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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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## PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

### **Study Articles 1-3** PAGES 7-20

We know that in many ways Jesus was a model for Christians. This series of articles focuses on Jesus' mental attitude and course of action. You will find examples that you can apply in your family and in the congregation as well as when coping with challenges.

### **Study Article 4** PAGES 21-25

How much do you appreciate the truths you have learned from God's Word? This article will help us to reflect on the remarkable benefits of divine education. It also discusses the blessings we receive when we make sacrifices for the sake of the good news.

### **Study Article 5** PAGES 25-29

What has Jehovah done to provide for our deliverance from sin and death? At what cost? Knowing the answers can fill our hearts with appreciation and move us to show Jehovah how much we value the hope of deliverance that he and his Son have made possible.

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# Religion

## My Choice or My Parents'?

IN Poland quite a few people say to Jehovah's Witnesses, "I was born into my religion, and I will die in it." That implies that, in their view, religion is passed down from one generation to another. Do you find a similar attitude toward religion in your area? What often results from such a viewpoint? Religion tends to become formalistic and just a family tradition. Could this happen to those of Jehovah's Witnesses who have received a wonderful spiritual heritage from their parents or grandparents?

It did not happen to Timothy, who was guided by his devout mother and grandmother to believe in and love the true God. Timothy knew the holy writings "from infancy." In time, along with his mother and grandmother, Timothy became convinced that Christianity was the truth. He was "persuaded to believe" what he heard from the Scriptures concerning Jesus Christ. (2 Tim. 1:5; 3:14, 15) So although Christian parents today do their best to help their children to become servants of Jehovah, the children themselves need to develop a desire to become such.—Mark 8:34.

Each one must be persuaded to believe through convincing reasoning if he is to serve Jehovah out of love and maintain integrity no matter what happens. Then his faith will be solid and well-rooted.—Eph. 3:17; Col. 2:6, 7.



### The Children's Role

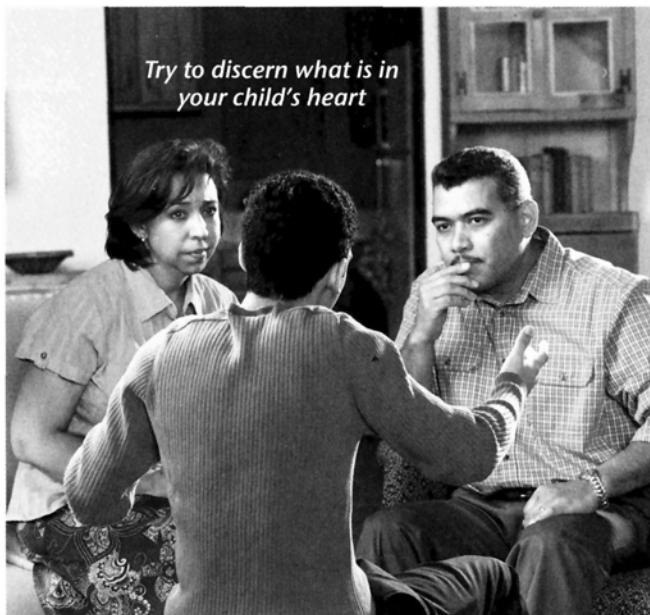
"I have always felt that Jehovah's Witnesses have the true religion," explains Albert,\* who was raised in a family of Witnesses, "but I had a hard time accepting what they were saying about the way I should live." If you are a youth, you may share his opinion. Why not make the effort to see what is involved in the way of life that God wants us to lead and then find delight in doing his will? (Ps. 40:8) "I simply started praying," Albert says. "At first, I found it difficult. I had to force myself to do so. Before long, however, I felt I could be valuable in God's eyes if I tried to do what is right. This gave me the strength to make needed changes." By cultivating a personal relationship with Jehovah, you can develop the desire to do what he requires of us.—Ps. 25:14; Jas. 4:8.

\* Some names have been changed.

Think of a game you have played, such as a board game or a particular sport. If you do not know the rules or cannot play it well, it will probably be boring. Yet, if you learned the rules and became good at the game, would you not look forward to playing it, even making opportunities to do so? The same is true of Christian activities. So take the initiative to prepare for Christian meetings. Get involved. Why, despite your age, you may even encourage others by your example! —Heb. 10:24, 25.

The same applies to telling others about your faith. This too should be done out of love, not out of compulsion. Ask yourself: ‘Why do I want to tell others about Jehovah? What reasons do I have to love him?’ You need to know Jehovah as a loving Father. He said through Jeremiah: “You will actually seek me and find me, for you will search for me with all your heart.” (Jer. 29:13, 14) What may this require of you? “I had to change my way of thinking,” says Jakub. “I have attended meetings and gone out in the ministry from childhood, but these activities became somewhat routine. Only when I got to know Jehovah better and developed a personal relationship with him did I really become involved in the truth.”

Good, upbuilding association has a lot to do with how much you enjoy your ministry. “He that is walking with wise persons will become wise,” says the inspired proverb. (Prov. 13:20) So seek friendship with those who pursue spiritual goals and who are happy in Jehovah’s service. Jola says: “I found the association with many young, spiritually-minded people encouraging. I began to share regularly in the ministry with great joy.”



### The Parents’ Role

“I am very grateful to my parents for teaching me about Jehovah,” says Jola. Yes, parents can have a powerful influence on their children’s choice. The apostle Paul wrote: “You, fathers, . . . go on bringing [your children] up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4) This inspired counsel clearly shows that the parents’ role is to teach their children Jehovah’s ways, not their own. Rather than putting into the mind of your children what you may have wanted to achieve, how wonderful it would be if you could help them make it their goal in life to live in harmony with Jehovah’s purposes!

You can inculcate Jehovah’s words in your children and “speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up.” (Deut. 6:6, 7) “We talked a lot about various avenues of the full-time ministry,” recall Ewa and Ryszard, the parents of three sons. The result? “The boys wanted to enroll

in the Theocratic Ministry School at an early age, became publishers, and eventually decided on their own to get baptized. Later, they took up Bethel or pioneer service."

Good parental example is vital. Ryszard says, "We were determined not to lead a double life, acting one way at home and another way in the congregation." Therefore, ask yourself: 'What do my children see in my life? Do they see a real love for Jehovah? Do they observe this love in my prayers and routine of personal study? Do they see it in my attitude toward field service, entertainment, and material things and in what I say about other members of the congregation?' (Luke 6:40) Children will observe your daily life and note any inconsistency between what you say and what you do.

Discipline plays an important role in rearing children. However, God's inspired Word tells us to "train up a boy according to the way *for him*." (Prov. 22:6) Ewa and Ryszard comment, "We took the time to have a Bible

study with each child separately." Of course, it is up to the parents to decide if a separate study is needed for each child. Whatever the case, a child needs to be treated as an individual. This requires flexibility and reasonableness. Rather than just telling your children that certain music is bad, for example, why not show them how to make wise decisions, how Bible principles are involved?

Your children may know exactly what you expect of them and may seem to conform to your wishes. Yet, you have to reach their heart. Remember, "counsel in the heart of a man is as deep waters, but the man of discernment is one that will draw it up." (Prov. 20:5) Be discerning, look for signs of any problem that may lurk in your children's heart, and take action *immediately*. Without making any accusations, show that you are concerned, and ask appropriate questions. Still, be careful not to be overly inquisitive. Your sincere concern will reach the heart and help you to assist them.



## The Role of the Congregation

Can you as one of God's servants help youths in the congregation appreciate the spiritual heritage they have received? Though parents are responsible for training their children, other congregation members, especially elders, can support their efforts. It is particularly important to reach out to those in religiously divided families.

What can the elders do to help young ones love Jehovah and feel needed and appreciated? Mariusz, who serves as an overseer in a congregation in Poland, says: "Elders should communicate, communicate, communicate with the young ones. That should be not only when problems arise but on other occasions as well—in the ministry, after the meetings, or over a cup of tea." Why not ask the young ones how they feel about the congregation? Such open communication draws young ones close to the congregation and enables them to feel a part of it.

If you are an elder, are you getting to know the youths in your congregation? Although he is now serving as an elder, Albert, mentioned earlier, experienced various trials during adolescence. He says, "As a young adult, I needed a personal shepherding call." Elders can also show personal interest in youths by praying for their spiritual well-being.  
—2 Tim. 1:3.

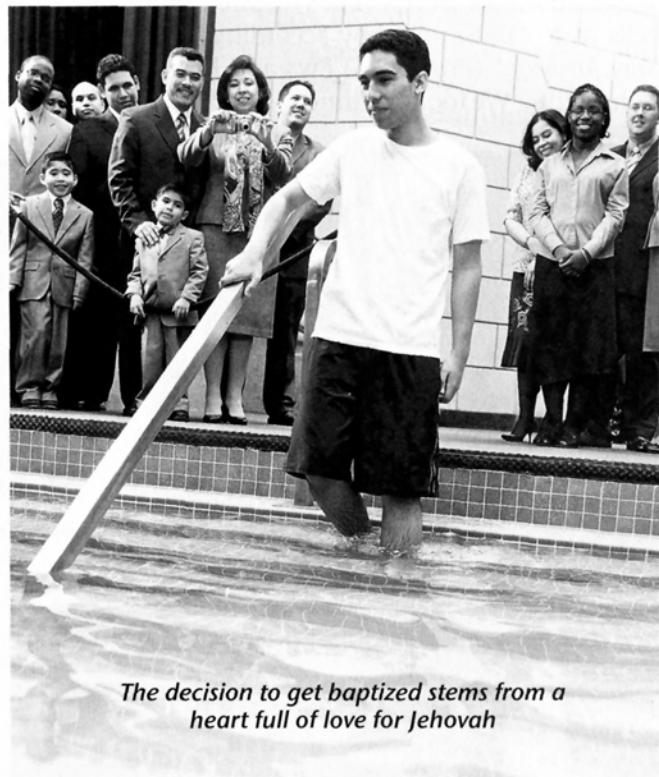
It is good for young ones to get involved in congregation activities. Otherwise, they might focus on pursuing worldly goals. Can you older ones share with them in the ministry and make friends with them? Spend leisure time with young ones, creating an atmosphere of trust and friendship. Jola recalls: "A pioneer sister showed

personal interest in me. It was with her that I went in the ministry for the first time because I wanted to."

## Your Personal Choice

Young ones, ask yourselves: 'What are my goals? If I am not yet baptized, do I have baptism as a goal?' The decision to get baptized should stem from a heart full of love for Jehovah, not from any obligation to a family tradition.

Yes, may Jehovah be your true Friend, and the truth be your treasure. Jehovah declared by means of the prophet Isaiah: "Do not gaze about, for I am your God." Jehovah will be with you as long as you are his friend. He will indeed strengthen you and "keep fast hold of you with [his] right hand of righteousness."—Isa. 41:10.



*The decision to get baptized stems from a heart full of love for Jehovah*

# KEEP CHRIST'S MENTAL ATTITUDE IN YOU

*"Have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had." —ROM. 15:5.*

**C**OME to me," said Jesus Christ. "Learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:28, 29) This warm invitation well expresses Jesus' loving mental attitude. No human could be a better example to follow. Although he was the mighty Son of God, Jesus displayed empathy and tenderness, especially toward those in need.

<sup>2</sup> In this and the following two articles, we will consider how we can develop and maintain the same mental attitude as Jesus and reflect "the mind of Christ" in our life. (1 Cor. 2:16) We will focus primarily on five aspects: Jesus' mildness and humility, his kindness, his obedience to God, his courage, and his unfailing love.

## Learn From Christ's Mild Temperament

<sup>3</sup> Jesus, the perfect Son of God, willingly came to earth to serve among imperfect and sinful people. Some of those would later kill him. Yet, Jesus always maintained his joy and self-control. (1 Pet. 2:21-23) 'Looking intently' at Jesus' example can help us to do the same when others' faults and imperfections affect us. (Heb. 12:2) Jesus invited his disciples to 'get under his yoke with him'

1. Why should we seek to adopt Christ's mental attitude?
2. What aspects of Jesus' attitude will we consider?
3. (a) What was one lesson in humility that Jesus taught his disciples? (b) How did Jesus react when his disciples showed weaknesses?

and thus to learn from him. (Matt. 11:29, ftn.) What could they learn? For one thing, Jesus was mild-tempered, and he was patient with his disciples despite their faults. On the night before he died, Jesus washed their feet, thereby teaching them a lesson in being "lowly in heart" that they would never forget. (*Read John 13:14-17.*) Later, when Peter, James, and John failed to "keep on the watch," Jesus sympathetically acknowledged their weakness. "Simon, are you sleeping?" he asked. "Men, keep on the watch and praying, in order that you do not come into temptation. The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak."

—Mark 14:32-38.

<sup>4</sup> How do we react if a fellow believer is competitive, easily offended, or slow to respond to counsel from the elders or "the faithful and discreet slave"? (Matt. 24:45-47) While we may be prepared to accept fleshly traits as normal in Satan's world, facing such imperfections among our brothers can be particularly trying. If the flaws of others easily annoy us, we need to ask ourselves, 'How can I better reflect "the mind of Christ"?' Try to keep in mind that Jesus did not become upset with his disciples, even when they showed a measure of spiritual weakness.

<sup>5</sup> Consider the case of the apostle Peter. When Jesus invited Peter to get out of the boat and walk toward Him on the water,

- 4, 5. How can Jesus' example help us to deal with the flaws of others?

Peter actually did so for a while. Then Peter looked at the windstorm and began to sink. Did Jesus become incensed and say to him: "Serves you right! Let that be a lesson to you"? No! "Immediately stretching out his hand Jesus caught hold of him and said to him: 'You with little faith, why did you give way to doubt?'" (Matt. 14:28-31) If we ever have to deal with a brother's apparent lack of faith, can we figuratively stretch out our hand and help him to gain more faith? That is certainly a lesson evident in Jesus' mild-tempered action toward Peter.

<sup>6</sup> Peter was also involved in the apostles' ongoing dispute about who was greatest among them. James and John wanted to sit one at Jesus' right hand and one at his left hand in his Kingdom. When Peter and the other apostles heard of it, they became indignant. Jesus knew that they likely acquired this attitude from the society in which they had grown up. Calling them to him, he said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. This is not the way among you; but whoever wants to become

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6. What did Jesus teach his apostles about seeking prominence?

*When a brother's faith falters, as did Peter's, will we extend a helping hand?*



great among you must be your minister, and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave." Jesus then pointed to his own example: "Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many."—Matt. 20:20-28.

<sup>7</sup> Reflecting on Jesus' humble mental attitude can help us to 'conduct ourselves as lesser ones' among our brothers. (Luke 9:46-48) Doing so contributes to unity. Jehovah, like the father of a large family, wants his children to "dwell together in unity," to get along. (Ps. 133:1) Jesus prayed to his Father that all true Christians would be united, in order that "the world may have the knowledge that you sent me forth and that you loved them just as you loved me." (John 17:23) Thus, our unity helps to identify us as Christ's followers. To enjoy such unity, we must view others' imperfections as Christ did. Jesus was forgiving, and he taught that only by being forgiving can we receive forgiveness.—*Read Matthew 6:14, 15.*

<sup>8</sup> We can also learn much by imitating the faith of those who have spent many years imitating Christ. Like Jesus, these usually show understanding of others' imperfections. They have learned that showing Christlike compassion not only helps us to "bear the weaknesses of those not strong" but also contributes to unity. Furthermore, it encourages the entire congregation to reflect Christ's mental attitude. They want the same for their brothers as the apostle Paul wanted for Christians in Rome: "May the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had, that with one accord you may with one

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7. How can each of us contribute to unity in the congregation?
  8. We can learn what from the example of long-time servants of God?

mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 15:1, 5, 6) Yes, our united worship brings praise to Jehovah.

<sup>9</sup> Jesus linked being "lowly in heart" with mildness, which is part of the fruitage of God's holy spirit. Therefore, along with studying Jesus' example, we need Jehovah's holy spirit, so that we can imitate that example properly. We should pray for God's holy spirit and strive to cultivate its fruitage—"love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control." (Gal. 5:22, 23) By thus following the pattern of humility and mildness that Jesus provided, we will please our heavenly Father, Jehovah.

### **Jesus Treated Others With Kindness**

<sup>10</sup> Kindness too is a part of the holy spirit's fruitage. Jesus consistently treated others with kindness. All who sincerely sought out Jesus found that he "received them kindly." (*Read Luke 9:11.*) What can we learn from the kindness Jesus showed? A kind person is friendly, gentle, sympathetic, and gracious. Jesus was like that. He felt pity for the people "because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd."—Matt. 9:35, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus also put his pity and compassion into action. Consider one instance. For 12 long years, a woman suffered from an abnormal flow of blood. She knew that under the Mosaic Law, her condition made her and anyone who touched her ceremonially unclean. (Lev. 15:25-27) Still, Jesus' reputation and demeanor must have convinced her that he could and would heal her. She kept

9. Why do we need holy spirit in order to imitate Jesus' example?

10. How did Jesus manifest kindness?

11, 12. (a) Describe an instance of Jesus' compassion in action. (b) What can you learn from the example considered here?

saying: "If I touch just his outer garments I shall get well." Summoning courage, she did so and immediately sensed that she had been healed.

<sup>12</sup> Jesus was aware that someone had touched him, and he looked around to see who it was. The woman, likely fearing a rebuke because she had violated the Law, fell down trembling at his feet and poured out the whole truth. Did Jesus reprimand this poor, suffering woman? Far from it! "Daughter," he said reassuringly, "your faith has made you well. Go in peace." (Mark 5: 25-34) How comforted she must have been to hear such kind words!

<sup>13</sup> Unlike the hardhearted Pharisees, Christ never used his authority to add to others' burdens. (Matt. 23:4) On the contrary, he kindly and patiently taught others Jehovah's ways. Jesus was an affectionate companion to his followers, consistently loving and kind, a true friend. (Prov. 17:17; John 15:11-15) Even children felt at ease with Jesus, and he obviously felt at ease with them. He was not too busy to stop what he was doing to spend time with little ones. On one occasion, his disciples, still nurturing ideas of self-importance like the religious leaders around them, tried to prevent people from bringing their young children to Jesus for him to touch. Jesus was not pleased with

13. (a) How did Jesus' attitude differ from that of the Pharisees? (b) How did Jesus treat children?

### **Can You Explain?**

- How did Jesus show that he was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart"?
- How did Jesus display kindness?
- What are some ways we show Christ-like mildness and kindness in this imperfect world?



*How can you help to make the congregation a haven of kindness?*

and in the ministry, Jehovah's people must face the spirit of the world. Unkind attitudes may disappoint us, but they should not surprise us. Jehovah inspired Paul to forewarn us that life in these critical "last days" would bring true Christians into contact with those who are "lovers of themselves, . . . having no natural affection."—2 Tim. 3: 1-3.

his disciples. He told them: "Let the young children come to me; do not try to stop them, for the kingdom of God belongs to suchlike ones." Then, using the children to provide an object lesson, he said: "Truly I say to you, Whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a young child will by no means enter into it."—Mark 10:13-15.

<sup>14</sup> Think for a moment about how some of those children would feel years later when as men and women, they would recall that Jesus Christ 'took them into his arms and blessed them.' (Mark 10:16) Today's children too will look back with fondness on the elders and others who show them wholesome, unselfish interest. More important, from an early age, children who receive such genuine concern in the congregation learn that Jehovah's spirit is on his people.

#### Show Kindness in an Unkind World

<sup>15</sup> Many people today feel that they do not have time to show kindness to others. Daily, therefore, at school, at work, while traveling,

14. What benefits do children derive from wholesome attention?

15. Why should we not be surprised by a lack of kindness today?

<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the atmosphere within the true Christian congregation provides a refreshing contrast to that of the unkind world. By imitating Jesus, each of us can contribute to that wholesome atmosphere. How can we do so? To begin with, many in the congregation need our help and encouragement because they face health problems or other adverse circumstances. In these "last days," such problems may be on the rise, but they are by no means new. In Bible times, Christians suffered from similar problems. Accordingly, helpful actions are as appropriate now as they were for Christians living back then. Paul, for example, exhorted Christians to "speak consolingly to the depressed souls, support the weak, be long-suffering toward all." (1 Thess. 5:14) This involves putting Christlike kindness to work.

<sup>17</sup> Christians have the responsibility to 'receive their brothers kindly,' to treat them as Jesus would have treated them, showing genuine concern for those we may have

16. How can we promote Christlike kindness in the congregation?

17, 18. What are some ways we can imitate Jesus' kindness?

known for years and those we may never before have met. (3 John 5-8) As Jesus took the initiative in showing compassion to others, so should we, always being refreshing to others.—Isa. 32:2; Matt. 11:28-30.

<sup>18</sup> Each of us can show kindness by taking an active interest in the welfare of others. Look for ways and make opportunities to do so. Reach out! “In brotherly love have tender affection for one another,” urged Paul, adding: “In showing honor to one another take the lead.” (Rom. 12:10) That means following Christ’s example, treating others with warmth and kindness, learning to show “love free from hypocrisy.” (2 Cor. 6:6) Paul described such Christlike love this way: “Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) Rather than hold-

ing grudges against our brothers and sisters, may we heed the admonition: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another just as God also by Christ freely forgave you.”—Eph. 4:32.

<sup>19</sup> Our striving to cultivate and show Christlike kindness at all times and in every situation brings us rich rewards. Jehovah’s spirit will be able to operate freely in the congregation, producing the spirit’s good fruitage. In addition, when we follow the pattern Jesus left and help others to do the same, our happy, united worship will bring joy to God himself. Therefore, let us constantly strive to reflect Jesus’ mildness and kindness in our dealings with others.

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19. What good results come from showing Christlike kindness?

## BE OBEDIENT AND COURAGEOUS AS CHRIST WAS

*“Take courage! I have conquered the world.”—JOHN 16:33.*

JESUS CHRIST always did God’s will. Not once did he even entertain the thought of disobeying his heavenly Father. (John 4:34; Heb. 7:26) But his circumstances on earth did not make it easy for him to be obedient. From the beginning of his preaching career, Jesus’ enemies, including Satan himself, tried to convince, force, or trick Jesus into abandoning his course of faithfulness. (Matt. 4:1-11; Luke 20:20-25) These enemies caused Jesus intense mental, emotional, and physical pain. Ultimately, they suc-

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1. How complete was Jesus’ obedience to God?

ceeded in bringing about his death on the torture stake. (Matt. 26:37, 38; Luke 22:44; John 19:1, 17, 18) Through all of this, and despite profound suffering, Jesus remained “obedient as far as death.”—*Read Philippians 2:8.*

<sup>2</sup> Jesus’ experience as a human on earth taught him new aspects of obedience. (Heb. 5:8) It may seem that there could be nothing more for Jesus to learn about serving Jehovah. After all, he had enjoyed intimate

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2, 3. What can we learn from Jesus’ being obedient despite his experiencing suffering?

association with Jehovah for unknown aeons and had been God's "master worker" during creation. (Prov. 8:30) Nevertheless, personally enduring in faith as a human despite suffering proved his complete integrity. Jesus, the Son of God, grew spiritually. What can we learn from his experience?

<sup>3</sup> Although he was a perfect man, Jesus did not try to remain perfectly obedient on his own. He prayed for God's help to remain obedient. (*Read Hebrews 5:7.*) For us to remain obedient, we too need a humble, prayerful attitude. For this reason, the apostle Paul counseled Christians: "Keep this mental attitude in you that was also in Christ Jesus," who "humbled himself and became obedient as far as death." (Phil. 2:5-8) Jesus' course proved that obedience is possible for humans even amid a wicked society. Granted, Jesus was perfect, but what about imperfect humans like us?

### Obedient Despite Imperfection

<sup>4</sup> God created Adam and Eve as intelligent creatures and free moral agents. As their descendants, we too are free moral agents. What does that mean? It means that we can decide to do good or to do bad. In other words, God has given us the freedom to choose to obey him or to disobey. Along with such great freedom comes responsibility, accountability. Indeed, our moral decisions mean life or death for us. They also impact on those around us.

<sup>5</sup> Because of our inherited imperfection, obedience does not come naturally. It is not always easy to obey God's laws. Paul faced this struggle. He wrote: "I behold in my members another law warring against the

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4. What does being created as free moral agents mean for us?

5. What struggle do we all have, and how can we be successful?

law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members." (Rom. 7:23) Of course, when no sacrifice, pain, or inconvenience is involved, obedience is easier. But how do we respond when there is a conflict between our desire to be obedient and "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes"? These negative forces arise from our imperfection as well as from the influence of "the spirit of the world" around us, and they are very powerful. (1 John 2:16; 1 Cor. 2:12) To resist them, we must 'prepare our heart' before we are faced with a crisis or temptation and determine that we will obey Jehovah, come what may. (Ps. 78:8) We have many Biblical examples of those who were successful because they did prepare their heart.—Ezra 7:10; Dan. 1:8.

<sup>6</sup> One way to prepare our heart is by diligently studying the Scriptures and Bible-based publications. Imagine yourself in the following situation. Suppose it is your evening for personal study. You have just prayed for Jehovah's spirit to help you to apply what you learn from his Word. You have plans to watch a particular movie on TV the next evening. You have heard that it received favorable reviews; yet you also know that it contains some immorality and violence.

<sup>7</sup> You ponder Paul's counsel at Ephesians 5:3: "Let fornication and uncleanness of every sort or greediness not even be mentioned among you, just as it befits holy people." You also recall Paul's advice at Philippians 4:8. (*Read.*) As you weigh this inspired counsel, you ask yourself, 'If I deliberately expose my heart and mind to such programs, am I following Jesus' example of strict obedience to God?' What will you do?

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6, 7. Illustrate how personal study can help us make wise choices.

Will you go ahead and watch that movie anyway?

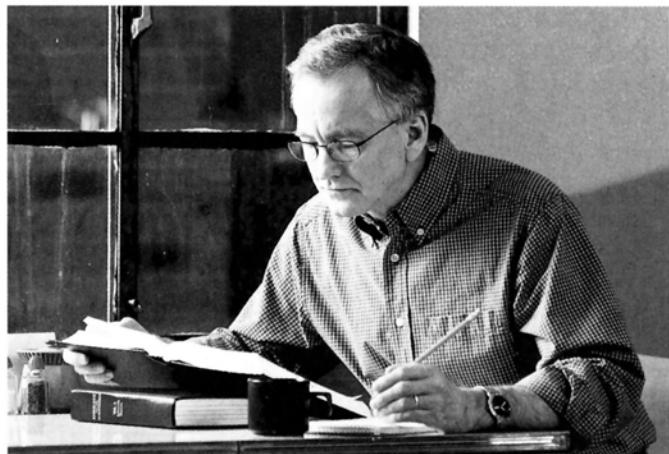
<sup>8</sup> It would be a mistake to lower our moral and spiritual standards, perhaps thinking that we are strong enough to resist the effects of bad association, including when that association might be in the form of violent, immoral entertainment. Instead, we must protect ourselves and our children from the corrupting influences of Satan's spirit. Computer users take pains to prevent their equipment from becoming infected with malicious viruses that can destroy data, interfere with operation, and even take over the machine and use it in an attack on other computers. Should we be any less vigilant in protecting ourselves from Satan's "crafty acts"?—Eph. 6:11, ftn.

<sup>9</sup> Practically every day, in some way we have to choose if we will do things Jehovah's way or not. In order to gain salvation, we must obey God and live by his righteous principles. By following Christ's example of obedience even "as far as death," we show that our faith is real. Jehovah will reward our faithful course. Jesus promised: "He that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matt. 24:13) Clearly, this calls for developing true courage, such as Jesus displayed.—Ps. 31:24.

### **Jesus—The Foremost Example of Courage**

<sup>10</sup> Surrounded as we are by this world's at-

8. Why must we maintain high moral and spiritual standards?
9. Why must we be determined every day to obey Jehovah?
10. What kinds of pressures may be put on us, and how should we respond?



*Are you 'preparing your heart' to resist temptations?*

titudes and conduct, we need courage to resist contamination. Christians deal with moral, social, financial, and religious pressures that could cause them to deviate from Jehovah's righteous ways. Many face family opposition. In some countries, educational institutions promote the theory of evolution ever more aggressively, and atheism is gaining more attention. In the face of such pressures, we cannot merely hunker down and do nothing. We must take action in order to resist and thus protect ourselves. Jesus' example shows us how we can succeed.

<sup>11</sup> Jesus told his disciples: "In the world you are having tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world." (John 16:33) He never yielded to the world's influence. He never allowed the world to stop him from carrying out his preaching commission or to cause him to lower his standards for true worship and proper conduct; nor should we. In prayer, Jesus said of his disciples: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) Studying Christ's

11. How can reflecting on Jesus' example give us more courage?

courageous example and reflecting on it can give us the necessary courage to remain separate from the world.

### Learn Courage From Jesus

<sup>12</sup> Jesus manifested great courage throughout his ministry. Exercising his authority as God's Son, he fearlessly "entered into the temple and threw out all those selling and buying in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the benches of those selling doves." (Matt. 21: 12) When soldiers came to arrest Jesus on his last night on earth, he courageously stepped forward to protect his disciples, saying: "If . . . it is I you are looking for, let these go." (John 18:8) Moments later, he told Peter to put away his sword, thus showing that the source of Jesus' confidence lay, not in earthly weapons, but in Jehovah.—John 18:11.

<sup>13</sup> Jesus fearlessly exposed the unloving false teachers of his day and their wrong teachings. "Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because you shut up the kingdom of the heavens before men," Jesus told them. "You have disregarded the weightier matters of the Law, namely, justice and mercy and faithfulness. . . . You cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of plunder and immoderateness." (Matt. 23:13, 23, 25) Je-

12-14. Give examples of Jesus' showing courage.

### Can You Explain?

- What will enable us to remain obedient despite being imperfect?
- On what is real faith based, and how can this help us to be courageous?
- What will result from our being obedient and showing Christlike courage?

sus' disciples would need similar courage because false religious leaders would also persecute them and kill some of them.—Matt. 23:34; 24:9.

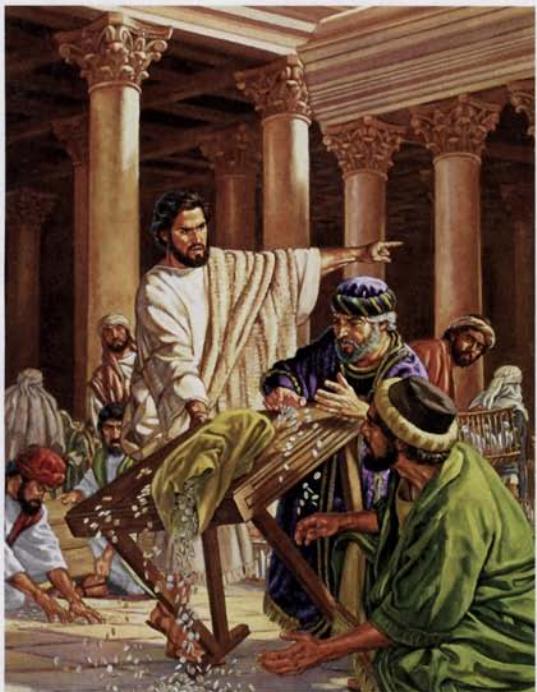
<sup>14</sup> Jesus took a courageous stand even against the demons. On one occasion, he was confronted by a demon-possessed man so strong that no one could bind that man with a chain. Unintimidated, Jesus expelled the many demons that held the man in their control. (Mark 5:1-13) Today, God has not given Christians the power to perform such miracles. Still, in our preaching and teaching, we too must wage spiritual warfare against Satan, the one who has "blinded the minds of the unbelievers." (2 Cor. 4:4) As in Jesus' case, our weapons "are not fleshly, but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things"—deeply ingrained but wrong religious notions. (2 Cor. 10:4) In wielding these spiritual weapons, we learn much from Jesus' example.

<sup>15</sup> Jesus' courage was based, not on bravado, but on faith. Ours must be too. (Matk 4: 40) How can we acquire real faith? Again, Jesus' example guides us. He displayed a thorough knowledge of the Scriptures and complete confidence in them. As a weapon, Jesus wielded, not a literal sword, but the sword of the spirit, God's Word. Time and again he supported his teachings with a reference to the Scriptures. Often he prefaced his words with the statement: "It is written," that is, in God's Word.\*

<sup>16</sup> To build faith that can withstand the trials of the sort that inevitably come with discipleship, we must read and study the Bible daily and attend Christian meetings, putting into our minds the truths that

\* For examples, see Matthew 4:4, 7, 10; 11:10; 21:13; 26:31; Mark 9:13; 14:27; Luke 24:46; John 6:45; 8:17.

15. On what was Jesus' courage based?  
16. How can we gain greater faith?



*Like Jesus, we can  
show courage based on faith*

are the foundation of faith. (Rom. 10:17) We must also meditate—reflect deeply—on what we learn, letting it sink into our heart. Only faith that is alive can move us to courageous action. (Jas. 2:17) And we must pray for holy spirit because faith is part of the spirit's fruitage.—Gal. 5:22.

<sup>17</sup> A young sister named Kitty experienced how real faith gives courage. From an early age, she knew that she should not be “ashamed of the good news” in school, and she really wanted to give a good witness to her fellow students. (Rom. 1:16) Each year, she resolved to reach out to others with the good news, but she held back for lack of courage. When she was in her late teens, she changed schools. She said, “This time, I am

17, 18. How did one young sister show courage in school?

going to make up for the opportunities I have let slip.” Kitty prayed for Christlike courage, discretion, and the right opportunity.

<sup>18</sup> On the first day of school, the students were asked to introduce themselves one by one. Several mentioned their religious background, adding that they did not really practice their faith. Kitty realized that this was the opportunity she had prayed for. When her turn came, she confidently said, “I am one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, and my source of guidance in spiritual and moral matters is the Bible.” As she continued, some students rolled their eyes. But others paid attention and later asked questions. The teacher even used Kitty as a good example of standing up for one’s beliefs. Kitty is very glad to have learned from Jesus’ courageous example.

#### Show Christlike Faith and Courage

<sup>19</sup> The apostles too realized that their courageous actions must be based on faith. They implored Jesus: “Give us more faith.” (*Read Luke 17:5, 6.*) Having real faith means more than merely believing that God exists. It involves developing a deep, trusting relationship with Jehovah, not unlike the relationship a small child has with a kind and loving father. Under inspiration, Solomon wrote: “My son, if your heart has become wise, my heart will rejoice, even mine. And my kidneys will exult when your lips speak uprightness.” (*Prov. 23:15, 16.*) In the same way, our courageously standing up for righteous principles brings Jehovah delight, and knowing that increases our courage. Therefore, let us always imitate Jesus’ example, taking a courageous stand for righteousness!

19. (a) What does having real faith involve? (b) How can we bring Jehovah delight?

# CHRIST'S LOVE MOVES US TO LOVE

*"Jesus, having loved his own that were in the world, loved them to the end."—JOHN 13:1.*

**J**ESUS set the perfect example of love. Everything about him—his speech, his conduct, his teaching, and his sacrificial death—demonstrated his love. To the very end of his life on earth, Jesus showed love toward those whom he met and especially toward his disciples.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus' outstanding example of love sets a high standard for his followers to uphold. It also motivates us to show similar love toward our spiritual brothers and sisters as well as toward all others. In this article, we will consider what congregation elders can learn from Jesus about showing love toward those who commit errors, even grave errors. We will also discuss how Jesus' love moves Christians to take positive action in times of hardship, disaster, and illness.

<sup>3</sup> On the night before Jesus' death, his own apostle Peter denied him three times. (Mark 14:66-72) Yet, once Peter had returned, as Jesus foretold he would, Jesus forgave him. Jesus entrusted Peter with weighty responsibilities. (Luke 22:32; Acts 2:14; 8:14-17; 10:44, 45) What do we learn from Jesus' attitude toward ones who have serious failings?

## Display Christ's Mental Attitude Toward Wrongdoers

<sup>4</sup> Among the many situations that call for

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- 1, 2. (a) How does Jesus' love stand out? (b) What facets of love will we discuss in this article?
  3. Despite Peter's serious failings, how did Jesus regard him?
  4. What situation especially calls for displaying Christ's mental attitude?

displaying Christ's mental attitude, one that can be particularly heartrending is dealing with serious wrongdoing, whether in the family or in the congregation. Sadly, as the last days of Satan's system come to their climax, the spirit of the world is taking an ever greater moral toll. The world's bad or indifferent moral attitudes can rub off on young and old alike, eroding their resolve to walk the narrow way. In the first century, some had to be disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation, and others were reproved. It is similar today. (1 Cor. 5:11-13; 1 Tim. 5:20) Nevertheless, when elders who handle these matters show Christlike love, this can have a profound impact on the wrongdoer.

<sup>5</sup> Like Jesus, elders must uphold Jehovah's righteous standards at all times. In doing so, they reflect Jehovah's mildness, kindness, and love. When someone is truly repentant, "broken at heart" and "crushed in spirit" because of his error, it may not be difficult for elders to "readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness." (Ps. 34:18; Gal. 6:1) But what about dealing with someone who is defiant and shows little or no remorse?

<sup>6</sup> When a wrongdoer rejects Scriptural counsel or tries to shift the blame for his wrong, elders and others may feel indignant. Knowing the damage the person has

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5. How should elders imitate Christ's attitude toward wrongdoers?
  6. What must elders avoid when dealing with wrongdoers, and why?

already caused, they may be tempted to express their own feelings about the individual's actions and attitude. Yet, anger is damaging and does not reflect "the mind of Christ." (1 Cor. 2:16; *read James 1:19, 20.*) Jesus warned some in his day in no uncertain terms, but never once did he say anything that was hateful or was intended to cause pain. (1 Pet. 2:23) Rather, he left the way open for wrongdoers to repent and return to Jehovah's favor. Indeed, one of the main reasons for Jesus' coming into the world was "to save sinners."—1 Tim. 1:15.

<sup>7</sup> How should Jesus' example in this regard affect our attitude toward those who must be disciplined by the congregation? Remember that the Scriptural arrangement for judicial action within the congregation protects the flock and may move a disciplined wrongdoer to repentance. (2 Cor. 2: 6-8) It is tragic that some are unrepentant

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7, 8. What should guide elders in handling judicial matters?

and must be disfellowshipped, yet it is heart-warming to know that a large number of such ones later return to Jehovah and his congregation. When elders show a Christ-like attitude, they help to smooth the way for the person to have a change of heart and eventually to return. In the future, some of these former wrongdoers may not remember all the Scriptural counsel that the elders gave them, but they will certainly remember that the elders respected their dignity and treated them with love.

<sup>8</sup> Elders, therefore, must display "the fruitage of the spirit," principally Christlike love, even under trying circumstances. (Gal. 5:22, 23) They should never rush to put a wrongdoer out of the congregation. They ought to show that they want erring ones to return to Jehovah. Thus, when a sinner later has a change of heart, as many do, he may be deeply grateful both to Jehovah and to the "gifts in men" who made it easier for him to return to the congregation.—Eph. 4:8, 11, 12.

*Elders want erring ones to return to Jehovah*



## Showing Christlike Love in the Time of the End

<sup>9</sup> Luke records an outstanding instance of Jesus' practical love. Knowing that, in time, Roman soldiers would besiege the doomed city of Jerusalem, preventing flight, Jesus lovingly warned his disciples: "When you see Jerusalem surrounded by encamped armies, then know that the desolating of her has drawn near." What should they do? Jesus gave clear and specific advance instructions. "Then let those in Judea begin fleeing to the mountains, and let those in the midst of her withdraw, and let those in the country places not enter into her; because these are days for meting out justice, that all the things written may be fulfilled." (Luke 21:20-22) After the Roman armies surrounded Jerusalem in 66 C.E., obedient ones acted on these instructions.

<sup>10</sup> During their flight from Jerusalem, Christians needed to show Christlike love

9. Give an example of Jesus' showing love for his disciples in a practical way.

10, 11. How can considering the early Christians' flight from Jerusalem help prepare us for the "great tribulation"?

for one another, even as Christ had shown love for them. They surely had to share whatever they had with one another. But Jesus' prophecy reached far beyond the razing of that ancient city. He foretold: "There will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." (Matt. 24:17, 18, 21) Before and during that "great tribulation" yet ahead, we too may face hardships and deprivations. Having Christ's mental attitude will help us to get through them.

<sup>11</sup> At that time, we will need to follow Jesus' example, showing unselfish love. In this connection, Paul counseled: "Let each of us please his neighbor in what is good for his upbuilding. For even the Christ did not please himself . . . Now may the God who supplies endurance and comfort grant you to have among yourselves the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had."—Rom. 15:2, 3, 5.

<sup>12</sup> Peter, a recipient of Jesus' love, similarly urged Christians to cultivate "unhypocris-

12. What kind of love do we need to develop now, and why?

*How did Christians leaving Jerusalem reflect Christ's mental attitude?*



cal brotherly affection" and to display "obedience to the truth." They are to "love one another intensely from the heart." (1 Pet. 1:22) Today, we need more than ever to develop such Christlike qualities. Already, pressures on all of God's people are intensifying. No one should put his confidence in any element of this old world, as the recent turmoil in the world's financial system vividly demonstrates. (*Read 1 John 2:15-17.*) Rather, as the end of this system draws ever nearer, we need to draw closer to Jehovah and to one another, cultivating genuine friendships within the congregation. Paul counseled: "In brotherly love have tender affection for one another. In showing honor to one another take the lead." (Rom. 12:10) And Peter emphasized the point further, saying: "Above all things, have intense love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins."—1 Pet. 4:8.

<sup>13</sup> Around the world, Jehovah's Witnesses are known for putting their Christlike love into action. Consider the Witnesses who responded to the call for help after storms and hurricanes devastated widespread areas of the southern United States in 2005. Moved by Jesus' example, more than 20,000 volunteered, many leaving comfortable homes and secure jobs to help their afflicted brothers.

<sup>14</sup> In one area, the storm surge reached as far as 50 miles inland, propelling a wall of water up to 30 feet high. When the water receded, a third of the homes and other buildings in its path were left totally ruined. Witness volunteers from several countries brought skills, tools, and building materials to the region and were willing to do whatever work was needed. Two fleshly sisters, widows, packed their belongings into a

13-15. How have some brothers shown Christlike love in the aftermath of disasters?



*Jehovah's Witnesses are known for putting Christlike love into action*

pickup truck and drove over 2,000 miles to help. One of those sisters has remained in the area, still helping the local relief committee and serving as a regular pioneer.

<sup>15</sup> More than 5,600 homes of Witnesses and others in the region have been rebuilt or repaired. How did local Witnesses feel about receiving this tremendous outpouring of love? One sister whose home was destroyed had moved into a tiny trailer with a leaky roof and a broken stove. The brothers built her a modest but comfortable house. Standing in front of her neat new home, she wept out of gratitude to Jehovah and to her brothers. In numerous other cases, displaced local Witnesses remained in their temporary accommodations for a year or more after their houses had been rebuilt. Why? In order to make their new home

available to relief workers. What an example of displaying Christ's mental attitude!

### Showing Christ's Attitude Toward the Sick

<sup>16</sup> Relatively few of us have had to deal with a major natural disaster. But practically everyone must face health problems, either his own or those of family members. Jesus' mental attitude toward the sick serves as an example for us. His love moved him to feel pity for them. When crowds brought their ailing ones to him, "he cured all who were faring badly."—Matt. 8:16; 14:14.

<sup>17</sup> Today, Christians do not have Jesus' miraculous power to heal, but they do share Jesus' compassionate attitude toward the sick. How is that demonstrated? As one evidence, elders show that they have Christ's mental attitude by making and monitoring arrangements to help sick ones in the congregation, following in principle the course of action mentioned at Matthew 25:39, 40.\* (*Read.*)

<sup>18</sup> Of course, one does not have to be an elder to do good to others. Consider the case

\* See the article "Do More Than Say: 'Keep Warm and Well Fed'" in the October 15, 1986, issue of *The Watchtower*.

16, 17. In what ways can we reflect Christ's mental attitude toward the sick?

18. How did two sisters display genuine love toward another, and with what results?

### Can You Explain?

- How can elders display Christ's mental attitude toward wrongdoers?
- Why is imitating Christ's love especially important in this time of the end?
- How can we reflect Christ's mental attitude toward the sick?

of 44-year-old Charlene, who had cancer and was told she had ten days to live. Seeing her need and the toll that caregiving was taking on her devoted husband, two spiritual sisters, Sharon and Nicolette, made themselves available full-time to help her through her final days. Those days stretched into six weeks, but the two sisters showed their love to the end. "It's difficult when you know someone will not recover," observes Sharon. "Yet, Jehovah made us strong. The experience drew us closer to him and to each other." Charlene's husband says: "I will always remember the kind and practical support of these two dear sisters. Their pure motive and positive attitude made this last trial easier for my faithful Charlene and gave me badly needed physical and emotional relief. I will be grateful to them forever. Their self-sacrifice strengthened my faith in Jehovah and my love for our whole association of brothers."

<sup>19</sup> In this series of three articles, we have considered five aspects of Jesus' mental attitude and how we can adopt his pattern of thinking and course of action. Let us be "mild-tempered and lowly in heart," as Jesus was. (Matt. 11:29) May we also strive to treat others kindly, even when their imperfections and weaknesses come to the fore. Let us courageously obey all of Jehovah's requirements, even in the face of trials.

<sup>20</sup> Finally, let us show Christlike love to all our brothers, as Christ himself did, "to the end." Such love identifies us as Jesus' true followers. (John 13:1, 34, 35) Yes, "let your brotherly love continue." (Heb. 13:1) Do not hold back! Use your life to praise Jehovah and to help others! Jehovah will bless your sincere efforts.

19, 20. (a) What five aspects of Christ's mental attitude have we considered? (b) What are you resolved to do?

# THE EXCELLING VALUE OF DIVINE EDUCATION

*"I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus."—PHIL. 3:8.*

FROM an early age, Robert excelled in school. When he was just eight years old, one of his teachers paid a special visit to his home and told him that there was no limit to what he might accomplish. She expressed the hope that he would one day become a medical doctor. His academic achievements as a high-school student qualified him to attend any of the best universities in his country. But Robert chose to forgo what many viewed as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity in order to pursue his goal of serving as a regular pioneer.

<sup>2</sup> Like Robert, many Christians—young and old—have opportunities for advancement in the present system of things. Some choose not to make full use of those opportunities so that they can pursue spiritual goals. (1 Cor. 7:29-31) What motivates Christians like Robert to expend themselves in the preaching work? In addition to their love for Jehovah, which is the foremost reason, they appreciate the excelling value of divine education. Have you considered lately what your life might be like if you had not come to a knowledge of the truth? Reflecting on some of the outstanding blessings we enjoy as a result of being taught by Jehovah will help us to maintain our appreciation for the good news and to be zealous in sharing it with others.

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1, 2. What choice have some Christians made, and why?

## Privileged to Be Taught by God

<sup>3</sup> In his goodness, Jehovah is willing to teach imperfect humans. Speaking prophetically of anointed Christians, Isaiah 54:13 says: "All your sons will be persons taught by Jehovah, and the peace of your sons will be abundant." Those words apply in principle to Christ's "other sheep" as well. (John 10:16) This is clear from a prophecy that is being fulfilled in our day. Isaiah saw in vision people from all the nations streaming to true worship. He describes them as saying to one another: "Let us go up to the mountain of Jehovah, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will instruct us about his ways, and we will walk in his paths." (Isa. 2:1-3) What a privilege it is to be taught by God!

<sup>4</sup> How can we qualify to benefit from divine education? A major requirement is that a person be meek and teachable. The psalmist David wrote: "Good and upright is Jehovah. . . . He will teach the meek ones his way." (Ps. 25:8, 9) And Jesus said: "I publicly praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have carefully hidden these things from wise and intellectual ones, and have revealed them to babes." (Luke 10:21) Do you not feel drawn to a God who "gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones"? —1 Pet. 5:5.

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3. Why can we be sure that Jehovah is willing to teach imperfect humans?
  4. What does Jehovah require of those whom he teaches?

<sup>5</sup> As servants of Jehovah, can we credit ourselves with having the good sense to find the truth? No. In fact, on our own initiative, we would never have come to a knowledge of God. Jesus said: "No man can come to me unless the Father, who sent me, draws him." (John 6:44) By means of the preaching work and by means of holy spirit, Jehovah is drawing sheeplike individuals, "the desirable things of all the nations." (Hag. 2:7) Are you not grateful to be one of those whom Jehovah has drawn to his Son?—*Read Jeremiah 9:23, 24.*

### The Power to Improve Lives

<sup>6</sup> Using a beautiful word picture, Isaiah's prophecy depicts the transformation of human personalities that is taking place in our time. Formerly violent people have become peaceable. (*Read Isaiah 11:6-9.*) Those who were once at enmity with one another because of differences in race, nationality, tribe, or some other cultural background have learned to dwell together in unity. Figuratively speaking, they have 'beaten their swords into plowshares.' (Isa. 2:4) What accounts for these remarkable changes? People have taken in "the knowledge of Jehovah" and have applied it in their lives. Although God's servants are imperfect, they form a true international brotherhood. The universal appeal of the good news and the fine fruitage it produces testify to the excelling value of divine education.—Matt. 11:19.

<sup>7</sup> The apostle Paul likened the ministry of God's servants to spiritual warfare. He wrote: "The weapons of our warfare are not fleshly,

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5. How only has it been possible for us to come to a knowledge of God?

6. What remarkable effect can taking in "the knowledge of Jehovah" have on people?

7, 8. (a) What are some of the "strongly entrenched things" that divine education helps people to overturn? (b) What shows that divine education brings praise to Jehovah?

but powerful by God for overturning strongly entrenched things. For we are overturning reasonings and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God." (2 Cor. 10:4, 5) What are some of the "strongly entrenched things" from which divine education frees people? The burden of false teachings, superstitions, and human philosophies, to mention just a few. (Col. 2:8) Divine education helps people to overcome bad practices and to cultivate godly qualities. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) It improves family life. And it gives those without hope a real purpose in life. This is the kind of education that is needed today.

<sup>8</sup> One of the qualities that Jehovah helps people to develop is honesty, as the following experience shows. (Heb. 13:18) A woman in India accepted a Bible study and in time qualified as an unbaptized publisher. One day while returning home from working on a Kingdom Hall construction project, she found on the ground near a bus station a gold chain worth eight hundred dollars (U.S.). Although of humble means, she took the chain to the police station and turned it in. The police officer there could not believe his eyes! Later, another officer asked her, "Why did you choose to turn in the chain?" She explained, "Bible teaching has transformed me, so I am an honest person now." Impressed, he said to the Christian elder who accompanied her to the station: "There are over 38 million people in this state. If you can help ten people to become like this woman, it would be a great achievement." When we consider the millions of lives that have been improved by divine education, do we not have abundant reasons to praise Jehovah?

<sup>9</sup> The transforming power of God's Word,

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9. How is it possible for people to make profound changes in their lives?

along with the help that Jehovah provides by means of his holy spirit, enables people to make profound changes in their lives. (Rom. 12:2; Gal. 5:22, 23) Colossians 3:10 says: “Clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it.” The message found in God’s Word, the Bible, has the power to reveal what a person really is on the inside, and it can change the way he thinks and even how he feels about things. (*Read Hebrews 4:12.*) By coming to an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures and by conforming his life to Jehovah’s righteous standards, a person can become a friend of God, with the prospect of living forever.

### Preparation for the Future

<sup>10</sup> Jehovah is in a unique position to help us prepare for the future because he knows what lies ahead. He determines what man-

10. (a) Why is Jehovah in a unique position to prepare us for the future? (b) What dramatic changes will soon affect the entire earth?

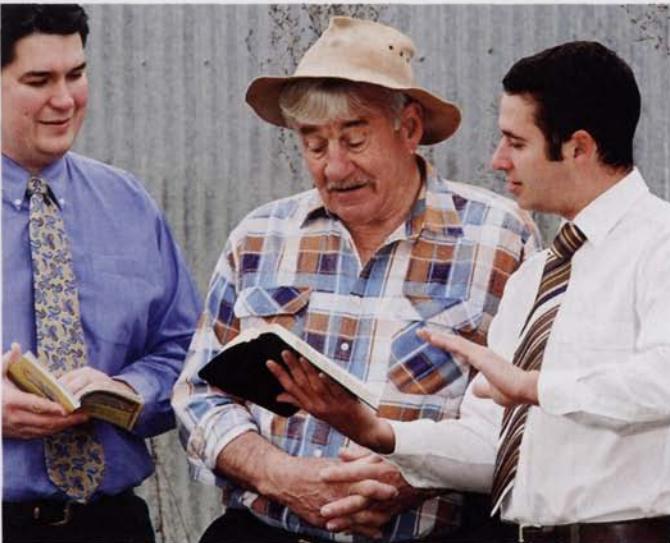
*Those taught by Jehovah form a true international brotherhood*



kind’s future will be. (Isa. 46:9, 10) Bible prophecy reveals that “the great day of Jehovah is near.” (Zeph. 1:14) Regarding that day, the words of Proverbs 11:4 will prove true: “Valuable things will be of no benefit on the day of fury, but righteousness itself will deliver from death.” When the time arrives for Jehovah’s judgment to be executed on Satan’s world, what will matter is our standing with God. Money will be worthless. In fact, Ezekiel 7:19 says: “Into the streets they will throw their very silver, and an abhorrent thing their own gold will become.” That foreknowledge can help us to act wisely now.

<sup>11</sup> One distinct way that divine education prepares us for the coming of Jehovah’s day is by helping us to set proper priorities. The apostle Paul wrote to Timothy: “Give orders to those who are rich in the present system of things not to be high-minded, and to rest their hope, not on uncertain riches, but on God.” Even if we are not affluent, we can benefit from this divinely inspired counsel. What does it involve? Instead of storing up material riches, we should strive “to work at good” and “to be rich in fine works.” By putting spiritual matters first in our lives, we ‘treasure up for ourselves a fine foundation for the future.’ (1 Tim. 6:17-19) Such a course of self-sacrifice reflects practical wisdom, for as Jesus said, “what benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?” (Matt. 16:26, 27) In view of the nearness of Jehovah’s day, each of us does well to consider: ‘Where am I storing up treasure? Am I slaving for God or for Riches?’—Matt. 6:19, 20, 24.

11. What is one way that divine education helps us to prepare for the future?



*Is it not a blessing to be one of  
“God’s fellow workers”?*

<sup>12</sup> Foremost among the “fine works” outlined in God’s Word for Christians is the lifesaving work of Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) As was the case in the first century, some may look down on our ministry. (*Read 1 Corinthians 1:18-21.*) But that does not change the value of our message, and it does not lessen the importance of giving everyone the opportunity to put faith in it while there is yet time. (Rom. 10:13, 14) As we help others to benefit from divine education, we put ourselves in line to receive many blessings.

### Blessed for Making Sacrifices

<sup>13</sup> Prior to his becoming a Christian, the apostle Paul was being groomed for success in the Jewish system of things. When he was likely no more than 13 years old, he moved from his native city of Tarsus to Jerusalem to study under the highly esteemed Law teacher Gamaliel. (Acts 22:3) In time, Paul began

12. Why should we not be deterred if some look down on our ministry?

13. What sacrifices did the apostle Paul make for the good news?

to stand out among his contemporaries, and had he continued in that course, he might have risen to prominence in Judaism. (Gal. 1:13, 14) When he accepted the good news and took up the preaching work, he left all of that behind. Did Paul regret the choice he had made? No. In fact, he wrote: “I do indeed also consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord. On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse.”—Phil. 3:8.

<sup>14</sup> Like Paul, Christians today make sacrifices for the sake of the good news. (Mark 10:29, 30) Do we miss out because of doing so? Robert, mentioned at the outset, speaks for many when he says: “I have no regrets whatsoever. The full-time ministry has brought me joy and satisfaction, and it has allowed me to ‘taste and see that Jehovah is good.’ Whenever I made material sacrifices in order to pursue spiritual goals, Jehovah always blessed me with more than what I had sacrificed. It is as if I did not really sacrifice anything. I have only gained!”—Ps. 34:8; Prov. 10:22.

<sup>15</sup> If you have been sharing in the preaching and teaching work for some time now,

14, 15. We experience what blessings as “God’s fellow workers”?

### How Would You Answer?

- What does Jehovah require of those whom he teaches?
- How does divine education improve people’s lives?
- In what ways are we blessed for helping others to benefit from divine education?

you too have no doubt had opportunities to taste and see that Jehovah is good. Have there been times when you sensed the help of his spirit as you were presenting the good news? Have you seen others' eyes light up as Jehovah opened their heart to pay attention to the message? (Acts 16:14) Has Jehovah helped you to overcome obstacles, perhaps opening the way for you to expand your ministry? Has he supported you in times of difficulty, enabling you to continue serving him when you felt that your strength was giving out? (Phil. 4:13) When we personally experience Jehovah's helping hand as we carry out our ministry, he becomes more real to us and we feel even closer to him. (Isa. 41:10) Is it not a blessing to be one of "God's

fellow workers" in the grand work of divine education?—1 Cor. 3:9.

<sup>16</sup> Many people hope to accomplish something of lasting significance during their lifetime. We have seen that even outstanding achievements in today's world are often soon forgotten. However, the modern-day works that Jehovah is accomplishing in connection with the sanctification of his name will no doubt be preserved in a permanent record as part of theocratic history. They will be remembered forever. (Prov. 10:7; Heb. 6:10) May we cherish our privilege of sharing in the history-making work of divine education.

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16. How do you feel about the efforts and sacrifices you make in connection with divine education?

## DO YOU VALUE WHAT JEHOVAH HAS DONE TO DELIVER YOU?

*"Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, because he has turned his attention and performed deliverance toward his people."—LUKE 1:68.*

**I**MAGINE that you are lying in a hospital bed. You are in a ward where everyone suffers from the same illness, a deadly disease with no known cure. When you learn that a doctor is spearheading an effort to find a cure, you are hopeful. You eagerly await news of any developments. One day, you learn that a cure has been found! The doctor behind the breakthrough made enormous sacrifices to make the cure possible.

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1, 2. How might the seriousness of our present condition be illustrated, and what questions will we discuss?

How would you respond? Surely your heart would swell with respect and appreciation for the man who opened a way for you and many others to be delivered from death.

<sup>2</sup> That scenario may seem dramatic, but it corresponds to a reality we all face. Each of us is in a condition far more serious than the one described. We are in dire need of a rescuer. (*Read Romans 7:24.*) To deliver us, Jehovah has gone to great lengths. His Son too has made significant sacrifices. Let us consider, then, four basic questions. Why do we need deliverance? What has our

deliverance cost Jesus? What has it cost Jehovah? And how can we show that we value divine deliverance?

### Why We Need Deliverance

<sup>3</sup> According to a recent estimate, one of the worst pandemics in human history was the Spanish influenza of 1918, which killed tens of millions of people. Other diseases are more lethal in a sense. While they may infect fewer people, they kill a higher percentage of the people they do infect.\* However, what if we were to compare sin to such a pandemic? Recall the words of Romans 5: 12: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned." The infection rate of sin is 100 percent, since all imperfect humans sin. (*Read Romans 3:23.*) And what is the mortality rate? Paul wrote that sin brings death "to all men."

<sup>4</sup> Many today do not see sin and death in such dire terms. They worry about what they call premature death, but they dismiss as "natural" the death that creeps up on humans through the aging process. It is all too easy for humans to forget the Creator's perspective. Our lifespan is infinitely shorter than he meant it to be. Actually, no human has lived for even "one day" from Jehovah's point of view. (2 Pet. 3:8) God's Word thus says that our lives are as transitory as a season's growth of grass or as an exhaled

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\* The Spanish influenza is said to have infected anywhere from a fifth to over one half of the world's population at the time. The virus may have killed somewhere between 1 to 10 percent of the people it infected. By contrast, Ebola virus is much rarer, but in some outbreaks it has killed nearly 90 percent of those it infected.

3. How is sin comparable to a pandemic?
4. What is Jehovah's perspective on our lifespan, and how does his viewpoint differ from that of many today?

breath. (Ps. 39:5; 1 Pet. 1:24) We need to keep that perspective in mind. Why? If we see the severity of the "disease" that afflicts us, we can better appreciate the value of the "cure"—our deliverance.

<sup>5</sup> In order to grasp the severity of sin and its effects, we must try to fathom what it has cost us. That may be difficult at first because sin cost us something we have never yet experienced. Adam and Eve initially enjoyed perfect human life. Perfect in mind and body, they could choose to control their thoughts, feelings, and actions. Thus they were free to grow as servants of Jehovah God, to fulfill the tremendous potential within them. Instead, they threw away that precious gift. By choosing to sin against Jehovah, they lost for themselves and their offspring the kind of life that Jehovah intended for them. (Gen. 3:16-19) At the same time, they inflicted on themselves and on us the terrible "disease" we have been discussing. Rightly, Jehovah condemned them. But for us, he holds out the hope of deliverance.—Ps. 103:10.

### What Our Deliverance Cost Jesus

<sup>6</sup> Jehovah knew that it would prove very costly to deliver the offspring of Adam and Eve. In the prophecy recorded at Genesis 3: 15, we learn something about the cost of deliverance. Jehovah would provide a "seed," a rescuer, who would one day destroy Satan, crushing him out of existence. However, that rescuer would suffer along the way, receiving a figurative wound in the heel. That sounds painful and debilitating, but what does it mean? Just what would Jehovah's Chosen One have to endure?

5. What has been the cost of sin to each of us?
6. 7. (a) How did Jehovah first show that our deliverance would prove costly? (b) What can we learn from the sacrifices offered up by Abel and by patriarchs who lived prior to the Law?

<sup>7</sup> In order to save mankind from sin, the rescuer would have to provide a means of atonement, a way of reconciling humans to God by undoing the effects of sin. What would that involve? There were early indications that a sacrifice would be required. When the first faithful human, Abel, offered animal sacrifices to Jehovah, he met with divine approval. Later, such God-fearing patriarchs as Noah, Abraham, Jacob, and Job offered similar sacrifices, which pleased God. (Gen. 4:4; 8:20, 21; 22:13; 31:54; Job 1:5) Centuries later, the Mosaic Law brought the matter of sacrifice into sharper focus.

<sup>8</sup> Among the most important sacrifices required by the Law were those offered on the annual Day of Atonement. On that day, the high priest carried out a series of symbolic actions. He offered sacrifices to Jehovah to provide for the atonement of sins—first those of the priestly class, then those of the nonpriestly tribes. The high priest entered the Most Holy compartment of the taberna-

8. What did the high priest do on the annual Day of Atonement?



*On Atonement Day,  
Israel's high priest became  
a living illustration of  
the Messiah*

cle or temple, where only he could go and only on this one day of the year. There he sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices before the ark of the covenant. Above that sacred chest, a bright, shining cloud sometimes appeared, representing the presence of Jehovah God.—Ex. 25:22; Lev. 16:1-30.

<sup>9</sup> The apostle Paul was inspired to reveal the meaning behind those symbolic actions. He showed that the high priest pictured the Messiah, Jesus Christ, while the offering of the sacrifices signified Christ's sacrificial death. (Heb. 9:11-14) That perfect sacrifice would provide real atonement for two groups of people—the priestly class of Christ's 144,000 spirit-anointed brothers and the "other sheep." (John 10:16) When the high priest entered the Most Holy, he foreshadowed Jesus' entry into heaven itself to present before Jehovah God the value of the ransom sacrifice.—Heb. 9:24, 25.

<sup>10</sup> Clearly, the deliverance of the offspring of Adam and Eve would be costly. The Messiah would have to sacrifice his life! The prophets of the Hebrew Scriptures presented this truth in vivid terms. For example, the prophet Daniel stated directly that "Messiah the Leader" would be "cut off," or executed, in order "to make atonement for error." (Dan. 9:24-26) Isaiah foretold that the Messiah would be rejected, persecuted, and executed, or pierced, to bear the sins of imperfect humans.—Isa. 53:4, 5, 7.

<sup>11</sup> Before he came to the earth, God's only-begotten Son was aware of what our deliverance would cost him. He would have

9. (a) On Atonement Day, whom did the high priest picture, and what did the sacrifices he offered signify? (b) What was represented by the high priest's entry into the Most Holy?

10. Bible prophecy showed that the Messiah would experience what?

11. In what ways did Jehovah's Son show willingness to sacrifice himself for our deliverance?

to suffer terribly and then be put to death. When his Father taught him those truths, did he shrink back or rebel? On the contrary, he submitted willingly to his Father's instruction. (Isa. 50:4-6) Likewise, while on earth, Jesus obediently carried out his Father's will. Why? He provided one answer in these words: "I love the Father." He provided another in these: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 14:31; 15:13) So our deliverance is due, in large part, to the love of Jehovah's Son. Though it cost him his perfect human life, he was glad to do it for the sake of our deliverance.

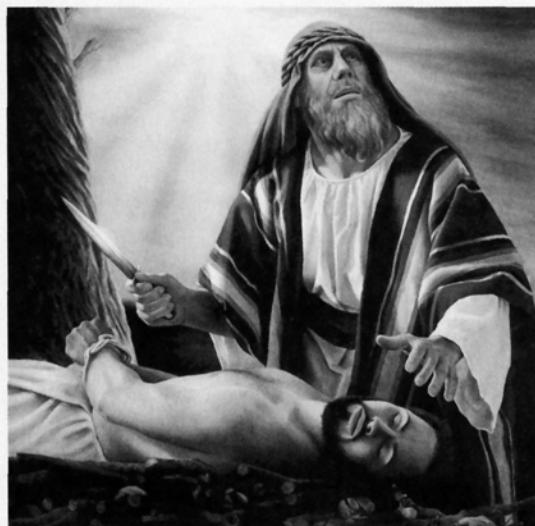
### What Our Deliverance Cost Jehovah

<sup>12</sup> Jesus was not the Originator or Purposer behind the ransom sacrifice. Rather, this means of deliverance was a key feature of Jehovah's will. The apostle Paul indicated that the altar at the temple, upon which the sacrifices were offered, represented Jehovah's will. (Heb. 10:10) So the deliverance we receive by means of Christ's sacrifice is something we owe first and foremost to Jehovah. (Luke 1:68) It is an expression of his perfect will and of his great love for humans.—*Read John 3:16.*

<sup>13</sup> What did it cost Jehovah to express his love for us in this way? It is difficult for us to fathom. However, there is a Bible account that can help us see the matter more clearly. Jehovah asked the faithful man Abraham to do something supremely difficult—to offer up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. Now, Abraham was a loving father. Jehovah spoke to him of Isaac as "your only son whom you so love." (Gen. 22:2) Still, Abraham saw that doing Je-

12. The ransom is an expression of whose will, and why did he provide it?

13, 14. How can Abraham's example help us appreciate what Jehovah has done in our behalf?



*Abraham's willingness to offer up his son teaches us much about Jehovah's far greater sacrifice*

hovah's will was even more important than his love for Isaac. Abraham went ahead and obeyed. However, Jehovah did not allow Abraham to do what He himself would do one day. God sent an angel to stop Abraham just before sacrificing his son. Abraham had been so determined to obey his God in this difficult test that he felt sure that his only hope of seeing the young man alive again would be by means of a resurrection. But he had complete faith that God would perform such a resurrection. Indeed, Paul said that Abraham did receive Isaac back by resurrection "in an illustrative way."—Heb. 11:19.

<sup>14</sup> Can you begin to imagine Abraham's pain as he prepared to offer up his son? In a sense, Abraham's experience helps to illustrate that of Jehovah in sacrificing the one he called "my Son, the beloved." (Matt. 3:17) Remember, though, that Jehovah's pain was likely more intense. He and his Son had enjoyed associating together for countless millions, perhaps even billions, of years. The Son worked joyously with the Father as his beloved "master worker" and as his

Spokesman, "the Word." (Prov. 8:22, 30, 31; John 1:1) What Jehovah endured as his Son was tormented, ridiculed, and then executed as a criminal is far more than we can know. Our deliverance cost Jehovah dearly! How, then, can we show that we value that deliverance?

### How Can You Show That You Value Deliverance?

<sup>15</sup> Jesus completed the great act of atonement after being resurrected to heaven. Reunited with his beloved Father, he presented to Him the value of his sacrifice. Great blessings followed. Complete forgiveness became available, first for the sins of Christ's anointed brothers, then for "the whole world's." Because of that sacrifice, today all who sincerely repent of their sins and become genuine followers of Christ can enjoy a clean standing before Jehovah God. (1 John 2:2) How do you fit in?

<sup>16</sup> Let us return to the illustration given at the outset. Suppose the doctor who finds the cure to the disease were to approach the patients in your ward with this offer: Any patient who accepts treatment and follows the prescribed regimen will without fail be cured. What if most of your fellow patients refused to follow the doctor's direction, arguing that it would be too much trouble to take the medicine or adhere to the prescribed regimen? Would you go along with them, even though you had convincing evidence that the cure really worked? Of course not! No doubt you would express thanks for the cure and then follow the doctor's instructions carefully, perhaps even telling others of your choice. In a far greater sense,

15. How did Jesus complete the great act of atonement, and what did this make possible?

16. How might we illustrate why we should appreciate the deliverance that Jehovah has made possible for us?

each of us should be eager to show Jehovah just how much we appreciate the deliverance that he has made possible through the ransom sacrifice of his Son.—*Read Romans 6:17, 18.*

<sup>17</sup> If we appreciate what Jehovah and his Son have done in order to deliver us from sin and death, we will show it. (1 John 5:3) We will fight against our tendency to sin. Never will we give in to the willful practice of sin and lead the hypocritical double life that often goes with it. Such a course would amount to saying that we do not value or appreciate the ransom at all. Rather, we will show our appreciation by working hard to stay clean in God's sight. (2 Pet. 3:14) We will show it by sharing with others our wonderful hope of deliverance, so that they too may have a clean standing with Jehovah and the hope for an eternal future. (1 Tim. 4:16) Surely Jehovah and his Son are worth every bit of the time and energy we can devote to praising them! (Mark 12:28-30) Think of it! We can look forward to the time when we will be fully cured of sin. We can live life as God meant it to be, in perfection, forever—all because of what Jehovah has done to deliver us!—Rom. 8:21.

17. In what ways can you show your appreciation for what Jehovah has done to deliver you?

### How Would You Answer?

- Why are you in urgent need of deliverance?
- How does Jesus' act of self-sacrifice affect you?
- How do you feel about Jehovah's gift of the ransom?
- What are you motivated to do in response to Jehovah's provisions for your deliverance?



# I FOUND MEANING IN LIFE

AS TOLD BY  
**GASPAR MARTÍNEZ**

*In some ways, mine is the simple story of a poor country boy who made good in the city. But you will see that the wealth I accumulated was not exactly what I had expected.*

I GREW up in a barren rural area during the 1930's in the Rioja region of northern Spain. At the age of ten, I had to leave school, but by then I had learned to read and write. Along with my six brothers and sisters, I spent my days in the fields taking care of the sheep or cultivating our meager plots of land.

Poverty led us to put great stock in material things. We became envious of those who had more than we did. Still, the bishop once remarked that ours was "the most religious village of his diocese." Little did he realize that, in time, many would abandon Catholicism.

## A Search for Something Better

I married Mercedes, a girl from the same village. Before long, we had a young son to care for. In 1957 we moved to the nearby city of Logroño, and eventually all my family did the same. I soon discovered that as an unskilled worker, I had few prospects of earning a decent wage. I wondered where to turn for guidance. I started a search in the local li-

brary, although I did not really know what to look for.

Later, I heard about a radio program that offered a Bible study course by correspondence. Soon after I completed it, some Evangelical Protestants contacted me. After a couple of visits to their place of worship, I could see rivalry among prominent members of the group. I did not return, concluding that all religions must be the same.

## The Scales Fall From My Eyes

In 1964 a young man called Eugenio visited our home. He was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, a religion I had never heard of before. But I was more than willing to talk about the Bible. I thought I had a good knowledge of the Scriptures. I responded to him using a few of the Bible texts I had learned in my correspondence course. Although I tried to defend certain Protestant doctrines, in my heart I did not really believe them.

After two long conversations, I had to admit that Eugenio handled the Word of God like an expert. It amazed me to see how he

could look up scriptures and reason on their application, though his regular schooling had been less than mine. Eugenio showed me from the Bible that we are living in the last days and that God's Kingdom will soon usher in a paradise earth. I was intrigued.—Ps. 37:11, 29; Isa. 9:6, 7; Matt. 6:9, 10.

I readily accepted a Bible study. Virtually everything I learned was new, and it touched my heart. A prospect opened up before me, one that offered something worth living for. My search had come to an end. Now my efforts to improve my social status seemed irrelevant, and my struggle to cope with work problems became of minor importance. Even sickness and death itself will be overcome.—Isa. 33:24; 35:5, 6; Rev. 21:4.

Right away I began to tell my relatives what I was learning, enthusiastically explaining to them that God promises to bring about a paradise earth where faithful humans can live forever.

### **My Family Embraces Bible Truth**

Soon, about a dozen of us decided to meet every Sunday afternoon in my uncle's home to discuss Bible promises. We spent two or three hours every week doing so. When Eugenio saw that such a large group of my relatives had an interest in the Bible, he arranged to give personal attention to each family.

I had other relatives in Durango, a small town some 80 miles away, where no Witnesses lived. So three months later, I took a couple of days' vacation to visit them in order to explain my newfound faith. On that occasion, about ten of us got together each evening, and I spoke to them until the early hours of the morning. All of them were delighted to listen. When my brief visit came to an end, I left them some Bibles and Bible literature. Thereafter, we kept in touch.

When the Witnesses arrived in Durango—where nobody else had preached before—they found 18 people eagerly waiting for a Bible study. The Witnesses were happy to arrange for each family to have one.

Until then, Mercedes had not proved receptive, more because of fear of man than a reluctance to accept Bible teachings. The work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Spain at the time, so she thought that the authorities would expel our two children from school and that we would all become outcasts. But when she saw that the whole family was embracing Bible truth, she too wanted to study.

Within two years, 40 members of my family became Witnesses and were baptized in symbol of their dedication to serve God. Yes, my family shared my goal and purpose in life. I felt I had achieved something truly worthwhile. We had been blessed with spiritual riches in abundance.

### **Life Got Richer as I Got Older**

For the next 20 years, I concentrated on bringing up our two boys and helping the local congregation. When Mercedes and I moved to Logroño, there were only about 20 Witnesses in that city of some 100,000 inhabitants. Before long, I received many responsibilities in the congregation.

Then, when I was 56 years of age, my company unexpectedly shut down the factory where I worked, and I found myself unemployed. I had always had a keen desire to be in the full-time ministry, so I took advantage of these new circumstances to become a pioneer. The pension that I received was meager, and living on it was not easy. Mercedes helped out by doing cleaning jobs. We were able to manage and never lacked the necessary things. I am still a pioneer, and she serves from time to time as an auxiliary



*Almost all of Brother Martínez' family who are in the truth*

pioneer, enjoying the preaching work very much.

A few years ago, Mercedes would regularly leave our magazines with a young woman named Merche who as a child had studied the Bible. Merche read our literature with interest, and Mercedes noticed that in her heart Merche still had appreciation for Bible truth. Finally, Merche accepted a Bible study and began to progress well. But Vicente, her husband, drank a lot and could not hold down a regular job. As a result, he did not support her financially; his alcohol abuse threatened to wreck their marriage.

My wife suggested to Merche that Vicente talk to me, and finally he did. After several visits, he accepted a Bible study. Vicente began to change, stopping his drinking for several days at a time. Then his periods of abstinence lasted for a week or more. Eventually, he quit drinking alcohol altogether. His countenance improved noticeably, and his family became united. His whole family,

including his wife and daughter, give excellent support to the small congregation in the Canary Islands, where they now live.

### **Looking Back on a Meaningful Life**

Although some of my relatives who learned Bible teachings years ago have now died, our extended family has continued to grow, and God has richly blessed us. (Prov. 10: 22) How satisfying it is to see that practically all of those who began to study the Bible 40 years ago—along with their children and grandchildren—have continued to serve Jehovah faithfully!

I now have scores of fleshly relatives who are Witnesses, many of whom serve as elders, ministerial servants, and pioneers. My oldest son and his wife serve at the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Madrid, Spain. When I became a Witness, there were about 3,000 of us in Spain. Now there are over 100,000. I thoroughly enjoy the full-time ministry, and I am very grateful to God for a wonderful life in his service. Despite having had little formal education, I am able to serve from time to time as a substitute circuit overseer.

A few years ago, I discovered that the village where I grew up was practically deserted. Poverty eventually forced all the inhabitants to abandon their fields and their homes in search of a better life. Happily, a goodly number of those emigrants—including me—have found spiritual treasures. We learned that life does have meaning and that serving Jehovah brings the greatest joy imaginable.