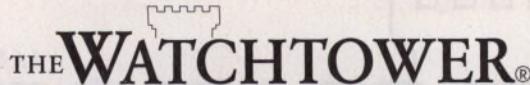
THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



MAN AND WOMAN

A Dignified Role for Each



THE WATCHTOWER®
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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Man and Woman *Made for Each Other*

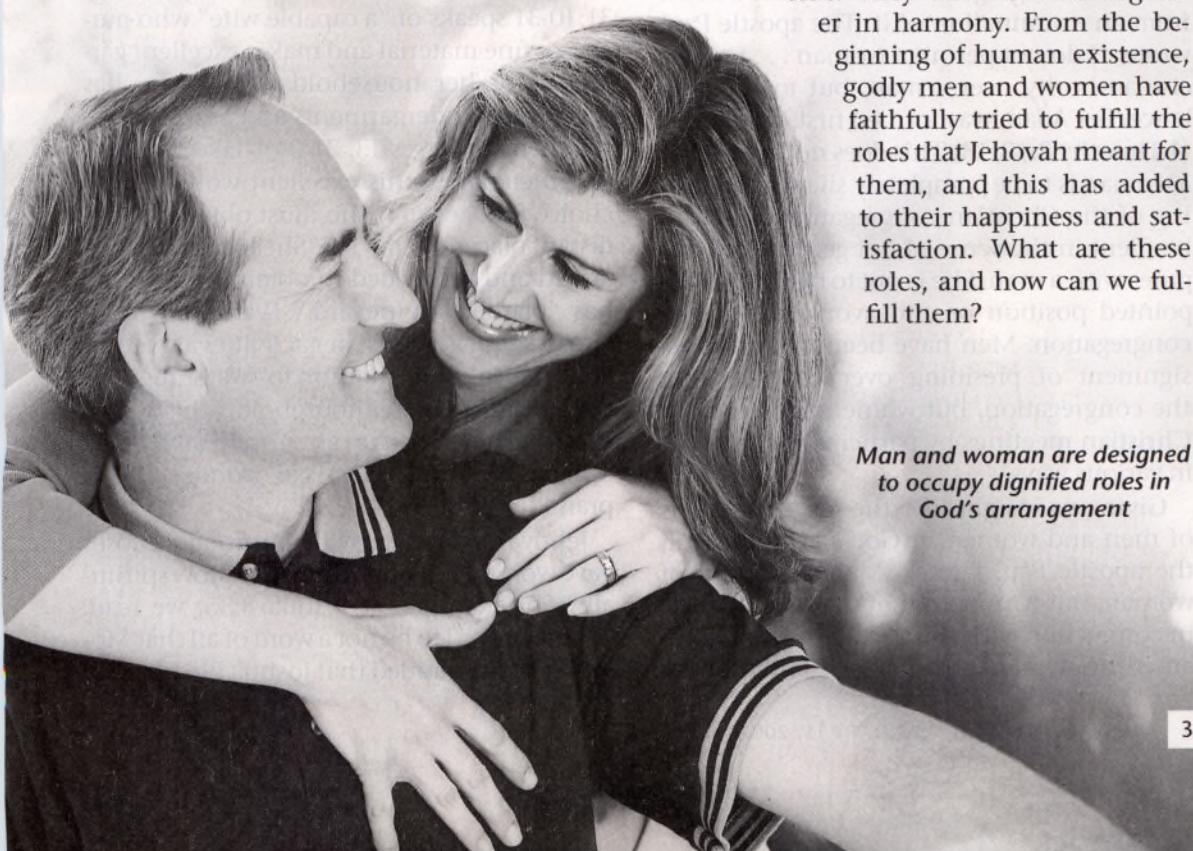
MAN and woman have always yearned to be together. This originated with God. Jehovah saw that it was not good for the first man, Adam, to continue by himself. So God made "a helper for [the man], as a complement of him."

Jehovah caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and then he took one of his ribs and "proceeded to build the rib . . . into a woman and to bring her to the man." Adam was so thrilled upon meeting this beautiful creation of Jehovah that he declared: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." With her feminine qualities, the perfect woman, Eve, was indeed lovable. And

perfect Adam in his masculine dignity deserved respect. They were made for each other. The Bible says: "That is why a man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh."—Genesis 2:18-24.

Today, however, families are breaking apart, and the relationship between man and woman is often abusive or governed by selfishness. A spirit of competition between the sexes has contributed to conflict and discord. All of this is contrary to God's purpose for man and woman. Man was designed to fill a wonderful role on earth. Woman was to occupy a unique and worthy place at man's side. They were to work together in harmony. From the beginning of human existence, godly men and women have faithfully tried to fulfill the roles that Jehovah meant for them, and this has added to their happiness and satisfaction. What are these roles, and how can we fulfill them?

Man and woman are designed to occupy dignified roles in God's arrangement



Man and Woman

A Dignified Role for Each

JEHOVAH GOD created Adam first, then Eve. Before Eve's creation, Adam gained experience in living. During this time, Jehovah gave him certain instructions. (Genesis 2:15-20) Serving as God's spokesman, Adam was to transmit these to his wife. Logically, then, he would take the lead in all matters involving worship.

A corresponding arrangement exists in the Christian congregation, and we can benefit from an examination of it. The apostle Paul wrote: "I do not permit a woman . . . to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence. For Adam was formed first, then Eve." (1 Timothy 2:12, 13) This does not mean that a woman is to be completely silent at a meeting of the Christian congregation. She is to be silent in the sense of not getting into disputes with a man. She is not to belittle his appointed position or endeavor to teach the congregation. Men have been given the assignment of presiding over and teaching the congregation, but women add much to Christian meetings by participating in them in various ways.

Giving us insight into the respective roles of men and women in God's arrangement, the apostle Paul wrote: "Man is not out of woman, but woman out of man . . . Besides, in connection with the Lord neither is woman without man nor man without woman



[neither being independent of the other]. For just as the woman is out of the man, so also the man is through the woman; but all things are out of God."—1 Corinthians 11:8-12.

Women Enjoy Fine Privileges

Under the Law given by God to Israel, women had many privileges and were free to use their initiative. For instance, Proverbs 31:10-31 speaks of "a capable wife" who purchases fine material and makes excellent garments for her household. Why, "she has made even undergarments and proceeded to sell them"! (Verses 13, 21-24) "Like the ships of a merchant," this excellent woman finds choice food, even if she must obtain it from distant places. (Verse 14) "She has considered a field and proceeded to obtain it," and she has "planted a vineyard." (Verse 16) Since "her trading is good," her activities are profitable. (Verse 18) In addition to "watching over the goings-on of her household," this industrious fearer of Jehovah unselfishly helps others. (Verses 20, 27) No wonder she is praised!—Verse 31.

Jehovah's laws provided through Moses gave women full opportunity to grow spiritually. For example, at Joshua 8:35, we read: "There proved to be not a word of all that Moses had commanded that Joshua did not read

aloud in front of all the congregation of Israel, together with the women and the little ones and the alien residents who walked in their midst." Concerning Ezra the priest, the Bible states: "[He] brought the law before the congregation of men as well as of women and of all intelligent enough to listen, on the first day of the seventh month. And he continued to read aloud from it before the public square that is before the Water Gate, from daybreak till midday, in front of the men and the women and the other intelligent ones; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law." (Nehemiah 8:2, 3) Women benefited from such reading of the Law. They also observed religious festivals. (Deuteronomy 12:12, 18; 16:11, 14) Most important, women in ancient Israel could have a personal relationship with Jehovah God and could individually pray to him.—1 Samuel 1:10.

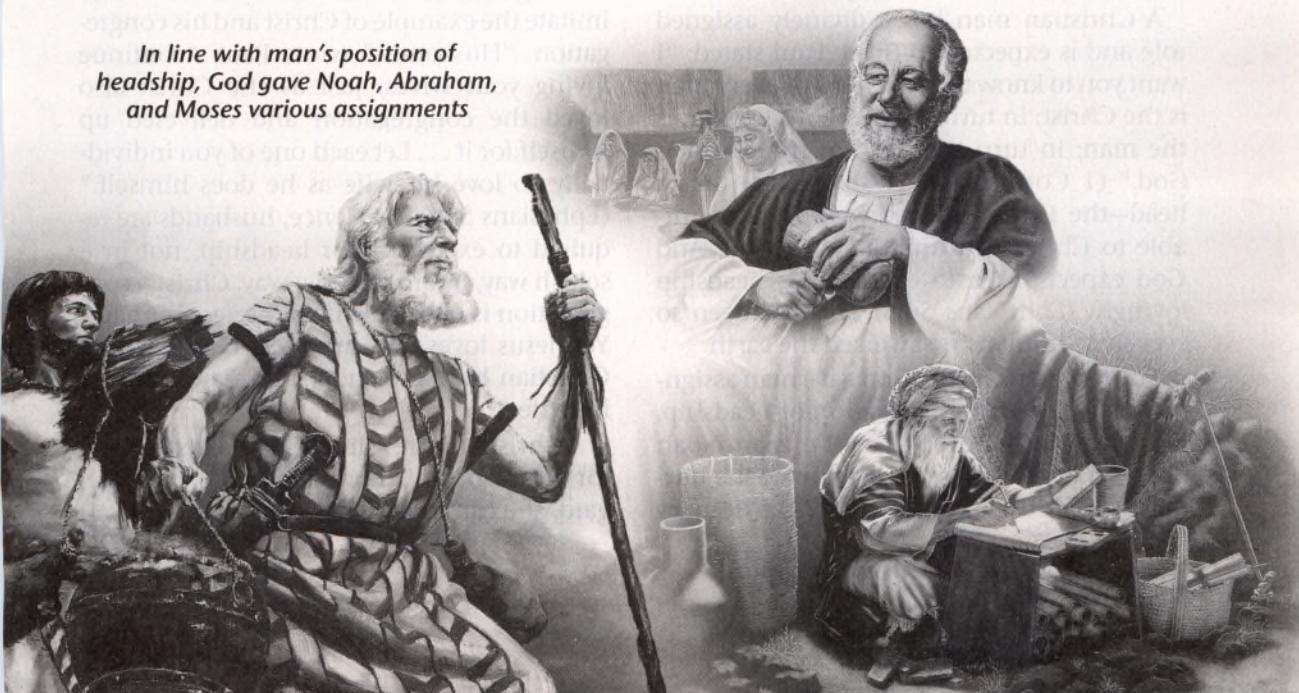
In the first century C.E., God-fearing women were privileged to minister to Jesus. (Luke 8:1-3) A woman anointed his head and feet during an evening meal in Bethany. (Matthew 26:6-13; John 12:1-7) Women were among those to whom Jesus appeared after

his resurrection. (Matthew 28:1-10; John 20:1-18) After Jesus' ascension to heaven, the group of about 120 that met together included "some women and Mary the mother of Jesus." (Acts 1:3-15) Many or all of these women were undoubtedly in the upper chamber in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., when the holy spirit was sent and Jesus' disciples miraculously spoke in a number of different languages.—Acts 2:1-12.

Both men and women were among those who experienced the fulfillment of Joel 2:28, 29, as quoted by the apostle Peter on the day of Pentecost: "I [Jehovah] shall pour out some of my spirit upon every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy . . . And even upon my men slaves and upon my women slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days." (Acts 2:13-18) For a time after Pentecost 33 C.E., Christian women were favored with the gifts of the spirit. They spoke in foreign languages and prophesied, not necessarily making predictions but speaking forth Scriptural truths.

In his letter to Christians in Rome, the apostle Paul speaks warmly of "Phoebe our sister," recommending her to them. He also

In line with man's position of headship, God gave Noah, Abraham, and Moses various assignments



refers to Tryphaena and Tryphosa, calling them "women who are working hard in the Lord." (Romans 16:1, 2, 12) Although these women did not hold appointed positions in the early Christian congregation, they and many other women had the blessing of being chosen by God to be associated with his Son, Jesus Christ, in the heavenly Kingdom. —Romans 8:16, 17; Galatians 3:28, 29.

What a grand privilege godly women enjoy today! "Jehovah himself gives the saying; the women telling the good news are a large army," says Psalm 68:11. Such women are to be commended. For instance, their skillful teaching at home Bible studies is leading many to accept true teachings that please God. Married Christian women who help their children to become believers and are supportive of their husbands who have many congregation duties also deserve praise. (Proverbs 31:10-12, 28) Single women too have a dignified place in God's arrangement, and Christian men are admonished to "entreat . . . older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness." —1 Timothy 5:1, 2.

Man's Varied Assignments

A Christian man has a divinely assigned role and is expected to fill it. Paul stated: "I want you to know that the head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3) Man too has a head—the Christ. Indeed, man is accountable to Christ and ultimately to God. And God expects man to exercise his headship lovingly. (Ephesians 5:25) This has been so ever since humans first walked the earth.

The Bible shows that God gave man assignments in line with his position of headship. For example, Jehovah had the man Noah build an ark for the preservation of life during the Flood. (Genesis 6:9-7:24) The man

Abraham was promised that by means of his seed, all the families and nations of the earth would bless themselves. The primary part of that seed is Christ Jesus. (Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:8-16) God appointed the man Moses to lead the Israelites out of Egypt. (Exodus 3:9, 10, 12, 18) It was through Moses that Jehovah gave the code of laws known as the Law covenant, or the Mosaic Law. (Exodus 24:1-18) Without exception, the Bible writers were men.

As Head of the Christian congregation, Jesus "gave gifts in men." (Ephesians 1:22; 4:7-13) When listing the qualifications for overseers, Paul refers to men. (1 Timothy 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9) So the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses are served by male overseers, or elders, and by men appointed as ministerial servants. (Philippians 1:1, 2; 1 Timothy 3:8-10, 12) Only men are to serve as shepherds in the Christian congregation. (1 Peter 5:1-4) As already noted, however, women have wonderful God-given privileges.

Happy in Their Roles

Fulfilling their God-given roles brings happiness to both men and women. Happy marriages result when husbands and wives imitate the example of Christ and his congregation. "Husbands," wrote Paul, "continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it . . . Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself." (Ephesians 5:25-33) Hence, husbands are required to exercise their headship, not in a selfish way, but in a loving way. Christ's congregation is not made up of perfect humans. Yet, Jesus loves and cares for it. Similarly, a Christian husband should love and care for his wife.

A Christian wife "should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:33) In this regard, she can look to the congregation as an

How They Feel About Their God-Given Role

"My husband exercises his headship in a loving and kind way," says Susan. "We usually discuss decisions, and when he decides what will or will not be done, I know it is for our benefit. Jehovah's arrangement for Christian wives really makes me happy and our marriage strong. We are close and work together to achieve spiritual goals."

A woman named Mindy comments: "The role that Jehovah has assigned to his female servants is an assurance of his love for us. I feel that giving my husband honor and respect as well as supporting him in his congregation duties is my way of showing appreciation to Jehovah for this arrangement."

example. Ephesians 5:21-24 states: "Be in subjection to one another in fear of Christ. Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation, he being a savior of this body. In fact, as the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything." Although a wife may at times find it challenging or difficult to be in subjection to her husband, this is "becoming [fitting, proper] in the Lord." (Colossians 3: 18) Being in subjection to her husband will be easier if she remembers that this is pleasing to the Lord Jesus Christ.

Even if her husband is not a fellow believer, a Christian wife is to submit to his headship. The apostle Peter says: "You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect." (1 Peter 3: 1, 2) Sarah, who respected her husband, Abraham, was privileged to bear Isaac and become an ancestress of Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 11:11, 12; 1 Peter 3:

5, 6) Wives who conduct themselves as Sarah did are sure to be rewarded by God.

Peace and harmony prevail when men and women fulfill their God-given roles. This results in their satisfaction and happiness. Moreover, complying with Scriptural requirements clothes each one with the dignity associated with a privileged place in God's arrangement.

"The women telling the good news are a large army"



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Isaiah—II

ISAIAH is faithfully carrying out his mission as a prophet. The pronouncements he has uttered against the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel have already come true. Now he has further word about the future of Jerusalem.

The city of Jerusalem will be destroyed, and its inhabitants will be taken captive. The desolation, though, will not be permanent. After a time, true worship will be restored. This is the basic message of Isaiah 36:1–66:24.* We stand to benefit from considering what is stated in these chapters because many of the prophecies in this section are having their major, or final, fulfillment in our day or will be fulfilled in the near future. This part of the book of Isaiah also contains exciting prophecies concerning the Messiah.

"LOOK! DAYS ARE COMING" (Isaiah 36:1–39:8)

In the 14th year of King Hezekiah's reign (732 B.C.E.), the Assyrians invade Judah. Je-

* For a discussion of Isaiah 1:1–35:10, see "Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Isaiah—I" in the December 1, 2006, issue of *The Watchtower*.

hovah promises to defend Jerusalem. The threat of invasion ends when Jehovah's angel single-handedly kills 185,000 Assyrian soldiers.

Hezekiah falls sick. Jehovah answers his prayer and heals him, adding 15 years to his life. When the king of Babylon sends emissaries to congratulate him, Hezekiah unwisely shows them all his treasures. Isaiah delivers Jehovah's message to Hezekiah, saying: "Look! Days are coming, and all that is in your own house and that your forefathers have stored up down to this day will actually be carried to Babylon." (Isaiah 39:5, 6) A little over 100 years later, the prophecy comes true.

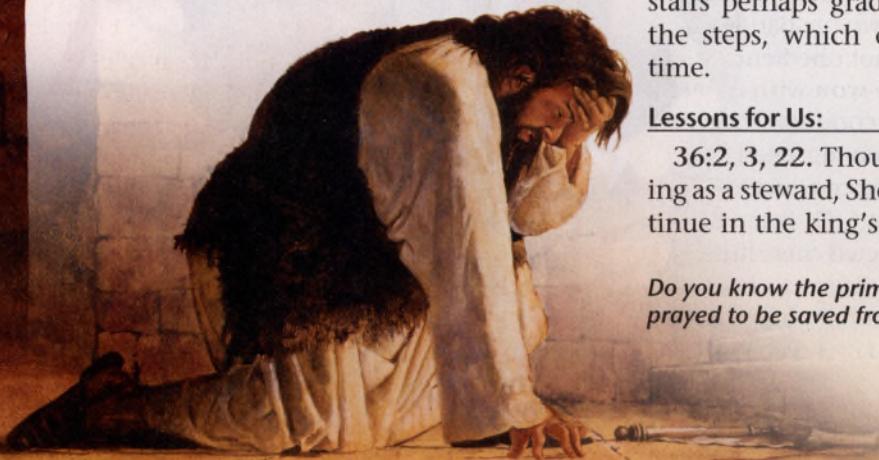
Scriptural Questions Answered:

38:8—What were "the steps" on which the shadow was made to recede? Since sundials were in use both in Egypt and in Babylon by the eighth century B.C.E., these steps could refer to the degrees of a sundial that Hezekiah's father, Ahaz, might have acquired. Or there might have been a staircase inside the palace. A column alongside the stairs perhaps gradually cast a shadow on the steps, which could serve to measure time.

Lessons for Us:

36:2, 3, 22. Though dismissed from serving as a steward, Shebna was allowed to continue in the king's service as a secretary to

Do you know the primary reason why Hezekiah prayed to be saved from the Assyrians?



his replacement. (Isaiah 22:15, 19) If we are removed from a position of responsibility in Jehovah's organization for some reason, should we not continue to serve God in whatever capacity he permits?

37:1, 14, 15; 38:1, 2. In times of distress, we are wise to turn to Jehovah in prayer and place our full trust in him.

37:15-20; 38:2, 3. When Jerusalem was under the Assyrian threat, Hezekiah's prime concern was that her overthrow would bring reproach on Jehovah's name. Upon learning that his sickness would prove fatal, Hezekiah had concerns that went beyond himself. What weighed more heavily on his mind was what his dying heirless would mean for the Davidic line of kings. He was also concerned about who would lead the fight against the Assyrians. Like Hezekiah, we consider the sanctification of Jehovah's name and the outworking of his purpose more important than our own salvation.

38:9-20. This song of Hezekiah teaches us that nothing is more important in life than to be able to praise Jehovah.

"SHE WILL BE REBUILT"

(Isaiah 40:1–59:21)

Immediately after foretelling the destruction of Jerusalem and the resulting captivity in Babylon, Isaiah prophesies about restoration. (Isaiah 40:1, 2) "She [Jerusalem] will be rebuilt," states Isaiah 44:28. Idols of Babylonian gods will be carried away like "pieces of luggage." (Isaiah 46:1) Babylon will be destroyed. All of this comes true two centuries later.

Jehovah will give his servant as "a light of the nations." (Isaiah 49:6) The Babylonian "heavens," or ruling class, will be "dispersed in fragments just like smoke," and her subjects "will die like a mere gnat"; but the 'captive daughter of Zion will loosen for herself

the bands on her neck.' (Isaiah 51:6; 52:2) To those who come to him and listen, Jehovah says: "I shall readily conclude with you people an indefinitely lasting covenant respecting the loving-kindnesses to David." (Isaiah 55:3) Living in harmony with God's righteous requirements leads to finding "exquisite delight in Jehovah." (Isaiah 58:14) The errors of the people, on the other hand, 'cause division between them and their God.'—Isaiah 59:2.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

40:27, 28—Why did Israel say: "My way has been concealed from Jehovah, and justice to me eludes my God"? Some Jews in Babylon may have felt that the injustices they were suffering were concealed from Jehovah or unseen by him. They were reminded that Babylon was not beyond the reach of the Creator of the earth, who does not tire out or grow weary.

43:18-21—Why were the returning exiles told 'not to remember the former things'? This was not in the sense that they should forget Jehovah's past deeds of deliverance. Rather, Jehovah wanted them to praise him on the basis of "something new" that they would experience themselves, such as their safe journey to Jerusalem, perhaps by a more direct desert route. "A great crowd" who come out of "the great tribulation" will also have new and personal reasons to glorify Jehovah.—Revelation 7:9, 14.

49:6—How is the Messiah "a light of the nations," even though his earthly ministry was limited to the sons of Israel? This is so because of what happened after Jesus' death. The Bible applies Isaiah 49:6 to his disciples. (Acts 13:46, 47) Today, anointed Christians, aided by a great crowd of worshippers, serve as "a light of the nations," enlightening peoples "to the extremity of the earth."—Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20.

53:10—In what sense did Jehovah take delight in crushing his Son? It must have pained Jehovah, the compassionate and empathetic God, to see his beloved Son suffer. Even so, He took delight in Jesus' willing obedience and all that his suffering and death would accomplish.—Proverbs 27:11; Isaiah 63:9.

53:11—What is the knowledge by means of which the Messiah “will bring a righteous standing to many people”? This is the knowledge that Jesus acquired by coming to earth, becoming a man, and suffering unjustly as far as death. (Hebrews 4:15) He thus provided a ransom sacrifice, which was needed to help anointed Christians and the great crowd to acquire a righteous standing before God.—Romans 5:19; James 2:23, 25.

56:6—Who are “the foreigners,” and in what ways are they “laying hold of [Jehovah’s] covenant”? “The foreigners” are Jesus’ “other sheep.” (John 10:16) They lay hold of the new covenant in that they obey the laws related to that covenant, cooperate fully with the arrangements made through it, partake of the same spiritual food as anointed Christians do, and support them in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.

Lessons for Us:

40:10-14, 26, 28. Jehovah is strong and gentle, all-powerful and all-wise, and far greater in understanding than we can comprehend.

40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 59:4. Political alliances and idols are ‘unrealities.’ Trusting in them has no value at all.

42:18, 19; 43:8. To close our eyes to God’s written Word and to shut our ears to his instruction through “the faithful and discreet slave” is to become spiritually blind and deaf.—Matthew 24:45.

43:25. Jehovah wipes out transgressions for his own sake. Our being freed from bondage to sin and death and gaining life is secondary to the sanctification of Jehovah’s name.

44:8. We have the backing of Jehovah, who is as stable and firm as a rock. We should never be afraid to bear witness about his Godship!—2 Samuel 22:31, 32.

44:18-20. Idolatry is a sign of corruption of the heart. Nothing should occupy the place of Jehovah in our heart.

46:10, 11. The ability to make ‘his own counsel stand,’ that is, to fulfill his purpose, is unmistakable proof of Jehovah’s Godship.

48:17, 18; 57:19-21. If we look to Jehovah for salvation, draw close to him, and pay attention to his commandments, our peace will be as plentiful as the waters of a flowing river and our righteous deeds as abundant as the waves of the sea. Those who pay no heed to God’s Word are like “the sea that is being tossed.” They have no peace.

52:5, 6. The Babylonians wrongly concluded that the true God was weak. They did not recognize Jehovah’s displeasure with his people as the reason for Israel’s enslavement. When calamity strikes others, we are wise not to jump to conclusions as to its cause.

52:7-9; 55:12, 13. We have at least three reasons to share joyfully in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work. Our feet are comely to humble ones who hunger spiritually. We see Jehovah “eye into eye,” or have a close relationship with him. We also enjoy spiritual prosperity.

52:11, 12. To be qualified to carry “the utensils of Jehovah”—his provisions for sacred service—we must be spiritually and morally clean.

"How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news!"

58:1-14. Hypocritical displays of devotion and righteousness are in vain. True worshippers should abound in genuine expressions of godly devotion and acts of brotherly love.—John 13:35; 2 Peter 3:11.

59:15b-19. Jehovah observes human affairs and intervenes in his own due time.

SHE "MUST BECOME A CROWN OF BEAUTY"

(Isaiah 60:1-66:24)

Pointing to the restoration of true worship in ancient times as well as in our day, Isaiah 60:1 states: "Arise, O woman, shed forth light, for your light has come and upon you the very glory of Jehovah has shone forth." Zion "must become a crown of beauty in the hand of Jehovah."—Isaiah 62:3.

Isaiah prays to Jehovah in behalf of his countrymen who will be repentant during their exile in Babylon. (Isaiah 63:15-64:12) After contrasting true servants with false, the prophet declares how Jehovah will bless those serving Him.—Isaiah 65:1-66:24.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

61:8, 9—What is the "indefinitely lasting covenant," and who are the "offspring"? This is the new covenant that Jehovah has concluded with anointed Christians. The "offspring" are the "other sheep"—the millions who respond to their message.—John 10:16.

63:5—How does God's rage support him? God's rage is a controlled emotion—his righteous indignation. His rage supports and motivates him to execute his righteous judgments.



Lessons for Us:

64:6. Imperfect humans cannot save themselves. When it comes to making atonement for sins, their righteous acts amount to nothing more than soiled garments.—Romans 3:23, 24.

65:13, 14. Jehovah blesses his faithful servants, abundantly satisfying their spiritual need.

66:3-5. Jehovah hates hypocrisy.

"Exult, You People"

How comforting the restoration prophecies must have been to the faithful Jews living as exiles in Babylon! "Exult, you people," said Jehovah, "and be joyful forever in what I am creating. For here I am creating Jerusalem a cause for joyfulness and her people a cause for exultation."—Isaiah 65:18.

We too live at a time when darkness envelops the earth and the nations are in thick gloom. (Isaiah 60:2) "Critical times hard to deal with" are here. (2 Timothy 3:1) Therefore, Jehovah's message of salvation provided in the Bible book of Isaiah is of great encouragement to us.—Hebrews 4:12.

MILESTONES in the Production of AFRICAN-LANGUAGE BIBLES

SINCERE Bible readers from Europe and North America long recognized the need for Africans to be able to read God's Word in their own tongues. To this noble end, many men went to Africa to learn African languages. Some gave tongues a written form and produced dictionaries. After that, they set about translating the Bible into many different African languages. This was no easy task. "A man might have to search for years before he found the right term for even the simplest and most fundamental of Christian concepts," explains *The Cambridge History of the Bible*.

In 1857 the Tswana people became the first to have a complete Bible translation in one of Africa's formerly unwritten tongues.* It was printed and bound in sections, not as one book. In time, translations of the Bible appeared in other African languages. Many of these early African translations contained God's name, Jehovah, in both the Hebrew Scriptures, or "Old Testament," and the Christian Greek Scriptures, or "New Testament." However, revisions and new translations were produced by individuals who did not respect the holy name of the Author of the Bible, Jehovah. Instead, they followed the superstitious Jewish tradition of replacing the di-

vine name with titles, such as God or Lord. Thus, a need arose for lovers of God in Africa to have a Bible translation that restores the divine name.



The divine name in a Tswana Bible published in 1840

Harold Strong Library of African Studies

Since the 1980's, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses has made a concerted effort to have the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* rendered into a number of major African languages. As a result, today hundreds of thousands of Bible lovers in Africa are able to read the *New World Translation* in their mother tongue. Thus far, the *New World Translation*, in whole or in part, is available in 17 indigenous African tongues.

Readers of these African-language Bibles are delighted to have a translation that highlights God's glorious name, Jehovah.

* By 1835 the Bible had been translated into the Malagasy language of Madagascar, and by 1840, the Amharic language of Ethiopia. These languages existed in written form long before the Bible was translated into them.



Visitors from Swaziland view new Bibles being produced at the South Africa branch

For example, when Jesus stood up in the synagogue in Nazareth, he announced his commission by reading a portion of the scroll of Isaiah, where his Father's name appears. (Isaiah 61:1, 2) According to Luke's Gospel as rendered in the *New World Translation*, Jesus read: "Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release, to preach Jehovah's acceptable year."—Luke 4: 18, 19.

Another milestone in the production of African-language Bibles was reached in August 2005. During that month, over 76,000 copies of the *New World Translation* in languages spoken in Africa were printed and bound at the South Africa branch of Jehovah's Witnesses. Included in that number were 30,000 Bibles in the Shona language.

This edition was released at the "Godly Obedience" Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses in Zimbabwe.

During that memorable month, visitors to the South Africa branch were thrilled to see the production of new African-language Bibles. "I was very happy and excited to have the privilege of sharing in the production of the *New World Translation* in Shona and other languages of Africa," said Nhlanhla, a member of the Bethel family who works on the bindery line. Indeed, he sums up the feelings of the entire South Africa Bethel family.

New Bibles will now reach the African public more quickly and economically than when they were produced overseas and shipped from there. More important, Africans now have readily available an accurate translation that uses the holy name of the grand Author of the Bible, Jehovah God.

SAMUEL *Promotes* **True Worship**

A PROPHET reproves fellow believers who requested a human king and urges them to obey God. To establish his authority, he asks Jehovah for a sign in the form of a storm. Rainstorms are virtually unknown in Israel during this time of the year, the days of the wheat harvest. Yet, God sends thunders and rain. Consequently, the people are greatly in fear of Jehovah and of his representative, Samuel.—1 Samuel 12:11-19.

Samuel the prophet was also a writer. His action-packed historical accounts cover some 330 years and include the exploits of Israel's Judges. For instance, the true-life story of Samson, the strongest man who ever lived, has provided the inspiration for poetry and opera as well as for other productions of stage and screen. (Judges, chapters 13-16) Samuel also wrote about Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi, both of whom were widowed and impoverished. This true story with a happy ending is equally gripping.—Ruth, chapters 1-4.

What lessons can we learn from Samuel's writings and his life? How did he promote true worship?

His Early Years

Samuel's father, Elkanah, was a worshipper of Jehovah and a loving husband. Elkanah's wife Hannah was a spiritually strong woman. At the house of Jehovah in Shiloh, barren Hannah fervently prayed, vowing: "O Jehovah of armies, if you will without fail look upon the affliction of your slave girl and

actually remember me, and you will not forget your slave girl and actually give to your slave girl a male offspring, I will give him to Jehovah all the days of his life, and no razor will come upon his head." (1 Samuel 1:1-11) This meant that the child would be set aside for Jehovah's service.

Hannah prayed silently. "Only her lips were quivering," says the account. High Priest Eli wrongly assumed that she was drunk and rebuked her. However, Hannah respectfully explained her situation, and Eli said: "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him." Jehovah did so, for the account continues: "It came about at the rolling around of a year that Hannah became pregnant and brought a son to birth and proceeded to call his name Samuel, because, said she, 'it is from Jehovah that I have asked him.'" —1 Samuel 1:12-20.

Samuel was brought up in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) As soon as Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him to the house of God in Shiloh and presented him to High Priest Eli. Under his care, the boy "became a minister of Jehovah." Hannah's great joy was expressed in her moving words of thanksgiving later recorded by Samuel himself.—1 Samuel 2:1-11.

If you are a parent, are you encouraging your children to take up a career in Jehovah's service? Promoting true worship is the best use that a person could ever make of his energies.

Samuel adjusted well to life at the sanctuary. He "continued growing up with Jehovah" and became "more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men." He displayed godly qualities that endeared him to others.—1 Samuel 2:21, 26.

The same could not be said of Eli's good-for-nothing sons, Hophni and Phinehas,

who “did not acknowledge Jehovah.” They practiced sexual immorality and took for themselves the best parts of sacrifices that people brought to the sanctuary. God had already sent a prophet to announce the punishment that Eli could expect, which included the death of his two sons. (1 Samuel 2:12, 15-17, 22-25, 27, 30-34) Jehovah would use Samuel to deliver another judgment message.

Samuel Serves as a Prophet

God told Samuel: “You must tell [Eli] that I am judging his house to time indefinite for the error that he has known, because his sons are calling down evil upon God, and he has not rebuked them.” It was not an easy message to deliver, and Eli insisted that Samuel not hide a word of it from him. So Samuel related all that Jehovah had said. That took courage!—1 Samuel 3:10-18.

As Samuel grew to maturity, all Israel came to know that he was God’s prophet. (1 Samuel 3:19, 20) The judgment that Samuel foretold began when Israel suffered a crushing defeat by the Philistines. Hophni and Phinehas died in the battle, and the Philistines captured the ark of Jehovah’s covenant. On learning of the loss of his sons and of the Ark, Eli fell backward from his seat, broke his neck, and died.—1 Samuel 4:1-18.

Twenty years later, Samuel urged the Israelites to abandon false worship. They responded by eliminating their idols, fasting, and confessing their sins. Samuel prayed and presented a burnt offering in their behalf. The result? When the Philistines attacked, God threw them into confusion, and Israel’s counterattack crushed the enemy. With Jehovah’s blessing, the condition of the Israelites improved considerably, and they recovered the territory that the Philistines had taken from them.—1 Samuel 7:3-14.

Samuel promoted true worship and willingly provided spiritual help

Samuel certainly did promote true worship. For instance, he saw to it that some of the spoils of battle were used to maintain the tabernacle. He helped to organize Passover celebrations and the service of the Levite gatekeepers. (1 Chronicles 9:22; 26:27, 28; 2 Chronicles 35:18) From his home at Ramah, Samuel made yearly trips to judge in various cities. He earned the reputation of being honest and impartial. Because people respected Samuel, he was able to help them spiritually. (1 Samuel 7:15-17; 9:6-14; 12:2-5) His honesty and spirituality undoubtedly motivated many to follow his example. Does Samuel’s course have that effect on you?

Israel Requests a King

In his old age, Samuel appointed his sons, Joel and Abijah, as judges. They “did not walk in his ways, but they were inclined to follow unjust profit and would accept a bribe and pervert judgment.” Their conduct led Israel’s older men to request a king. (1 Samuel 8:1-5) This was bad in Samuel’s eyes. When he prayed about it, however, Jehovah said: “It is not you whom they have rejected, but it is I whom they have rejected from being king over them.” (1 Samuel 8:6, 7) God told Samuel to grant the people’s wish and warn them that under a monarchy they would lose certain liberties. When the people insisted, Jehovah arranged for Samuel to anoint Saul as king.—1 Samuel 8:6-22; 9:15-17; 10:1.



Samuel supported this arrangement despite his misgivings. After an Israelite victory over the Ammonites, he gathered the people at Gilgal to confirm Saul's kingship. (1 Samuel 10:17-24; 11:11-15) Samuel reviewed Israel's history and admonished the king and the people to obey Jehovah. God answered Samuel's prayer with the unseasonal thunderstorm mentioned at the outset. That storm caused the people to admit their error in rejecting Jehovah. When they asked Samuel to pray for them, he replied: "It is unthinkable, on my part, to sin against Jehovah by ceasing to pray in your behalf; and I must instruct you in the good and right way." What an example of loyal love for Jehovah and his people! (1 Samuel 12:6-24) Are you just as willing to support theocratic arrangements and to pray in behalf of fellow believers?

Israel's First Two Human Kings

Saul was a modest man approved by God. (1 Samuel 9:21; 11:6) In time, though, he disregarded divine direction. For instance, Samuel reproved him for impatiently offering a sacrifice instead of waiting, as he had been commanded. (1 Samuel 13:10-14) When Saul disobediently spared the life of Amalekite King Agag, Samuel told him: "Jehovah has ripped away the royal rule of Israel from off you today, and he will certainly give it to a fellowman of yours who is better than you." Samuel himself put Agag to death and went into mourning for Saul. —1 Samuel 15:1-35.

REFLECT ON SAMUEL'S LIFE

- As Samuel's parents taught him God's word, bring your children up in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.
- Encourage your children to be like Samuel by making service to Jehovah their career.
- The godly qualities exhibited by Samuel endeared him to others, and he thus set a good example for us.
- Samuel did all he could to promote true worship, even as we should do.

Jehovah eventually said to Samuel: "For how long will you be mourning for Saul, while I, on the other hand, have rejected him from ruling as king over Israel?" At that, Jehovah dispatched Samuel to Bethlehem to anoint a son of Jesse as king. One by one, Samuel considered Jesse's sons until Jehovah gave His approval for David, the youngest, to be anointed. That day, Samuel learned an important lesson: "Not the way man sees is the way

God sees, because mere man sees what appears to the eyes; but as for Jehovah, he sees what the heart is."—1 Samuel 16:1-13.

Since Saul's disobedience pained Samuel, how it must have grieved him when Saul nurtured murderous hatred for David! Despite such trials, Samuel remained active in his old age and did what he could in Jehovah's service.—1 Samuel 19:18-20.

Samuel's Legacy

When Samuel died, Israel mourned this humble and courageous prophet who touched the lives of many. (1 Samuel 25:1) Samuel was imperfect, and at times he erred in judgment. Despite his limitations, however, Samuel gave Jehovah exclusive devotion and worked tirelessly to help others do the same.

Much has changed since Samuel's day, but the record of his life holds valuable lessons for us. Above all, Samuel practiced and promoted the true worship of Jehovah. Is that what you are doing?

Remaining Steadfast When a Child Rebels

A CHRISTIAN woman whom we will call Joy tried to raise her son to love Jehovah God. When he reached his late teens, though, the son rebelled and left home. "It was the deepest hurt I had ever experienced," Joy says. "I felt betrayed, broken-hearted, and frustrated. I was overwhelmed by negative thoughts."

Perhaps you too have tried to raise your children to love and serve God—only to see one or more of them turn their back on him. How can you cope with such bitter disappointment? What will help you to remain steadfast in your service to Jehovah?

When Jehovah's Sons Rebelled

A first step is to appreciate that Jehovah knows exactly how you feel. At Isaiah 49:15, we read: "Can a wife forget her sucking so that she should not pity the son of her belly? Even these women can forget, yet I myself shall not forget you." Yes, Jehovah experiences feelings common to fathers and mothers. Imagine, then, the pleasure he must have felt when all his angelic sons were praising and serving him. While answering the patriarch Job "out of the wind-storm," Jehovah recalled happy times with his united spirit family, saying: "Where did you happen to be when I founded the earth? . . . When the morning stars joyfully



cried out together, and all the sons of God began shouting in applause?"—Job 38:1, 4, 7.

In time, the true God saw a perfect angelic son rebel against him and become Satan, meaning "Resister." Jehovah also watched his first human son, Adam, and his perfect wife, Eve, join in the rebellion. (Genesis 3: 1-6; Revelation 12:9) Later, other angelic sons "forsook their own proper dwelling place" and rebelled against God.—Jude 6.

The Scriptures do not tell us how Jehovah felt when some of his perfect sons followed the course of rebellion. However, the Bible explicitly states: "Jehovah saw that the badness of man was abundant in the earth and every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time. And Jehovah felt regrets that he had made men in the

earth, and he felt hurt at his heart." (Genesis 6:5, 6) The rebellion of Jehovah's chosen people, Israel, also made him feel "hurt" and "pained."—Psalm 78:40, 41.

There can be no doubt that Jehovah has empathy for parents who suffer pain and hurt resulting from the behavior of rebellious children. In his Word, the Bible, he has given sound advice and encouragement to help such parents cope with their situation. God exhorts them to throw their anxiety upon him, to humble themselves, and to take their stand against Satan the Devil. Let us see how following this counsel can help you to remain steadfast when your child rebels.

Throw Your Anxiety Upon Jehovah

Jehovah knows that few things cause parents more anxiety than feeling that their children are in danger of harming themselves or of being harmed by others. The apostle Peter identifies one way to cope with this and other concerns. He writes: "Throw all your anxiety upon [Jehovah], because he

cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7) Why is this invitation and reassurance particularly relevant to the parents of a rebellious child?

While your child was young, you were vigilant in protecting him from dangers, and he likely responded to your loving direction. As he grew older, however, your influence over him may have diminished, but your keen desire to protect him from harm did not decrease. In fact, it probably increased.

As a result, when your child rebels and suffers spiritual, emotional, or physical harm, you may feel that you are to blame. Joy, mentioned earlier, felt this way. She says: "Each day, tormented by a sense of failure, I kept replaying past events in my mind." Especially at such times does Jehovah want you to "throw all your anxiety upon him." If you do so, he will help you. "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself," said the psalmist, "and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter." (Psalm 55:22) Joy experienced such comfort. She explains: "I spoke to Jehovah

*Draw strength from prayer and
the Christian congregation*



intimately about everything going on inside of me. My feelings just spilled out, and it was the greatest relief."

As an imperfect parent, you may have made mistakes while raising your child. But why should you focus on these? Jehovah evidently does not, for the inspired psalmist sang: "If errors were what you watch, O Jah, O Jehovah, who could stand?" (Psalm 130:3) Even if you had been a flawless parent, your child might still have rebelled. So share your feelings with Jehovah in prayer, and he will help you to cope. However, if you yourself are to remain steadfast in serving Jehovah and are to avoid becoming a victim of Satan, you must do more.

Humble Yourself

"Humble yourselves . . . under the mighty hand of God," wrote Peter, "that he may exalt you in due time." (1 Peter 5:6) Why is humility needed when your child rebels? In addition to causing you feelings of guilt and pain, having a rebellious child may cause you some embarrassment. You may be concerned that your child's actions have ruined your family's reputation, especially if he had to be disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation. Feelings of self-reproach and humiliation may combine to discourage you from attending Christian meetings.

In dealing with such a situation, you need to exercise practical wisdom. Proverbs 18:1 warns: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth." By attending Christian meetings regularly despite your grief, you will be able to tap into a vital source of instruction and encouragement. "Initially, I just did not want to face anybody," admits Joy. "But I reminded myself of the importance of my spiritual routine. Besides, if I had stayed at home, I would have brooded over my problems. The meet-

ings helped me to focus on upbuilding spiritual things. I am so grateful that I did not isolate myself and miss out on the loving support of my brothers and sisters."—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Remember, too, that each individual in a family must "carry his own load" of Christian responsibility. (Galatians 6:5) Jehovah expects parents to love and discipline their children. He also expects children to obey and honor their parents. If parents do their best to bring up their children in "the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah," the parents themselves will have a good reputation with God. (Ephesians 6:1-4) If a child rebels against loving parental discipline, it is the child's reputation that will be damaged. "Even by his practices a boy makes himself recognized as to whether his activity is pure and upright," says Proverbs 20:11. Satan's rebellion has certainly not damaged Jehovah's reputation among those who are acquainted with the facts.

Take Your Stand Against the Devil

"Keep your senses, be watchful," Peter warns. "Your adversary, the Devil, walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone." (1 Peter 5:8) Like a lion, the Devil often targets the young and inexperienced. In ancient times, lions roamed Israel and were a threat to domestic animals. If a

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

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Your Appreciation

young lamb strayed from the flock, it would become easy prey. A ewe might instinctively risk her own life to protect her lamb. However, even a full-grown sheep would be no match for a lion. Therefore, courageous shepherds were needed to protect the flock.—1 Samuel 17:34, 35.

To protect his figurative sheep from the “roaring lion,” Jehovah has arranged for spiritual shepherds to care for the flock under “the chief shepherd,” Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 5:4) Peter gives such appointed men this exhortation: “Shepherd the flock of God in your care, not under compulsion, but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.” (1 Peter 5:1, 2) With your cooperation as parents, these shepherds may be able to help a youth to correct his course spiritually.

When Christian shepherds need to counsel your rebellious child, you may feel an urge to protect him from the discipline. However, pursuing such a course would be a serious error. Peter states: “Take your stand against [the Devil]”—not against the spiritual shepherds.—1 Peter 5:9.

When Discipline Is Severe

If your child is unrepentant and is a baptized Christian, he may receive the strongest form of discipline—being disfellowshipped from the congregation. The extent of contact that you will then have with him depends on his age and other circumstances.

If the child is a minor and is living at home, you will naturally continue to take care of his physical needs. He also requires moral training and discipline, and you have the responsibility to provide these. (Proverbs 1:8-18; 6:20-22; 29:17) You may want to conduct a Bible study with him, involving his direct participation. You can draw his attention to various scriptures and to the publications provided by “the faithful and dis-

creet slave.” (Matthew 24:45) You can also take the child with you to Christian meetings and have him sit with you. All of this can be done in hopes that he will take Scriptural counsel to heart.

The situation is different if the disfellowshipped one is not a minor and is living away from home. The apostle Paul admonished Christians in ancient Corinth: “Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man.” (1 Corinthians 5:11) While caring for necessary family matters may require some contact with the disfellowshipped person, a Christian parent should strive to avoid needless association.

When an erring child is disciplined by Christian shepherds, it would be unwise if you were to reject or minimize their Bible-based action. Siding with your rebellious child would not be providing any real protection from the Devil. Actually, you would be endangering your own spiritual health. On the other hand, by supporting the efforts of the shepherds, you will remain “solid in the faith” and will provide the best help for your child.—1 Peter 5:9.

Jehovah Will Sustain You

If your child should rebel, remember that you are not alone. Other Christian parents have had similar experiences. Regardless of the trials we undergo, Jehovah can sustain us.—Psalm 68:19.

Rely on Jehovah in prayer. Regularly associate with the Christian congregation. Support the discipline of appointed shepherds. By doing so, you will be able to remain steadfast. And your good example may help your child to respond to the loving invitation from Jehovah to return to him.—Malachi 3:6, 7.

TEACH WHAT THE BIBLE *Really TEACHES*

*"Make disciples of people of all the nations,
. . . teaching them."*—MATTHEW 28:19, 20.



JEHOVAH'S WORD, the Holy Bible, is one of the oldest and most widely distributed books in the world. At least part of it has been translated into more than 2,300 languages. Over 90 percent of earth's inhabitants have it available in their native tongue.

² Millions of people read a portion of the Bible every day. Some have read it from cover to cover many times. Thousands of religious groups claim to base their teachings on the Bible, but they do not agree on what it teaches. Adding to the confusion are the strong disagreements between members of the same religion. Some have doubts about the Bible, its origin, and its value. Many view it as a sacred book merely for ceremonial use in making vows or in swearing to tell the truth in court.

³ Actually, the Bible contains God's powerful word, or message, for mankind. (Hebrews 4:12) As Jehovah's Witnesses, we therefore want people to learn what the Bible teaches. We are delighted to carry out the commission that Jesus Christ gave his followers when he said: "Go . . . and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them." (Matthew 28:19, 20) In our public ministry, we find honesthearted people who

1. What can be said about the availability of the Bible?

2, 3. (a) Why is there confusion about Bible teachings? (b) What questions will we consider?

are distressed over the religious confusion rampant in the world. They want to know the truth about our Creator and desire to learn what the Bible says about the meaning of life. Let us consider three questions that concern many people. In each case, we will take note of what religious leaders mistakenly say, and then we will review what the Bible *really* teaches. The questions are: (1) Does God care about us? (2) Why are we here? (3) What happens to us when we die?

Does God Care?

⁴ Let us begin with the question, Does God care about us? Sadly, many people think that the answer is no. Why do they feel that way? One reason is that they live in a world full of hatred, war, and suffering. 'If God really cared,' they reason, 'surely he would prevent such tragic things from happening.'

⁵ Another reason why people think that God does not care about us is that religious leaders have made them feel that way. What do clergymen often say when tragedy strikes? When one woman lost her two small children in an automobile accident, her minister said: "It was God's will. God needed two more angels." When clergymen make such comments, they are actually

4, 5. Why do people think that God does not care about us?

blaming God for the bad things that happen. Yet, the disciple James wrote: "When under trial, let no one say: 'I am being tried by God.' For with evil things God cannot be tried nor does he himself try anyone." (James 1:13) Jehovah God never causes what is bad. Indeed, "far be it from the true God to act wickedly."—Job 34:10.

⁶ Why, then, is there so much wickedness and suffering? One reason is that mankind in general has rejected God as Ruler, not wanting to submit to his righteous laws and principles. Humans have unwittingly sub-

6. Who is behind the wickedness and suffering in this world?

mitted to God's Adversary, Satan, for "the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) Knowledge of this fact makes it easier to understand why bad situations exist. Satan is evil, hateful, deceptive, and cruel. So we should expect the world to reflect the personality of its ruler. No wonder there is so much wickedness!

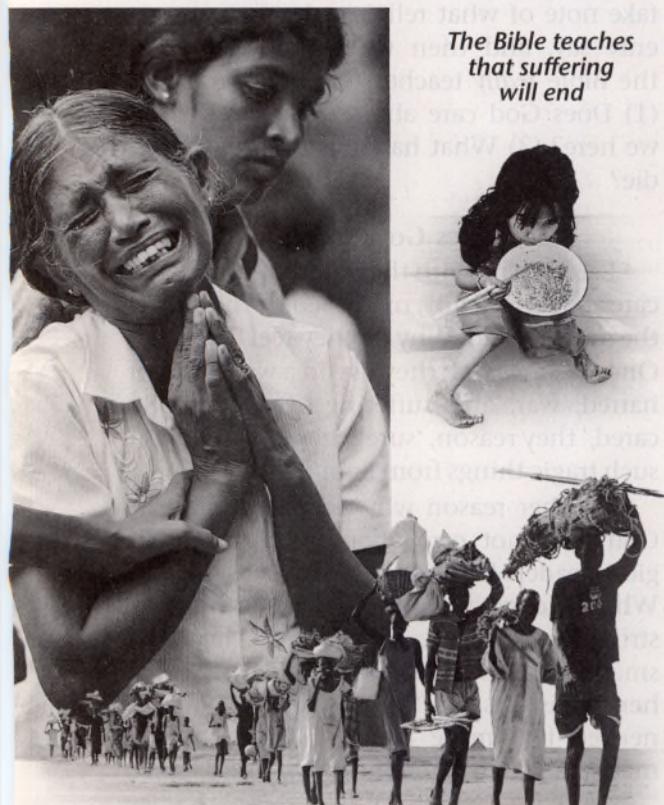
⁷ Human imperfection is another reason for the suffering we experience. Sinful humans tend to struggle for dominance, and that often results in wars, oppression, and suffering. Ecclesiastes 8:9 aptly says: "Man has dominated man to his injury." A further reason for suffering is "time and unforeseen occurrence." (Ecclesiastes 9:11) People often experience calamity because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time.

⁸ It is comforting to learn that Jehovah does not cause suffering. But does God truly care about what is going on in our lives? The heartwarming answer is yes! We know that Jehovah cares because his inspired Word tells us why he has allowed humans to pursue a bad course. God's reasons involve two issues: his sovereignty and the integrity of humans. Because he is the almighty Creator, Jehovah is not obligated to tell us why he permits suffering. Yet, he tells us because he cares about us.

⁹ Consider further evidence that God cares about us. He "felt hurt at his heart" when badness filled the earth in the days of Noah. (Genesis 6:5, 6) Does God feel differently today? No, for he does not change. (Malachi 3:6) He detests injustice and hates to see people suffer. The Bible teaches that God will soon undo all the harm that has resulted from human rule and from the influ-

7. What are some reasons for the suffering we experience?

8, 9. How do we know that Jehovah really cares about us?



Top right, girl: © Bruno Morandi/age fotostock; left, woman: AP Photo/Gemunu Amarasinghe; bottom right, refugees: © Sven Torfinn/Panos Pictures

ence of the Devil. Is that not convincing proof that God cares about us?

¹⁰ Religious leaders misrepresent God when they say that the tragedies we experience are his will. On the contrary, Jehovah longs to end human suffering. "He cares for you," says 1 Peter 5:7. That is what the Bible *really* teaches!

Why Are We Here?

¹¹ Let us now consider a second question that many wonder about, Why are we here? The world's religions often answer that man is on the earth only temporarily. They see our globe as little more than a stopover, or stepping-stone, on the way to life somewhere else. Some clergymen falsely teach that God will someday destroy this planet. As a result of such teachings, many people have concluded that they are better off living life to the full while they can because only death awaits them. What does the Bible *really* teach about why we are here?

¹² God has a wonderful purpose for the earth and for mankind. He "did not create [the earth] simply for nothing" but "formed it even to be inhabited." (Isaiah 45:18) Moreover, Jehovah "has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to totter to time indefinite, or forever." (Psalm 104:5) Learning these things about God's purpose for the earth and for mankind can help us to understand why we are here.

¹³ Genesis chapters 1 and 2 show that Jehovah took great care to prepare the earth for human habitation. At the end of the creative period involving our globe, everything was "very good." (Genesis 1:31) God placed the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, in

10. How does Jehovah feel about human suffering?
11. What do the world's religions often say about human life on the earth?

12-14. What does the Bible teach regarding God's purpose for the earth and for mankind?

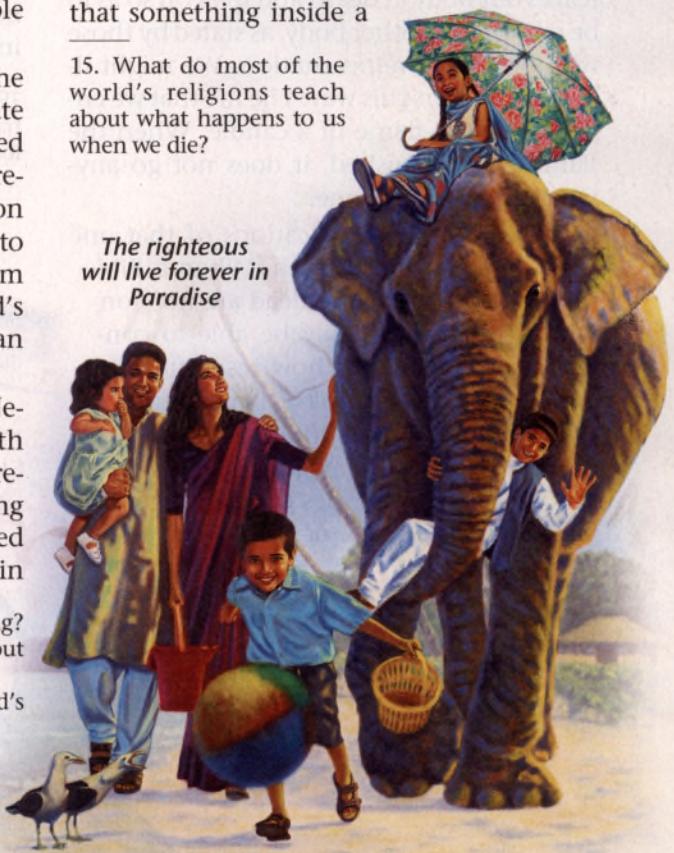
the lovely garden of Eden and supplied them with an abundance of good food. The first human pair were told: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it." They were to have perfect children, to extend the boundaries of their garden home earth wide, and to exercise loving dominion over the animals.—Genesis 1:26-28.

¹⁴ It is Jehovah's purpose to have a perfect human family dwell on earth eternally. God's Word says: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) Yes, humankind was meant to enjoy everlasting life in Paradise on earth. That is God's purpose, and it is what the Bible *really* teaches!

What Happens to Us at Death?

¹⁵ Now let us discuss a third question that concerns many: What happens to us when we die? Most of the world's religions teach that something inside a

15. What do most of the world's religions teach about what happens to us when we die?



*The righteous
will live forever in
Paradise*

person continues living after the body dies. Some religious groups still cling to the idea that God punishes the wicked by subjecting them to eternal suffering in a fiery hell. But is that the truth? What does the Bible *really* teach about death?

¹⁶ God's Word states: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages." Since the dead "are conscious of nothing at all," they cannot hear, see, speak, feel, or think. They no longer earn any wages. How could they? They are incapable of any work! Moreover, "their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished," for they cannot express any emotion.—Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6, 10.

¹⁷ What the Bible says on this subject is simple and clear—the dead do not continue to live somewhere. There is nothing that leaves our body at death and lives on so as to be reborn in another body, as stated by those who believe in reincarnation. We might illustrate matters this way: The life that we enjoy is like the flame of a candle. When the flame is extinguished, it does not go anywhere. It is simply gone.

¹⁸ Think of the implications of that one simple but powerful truth. When a Bible student learns that the dead are not conscious, he should easily be able to conclude that no matter how resentful his dead ancestors may have been during their lifetime, they cannot trouble him. He should also quickly grasp the point that his dead loved ones can no longer hear, see, speak, feel, or think. Therefore, they cannot be experiencing un-

bearable loneliness in purgatory or suffering in a place of fiery torment. However, the Bible teaches that the dead who are in God's memory will be resurrected. What a wonderful hope!—John 5:28, 29.

A New Book for Our Use

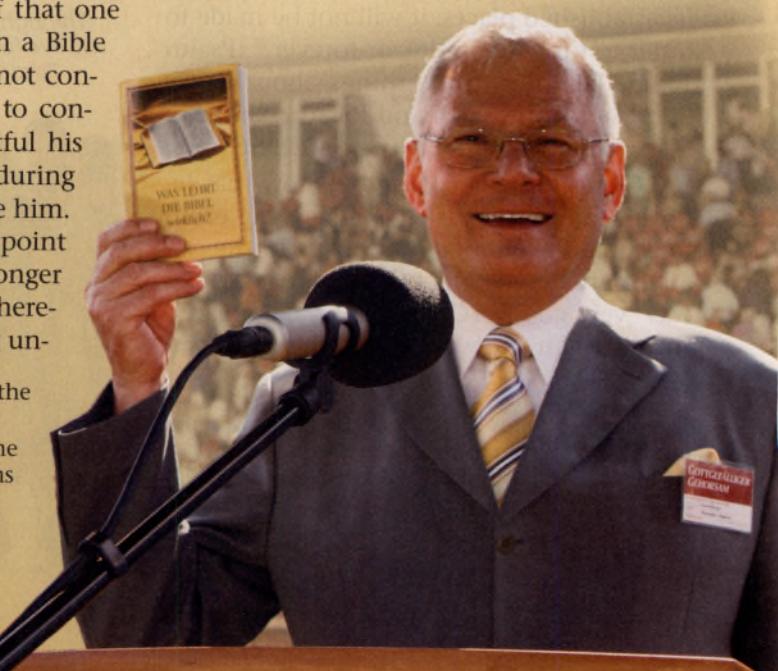
¹⁹ We have considered only three questions that many people wonder about. In each case, what the Bible teaches is clear and straightforward. What a joy it is to share such truths with those who want to know what the Bible teaches! But there are many other important questions to which honest-hearted ones need satisfying answers. As Christians, we have a responsibility to help them find the answers to such questions.

²⁰ It is challenging to teach Scriptural truth in a way that is clear and that appeals to the heart. To help us meet that challenge, "the faithful and discreet slave" prepared a book that is especially designed for our use in our Christian ministry. (Matthew 24:45-

19, 20. As Christians, what responsibility do we have, and what Bible study aid is especially designed for our use in our ministry?

16, 17. According to the Bible, what is the condition of the dead?

18. When a Bible student learns that the dead are not conscious, what conclusions can he draw?



47) This 224-page book is entitled *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

²¹ Released at the 2005/06 "Godly Obedience" District Conventions of Jehovah's Witnesses, this book has various noteworthy features. For instance, there is a five-page preface that is proving to be very helpful in starting home Bible studies. You will likely find it easy to discuss the pictures and the scriptures found in the preface. You may also use material in this section to show students how to locate Bible chapters and verses.

²² The writing style of this book is simple and clear. An effort has been made to reach the student's heart by involving him whenever possible. Each chapter has several introductory questions and a box at the end entitled "What the Bible Teaches." The box contains the Scriptural answers to the introductory questions. Fine pictures and captions as well as written illustrations in this publication will help the student to grasp new ideas. Although the book's main text has been kept quite simple, there is an appendix that will allow you to consider 14 important subjects in greater depth if the student requires additional information.

²³ The *Bible Teach* book is designed to help us teach people of different educational levels and from various religious backgrounds. If a student does not have any knowledge of the Bible, it may take more than one study session to cover a chapter. Do not rush through the material, but endeavor to reach the student's heart. If he does not understand a certain illustration used in the book, explain it or use an alternative. Prepare well, do your best to use the book effectively, and pray for God's help so that you can 'handle

21, 22. What are some noteworthy features of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

23. What suggestions are offered regarding the use of the *Bible Teach* book on Bible studies?

the word of the truth aright.'—2 Timothy 2:15.

Be Grateful for Your Priceless Privileges

²⁴ Jehovah has given his people priceless privileges. He has enabled us to learn the truth about him. We must never take that privilege for granted! After all, God has hidden his purposes from the haughty and has revealed them to humble ones. In this regard, Jesus said: "I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intellectual ones and have revealed them to babes." (Matthew 11:25) It is a rare honor to be counted among the humble ones who serve the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah.

²⁵ God has also given us the privilege of teaching others about him. Remember that he has been misrepresented by those who have taught lies about him. Many people thus have an entirely wrong impression of Jehovah, thinking that he is uncaring and hard-hearted. Are you willing, yes, even eager, to help set the record straight? Do you want honesthearted people everywhere to know the truth about God? Then by all means, demonstrate your godly obedience by zealously preaching and by teaching others what the Scriptures say on vital subjects. Truth-seekers need to learn what the Bible *really* teaches.

24, 25. Jehovah has granted his people what priceless privileges?

What Are Your Answers?

- How do we know that God cares about us?
- Why are we here on earth?
- What happens to us when we die?
- What features of the *Bible Teach* book do you especially appreciate?

HELP OTHERS OBEY WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES

"As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones that, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance."—LUKE 8:15.

THIS book is simply excellent. My students love it. I love it. This book makes it possible to start Bible studies with people right at their doorstep." So said a full-time pioneer minister of Jehovah's Witnesses concerning the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?** Referring to the same publication, an elderly Kingdom proclaimer said: "I have had the privilege of helping many people come to know Jehovah in the 50 years I have been active in the ministry. But I must say, this study publication is outstanding. The refreshing word pictures and illustrations are a delight." Is that how you feel about the *Bible Teach* book? This Bible study aid is designed to help you fulfill Jesus' command: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you."—Matthew 28:19, 20.

² No doubt, Jehovah's heart rejoices as he sees some 6.6 million of his Witnesses willingly obeying Jesus' direction to make disciples. (Proverbs 27:11) Jehovah is obviously blessing their efforts. During 2005, for example, the good news was preached in 235 lands and, on average, over 6,061,500 Bible studies were conducted. As a re-

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

1, 2. (a) For what purpose is the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* designed? (b) In recent years, how has Jehovah blessed the efforts of his people to make disciples?

sult, many people 'heard God's word and accepted it, not as the word of men, but, just as it truthfully is, as the word of God.' (1 Thessalonians 2:13) Over the past two years, more than half a million new disciples have conformed their lives to Jehovah's standards and dedicated themselves to God.

³ Have you recently experienced the joy of conducting a Bible study with someone? Worldwide, there are still individuals with "a fine and good heart" who upon hearing the word of God will "retain it and bear fruit with endurance." (Luke 8:11-15) Let us consider how you can use the *Bible Teach* book in the disciple-making work. Our discussion will examine three questions: (1) How can you start a Bible study? (2) What teaching methods work best? (3) How can you help a

3. What questions regarding the use of the *Bible Teach* book will be examined in this article?

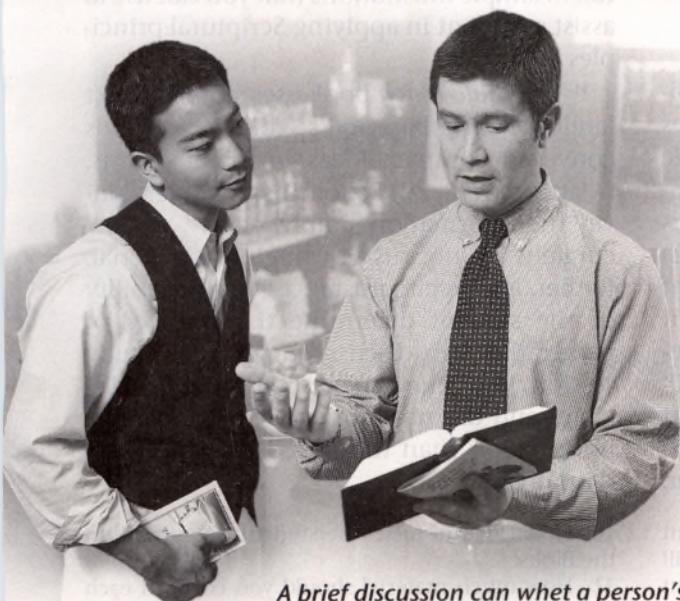


person to become not only a student but also a teacher of God's written Word, the Bible?

How You Can Start a Bible Study

⁴ If you were asked to leap a wide stream in one bound, you might balk at the suggestion. But if stepping-stones were placed at regular intervals across it, you would likely be more inclined to attempt the crossing. Likewise, a busy person may hesitate to study the Bible. The householder may think that too much time and effort are required to study it. How can you help him to overcome his reluctance? By conducting a series of brief, informative discussions, you can use the *Bible Teach* book to lead the person into a regular study of God's Word. If you prepare well, each return visit on the person will become like a stepping-stone toward his friendship with Jehovah.

4. Why might some hesitate to study the Bible, and how may you help them to overcome their reluctance?



A brief discussion can whet a person's appetite for Bible knowledge

⁵ However, before you can help someone else benefit from the *Bible Teach* book, you need to become thoroughly familiar with it. Have you read the book from beginning to end? One couple took the publication with them on vacation and started reading it while relaxing at the beach. As a local woman selling goods to tourists approached them, she noticed the title *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* She told the couple that just a few hours earlier, she had prayed about that very question, asking God for an answer. The couple gladly gave the woman a copy of the book. Have you 'bought out time' to read this publication, possibly a second time, while waiting for an appointment or taking a break at work or at school? (Ephesians 5:15, 16) If you do, you will become familiar with this Bible study aid and may also create opportunities to talk to others about its contents.

6 When offering the book in the public ministry, make good use of the illustrations, scriptures, and questions on pages 4, 5,

and 6. For example, you might start a conversation by asking, "With all the problems facing mankind today, what do you feel is a reliable source of guidance?" After listening carefully to the person's response, read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17, and explain that the Bible offers a real solution to mankind's problems. Then, direct the householder's attention to pages 4 and 5, and ask: "Of the conditions illustrated on these pages, which one distresses you most?" When the householder points to one, have him hold the book while you read the associated scripture from your Bible. Next, read page 6,

5. Why do you need to read the *Bible Teach* book?

6, 7. How can you use the *Bible Teach* book to start Bible studies?

and ask the householder, "Of the six questions mentioned at the bottom of this page, which one would you like to have answered?" When the person picks one, show him the chapter that answers that question, leave the book with him, and make definite arrangements to call again and discuss that question.

⁷ The presentation just outlined would take about five minutes to complete. In those few minutes, however, you will have learned what concerns the householder, read and applied two scriptures, and laid the basis for a return visit. Your brief conversation with the householder may well be the most encouraging and consoling experience he has had in a long time. As a result, even a busy person is likely to look forward to spending a few more minutes with you as you help him take his next step to get on 'the road that leads to life.' (Matthew 7:14) In time, as the householder's interest develops, the duration of the study should be extended. This can be done by offering to sit down and study for a longer specified period.

Teaching Methods That Work Best

⁸ Once a person starts to obey what the Bible teaches, he will probably face obstacles that could hinder his progress. The apostle Paul said: "All those desiring to live with godly devotion in association with Christ Jesus will also be persecuted." (2 Timothy 3:12) Paul compared these trials to a fire that would destroy inferior building materials but leave such materials as gold, silver, and precious stone unharmed. (1 Corinthians 3:10-13; 1 Peter 1:6, 7) To help your Bible student develop the qualities required in order to stand up to the tests that he may encounter,

8, 9. (a) How can you prepare your Bible student to stand up to the obstacles and tests that he will likely encounter? (b) Where can the fire-resistant materials to build strong faith be found?

you need to assist him by building with fire-resistant materials.

⁹ The psalmist likens "the sayings of Jehovah" to "silver refined in a smelting furnace of earth, clarified seven times." (Psalm 12:6) Indeed, the Bible contains all the precious materials that can be utilized to build strong faith. (Psalm 19:7-11; Proverbs 2:1-6) And the *Bible Teach* book shows you how to be effective in using the Scriptures.

¹⁰ During the study, focus the student's attention on the scriptures provided in each chapter under discussion. Use questions to help the student understand key Bible texts and apply them personally. Be careful not to tell him what to do. Instead, imitate Jesus' example. When a man versed in the Law questioned him, Jesus replied: "What is written in the Law? How do you read?" The man answered from the Scriptures, and Jesus helped him see how to apply the principle to himself. Giving an illustration, Jesus also helped the man see how the teaching should affect him. (Luke 10:25-37) The *Bible Teach* book is full of simple illustrations that you can use to assist a student in applying Scriptural principles to himself.

¹¹ The *Bible Teach* book uses simple, direct language to explain God's Word, just as Jesus conveyed complex ideas in simple terms. (Matthew 7:28, 29) Follow his example. Convey the information simply, clearly, and accurately. Do not rush through the material. Rather, let the circumstances and the ability of the student determine the number of paragraphs you discuss during each study session. Jesus knew the limitations of his disciples and did not burden them with more information than they needed at the time.
—John 16:12.

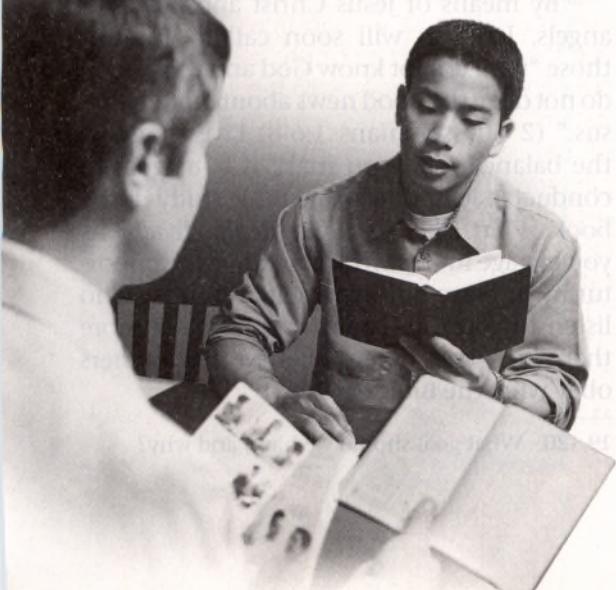
10. How can you focus the student's attention on the Bible?
11. How much material should you cover in each study session?

¹² The *Bible Teach* book contains an appendix that has 14 topics. Based on the needs of the student, you as his instructor should be able to determine how this material can best be used. For example, if a student finds a subject difficult to grasp or has questions on specific matters because of previously held beliefs, it may suffice to direct his attention to the appropriate section of the appendix and let him consider the subject himself. On the other hand, the student's needs may dictate that you cover the material with him. The appendix contains essential Scriptural subjects, such as "‘Soul’ and ‘Spirit’—What Do These Terms Really Mean?" and "Identifying ‘Babylon the Great.’" You may want to discuss these topics with your student. Since no questions are provided for the subjects discussed in the appendix, you will need to be familiar with the information in order to formulate meaningful questions.

¹³ "Unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it," states Psalm 127:1. There-

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12. How should the appendix be used?
 13. What role does prayer play in strengthening faith?

What can you do to direct the student’s attention to the Bible?



fore, as you prepare to conduct a Bible study, pray for Jehovah's help. Let the prayers you say at the beginning and end of each study reflect your warm relationship with Jehovah. Encourage the student to pray to Jehovah for the wisdom to understand His Word and the strength to apply its counsel. (James 1:5) If he does so, the student will be strengthened to endure trials and will continue to grow strong in faith.

Help Bible Students to Become Teachers

¹⁴ If our Bible students are to obey "all the things" Jesus commanded his disciples, they need to progress from being students of God's Word to being teachers of it. (Matthew 28:19, 20; Acts 1:6-8) What can you do to help a student make that kind of spiritual progress?

¹⁵ Right from the first study, invite the student to attend congregation meetings with you. Explain to him that the meetings are where you receive your training as a teacher of God's Word. Over a number of weeks, take a few minutes at the end of each Bible study to describe the program of spiritual instruction that you receive at the various meetings and assemblies. Speak enthusiastically about the benefits you gain on these occasions. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) Once the student starts attending meetings regularly, he is likely to become a teacher of God's Word.

¹⁶ Help the Bible student to establish goals that he can attain. For example, encourage him to share what he is learning with a friend or a relative. Also, suggest that he set the goal of reading the entire Bible. If you help him to establish and maintain a routine of regular Bible reading, this habit will benefit him long after he is baptized. In addition,

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14. What progress do Bible students need to make?
 15. Why should you encourage your Bible student to attend Christian meetings?
 - 16, 17. What are some goals that a Bible student can set and attain?

why not suggest that the student make it a goal to remember at least one Bible text that answers a key question from each chapter of the *Bible Teach* book? By doing so, he will become “a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright.”—2 Timothy 2:15.

¹⁷ Rather than teaching a student simply to repeat scriptures or to give the gist of what they say, encourage him to explain pertinent Bible verses as he provides an answer to those who demand of him a reason for his faith. Brief practice sessions may help, with you playing the part of a relative or a workmate who asks him to explain his beliefs. As the student responds, show him how to answer with “a mild temper and deep respect.”

—1 Peter 3:15.

¹⁸ In time, the student may qualify to engage in the field ministry. Emphasize that it is a privilege to be allowed to share in this work. (2 Corinthians 4:1, 7) Once the elders have determined that the student qualifies as an unbaptized publisher, help him prepare a simple presentation and then accompany him in the field service. Continue to work with him regularly in various aspects of the public ministry, and teach him how to prepare for and make effective return visits. Your own good example will be a positive influence.—Luke 6:40.

18. When a Bible student qualifies as an unbaptized publisher, what further help can you give him?

What Did You Learn?

- The *Bible Teach* book is designed for what purpose?
- How can you start Bible studies using the *Bible Teach* book?
- What teaching methods work best?
- How can you help a student to become a teacher of God’s Word?



Help the Bible student to progress

“Save Both Yourself and Those Who Listen to You”

¹⁹ Without a doubt, it takes much hard work to help a person come to “an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Timothy 2:4) However, few joys in life can compare with the pleasure of helping someone obey what the Bible teaches. (1 Thessalonians 2:19, 20) Indeed, what a privilege we have to be “God’s fellow workers” in this worldwide teaching work!—1 Corinthians 3:9.

²⁰ By means of Jesus Christ and powerful angels, Jehovah will soon call to account those “who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus.” (2 Thessalonians 1:6-8) Lives hang in the balance. Can you make it your goal to conduct at least one home Bible study in the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* As you engage in this work, you have the opportunity to “save both yourself and those who listen to you.” (1 Timothy 4:16) Now more than ever, it is urgent that we help others obey what the Bible teaches.

19, 20. What goal should we have, and why?

Questions From Readers

In what sense did the congregator find only “one man out of a thousand” but not “a woman among all these”?—Ecclesiastes 7:28.

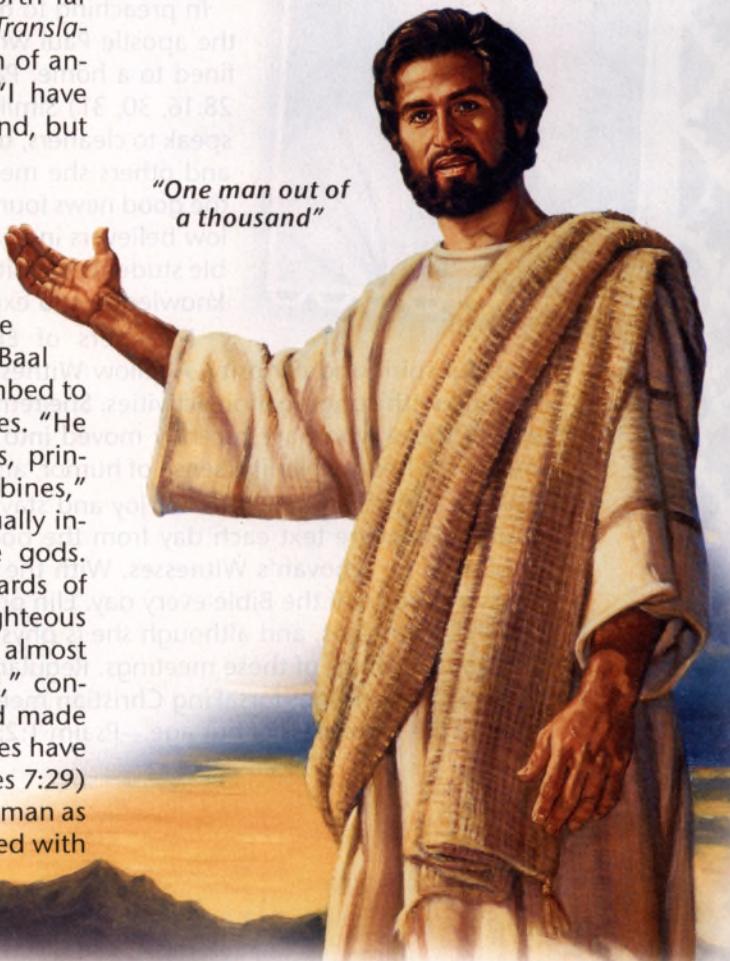
To understand these inspired words correctly, we must first appreciate how God views women. The Bible refers to the widow Naomi’s daughter-in-law Ruth as “an excellent woman.” (Ruth 3:11) According to Proverbs 31:10, a good wife “is worth far more than corals.” (*An American Translation*) What, then, did King Solomon of ancient Israel mean when he said: “I have found . . . one true man in a thousand, but never a true woman”?—Moffatt.

The context shows that low moral standards must have prevailed among women in Solomon’s day. (Ecclesiastes 7:26) This may have been largely a result of the influence of foreign women who practiced Baal worship. Even King Solomon succumbed to pressure from his many foreign wives. “He came to have seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines,” says the Bible, “and his wives gradually inclined his heart” to worship false gods. (1 Kings 11:1-4) The moral standards of men too were not good—one righteous man in a thousand was a rarity, almost negligible. “This only I have found,” concludes Solomon, “that the true God made mankind upright, but they themselves have sought out many plans.” (Ecclesiastes 7:29) This is a conclusion about mankind—man as the human race, not man as compared with

woman. Hence, the words found at Ecclesiastes 7:28 should be viewed as a comment on the general moral condition of the people of Solomon’s day.

However, there is another possible meaning to this verse. It may also be prophetic, for never has a woman given Jehovah perfect obedience. But there has been one such man—Jesus Christ.—Romans 5:15-17.

“One man out of a thousand”



A CENTENARIAN With a Purpose in Life



ELIN is one of 60 people in Sweden who were recently listed as being 105 years of age or older. She herself is 105. Although she is confined to a home for the elderly, her health allows her to continue serving as an active Witness of Jehovah, the life course that she chose more than 60 years ago.

In preaching to others, Elin follows the pattern set by the apostle Paul when he was under house arrest, confined to a home. Paul preached to all his visitors. (Acts 28:16, 30, 31) Similarly, Elin seizes every opportunity to speak to cleaners, dentists, doctors, hairdressers, nurses, and others she meets in the home, sharing with them the good news found in the Bible. From time to time, fellow believers in Elin's congregation even invite their Bible students to visit her so that they can benefit from her knowledge and experience.

Members of Elin's congregation appreciate her cheerful spirit and curiosity. A fellow Witness says: "She has a fantastic ability to keep up with congregation activities. She remembers the names of all the children and of those who have recently moved into the congregation." Elin is also well-known for her hospitality, sense of humor, and positive view of life.

What helps Elin maintain her joy and stay focused on her purpose in life? She reads a Scripture text each day from the booklet *Examining the Scriptures Daily*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. With the help of a magnifying glass, she also reads a portion of the Bible every day. Elin prepares for the weekly meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses, and although she is physically unable to attend them, she listens to recordings of these meetings. Regularly reading the Bible and Bible-based publications and not forsaking Christian meetings can help us live a full and purposeful life regardless of our age.—Psalm 1:2; Hebrews 10:24, 25.