

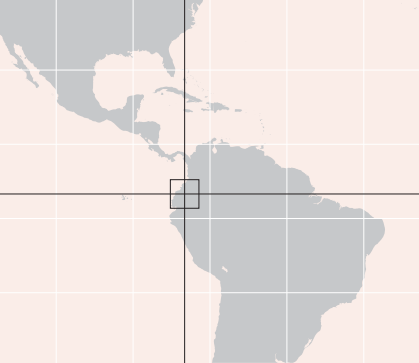
MAY 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JULY 3-30, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
ECUADOR

A regular pioneer shares the Bible's message in the Quichua (Imbabura) language with a vendor at a crafts market in the city of Otavalo in northern Ecuador.

PUBLISHERS
90,110

BIBLE STUDIES
148,637

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2016)
274,593

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Helping “Foreign Residents” to “Serve Jehovah With Rejoicing”

“Jehovah is protecting the foreign residents.”—PS. 146:9.

“WHEN civil war started in Burundi, our family was at an assembly,” relates a brother named Lije. “We could see people running, shooting. My parents and 11 of us siblings fled for our lives with only the clothes on our backs. Some of my family finally made it to a refugee camp in Malawi, a journey of over 1,000 miles (1,600 km). The rest of us were scattered.”

² Worldwide, refugees who have fled their homes because of war or persecution now number over 65,000,000—the highest ever recorded.* Among these are thousands of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Many have lost loved ones and nearly all their possessions. What further challenges have some faced? How can we help these brothers and sisters to “serve Jehovah with rejoicing” despite their trials? (Ps. 100:2) And how

* In this article, we use the term “refugees” to denote those who have been displaced—whether across national borders or within their own country—by armed conflict, persecution, or disaster. According to the UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), today “1 in every 113 people” worldwide is “forcibly displaced.”

- 1, 2. (a) What trials do some of our brothers and sisters face?
- (b) What questions arise?

SONGS: 17, 109

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What trials have many refugees experienced?

How can we help to fill the greatest needs of refugees?

What should we keep in mind when preaching to refugees?

can we effectively share the good news with refugees who do not yet know Jehovah?

THE LIFE OF A REFUGEE

³ After Jehovah's angel warned Joseph that King Herod intended to kill Jesus, young Jesus and his parents became refugees in Egypt. They remained there until Herod died. (Matt. 2:13, 14, 19-21) Decades later, Jesus' early disciples "were scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria" because of persecution. (Acts 8:1) Jesus had foreseen that many of his followers would be forced from their homes. He said: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." (Matt. 10:23) Fleeing for any reason is seldom easy.

⁴ Refugees may face danger when fleeing or when living in a refugee camp. "We walked for weeks, passing hundreds of dead bodies," recalls Gad, Lije's younger brother. "I was 12 years old. My feet were so swollen that I told my family to go on without me. My father—not about to abandon me to the rebel forces—carried me. We survived day by day, praying to Jehovah and trusting in him, sometimes eating only mangoes that were growing along the way."—Phil. 4:12, 13.

⁵ Most of Lije's family eventually spent years in United Nations refugee camps. Yet, they were not safe there. Lije, now a circuit overseer, comments: "Most people had no work. They gossiped, drank, gambled, stole, and were immoral." To resist the bad influences, Witnesses in the camps needed to stay

fully involved in congregation activities. (Heb. 6:11, 12; 10:24, 25) To stay spiritually healthy, they used their time productively, many by pioneering. They kept a positive attitude by recalling that, like Israel's trek in the wilderness, their stay in the camp would eventually come to an end.—2 Cor. 4:18.

SHOWING LOVE TO REFUGEES

⁶ "The love of God" compels us to show love to one another, especially in dire situations. **(Read 1 John 3:17, 18.)** When famine threatened Judean Christians in the first century, the congregation organized help for them. (Acts 11:28, 29) The apostles Paul and Peter also exhorted Christians to be hospitable to one another. (Rom. 12:13; 1 Pet. 4:9) If Christians are to welcome visiting brothers, how much more should they welcome fellow believers whose lives are in danger or who have been persecuted for their faith!—**Read Proverbs 3:27.***

⁷ Recently, thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses—men, women, and children—had to flee conflict and persecution in eastern Ukraine. Tragically, some were killed. But most of them were taken in by their spiritual brothers elsewhere in Ukraine, and many others were accommodated by fellow Witnesses in Russia. In both countries, they remain politically neutral, being "no part of the world," and continue zealously "declaring the good news of the word."—John 15:19; Acts 8:4.

* See the article "Do Not Forget Kindness to Strangers" in *The Watchtower* of October 2016, pp. 8-12.

3. How did Jesus and many of his disciples become refugees?

4, 5. What dangers exist when refugees (a) are fleeing? (b) are living in a camp?

6, 7. (a) How does "the love of God" move Christians to act toward brothers in need? (b) Cite an example.

HELPING REFUGEES TO STRENGTHEN THEIR FAITH

⁸ While some people are displaced within their own country, many others are thrust into a totally unfamiliar environment in a new land. Governments may provide some food, clothing, and shelter, but familiar foods may be unavailable. Refugees from warm lands may encounter cold weather for the first time and may not know how to dress for it. If they come from a rural area, they may be at a loss about how to use modern household appliances.

⁹ Some governments have programs to help refugees adjust to their new circumstances. However, often within months, refugees may be expected to support themselves. The transition can be overwhelming. Imagine trying to learn a new language and to adapt to new laws and expectations regarding manners, punctuality, taxes, bill paying, school attendance, and child discipline—all at once! Can you patiently and respectfully help brothers and sisters who face such challenges?—Phil. 2:3, 4.

¹⁰ Further, authorities have at times made it difficult for our brothers who are refugees to contact the congregation. Some agencies have threatened to cut off assistance or deny our brothers asylum if they refuse to accept employment that requires them to miss meetings. Frightened and vulnerable, a few brothers have given in to such pressures. Therefore, it is urgent to meet our refugee brothers as soon as possible af-

8, 9. (a) What challenges may refugees face in a new land? (b) Why do they need our patient help?

10. How can we strengthen the faith of arriving refugees? (See opening picture.)

ter their arrival. They need to see that we care about them. Our compassion and practical help can strengthen their faith.—Prov. 12:25; 17:17.

GIVING REFUGEES PRACTICAL HELP

¹¹ At first, we may need to supplement our brothers' food, clothing, or other basic needs.* Even small gestures, like giving a brother a necktie, mean a lot. And when refugees show gratitude, never demanding anything, they help their hosts to experience the joy of giving. Granted, living indefinitely on others' generosity may erode the self-respect of the refugees and may damage their relationships with other brothers. (2 Thess. 3:7-10) But they do need practical help.

¹² Giving refugees practical help requires, not a lot of money, but mainly our time and concern. It may be as simple as showing them how to use public transportation, how to shop for healthful but inexpensive foods, or how to obtain tools or equipment—such as a sewing machine or a lawn mower—in order to earn some income. More important, you can help them to become fully involved in their new congregation. If possible, offer them rides to meetings. Also explain how they might approach people with the Kingdom message in your territory. Take the refugee

* As soon as possible after a refugee arrives, elders should follow the direction in *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*, chapter 8, paragraph 30. Elders can contact congregations in other lands by sending correspondence to their own branch using jw.org. In the meantime, they can ask discreet questions about a refugee's congregation and ministry to discern his spiritual condition.

11. (a) What do refugees initially need? (b) How can refugees show gratitude?

12, 13. (a) How can we give refugees practical help? (b) Cite an example.



How can we help our brothers and sisters who are refugees? (See paragraphs 11-13)

brothers and sisters along with you in the ministry.

¹³ When four adolescent refugees arrived in one congregation, various elders taught them to drive, type, and write résumés, as well as to schedule their time to serve Jehovah fully. (Gal. 6:10) Soon, all four became pioneers. That guidance, along with their own efforts to pursue spiritual goals, helped them to blossom and to avoid being swallowed up by Satan’s system.

¹⁴ Like all other Christians, refugees need to resist the temptation and pressure to compromise their relationship with Jehovah in order to obtain material things.* Lije, quoted earlier, and his siblings remember the lessons of faith their father taught them even as they were fleeing. “One by one, he threw away the few nonessential belongings we carried. Finally, he held up the empty

* See the articles “No One Can Serve Two Masters” and “Be of Good Courage—Jehovah Is Your Helper!” in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2014, pp. 17-26.

14. (a) What temptation do refugees need to resist? (b) Cite an example.

bag and said with a smile: ‘You see? This is all you need!’”—**Read 1 Timothy 6:8.**

CARING FOR THE GREATEST NEEDS OF REFUGEES

¹⁵ More than material assistance, refugees need spiritual and emotional support. (Matt. 4:4) Elders can help by obtaining literature in the language of the refugees and by helping them contact brothers who speak their language. Many refugees have been torn away from their tight-knit extended families, communities, and congregations. They need to sense Jehovah’s love and compassion among their fellow Christians. Otherwise, they may be drawn to unbelieving relatives or compatriots who can relate to their culture and experiences. (1 Cor. 15:33) By making them feel fully accepted in the congregation, we have the privilege to share with Jehovah in “protecting the foreign residents.”—Ps. 146:9.

¹⁶ As with young Jesus and his family, refugees may not have the op-

15, 16. How can we support refugees (a) spiritually? (b) emotionally?

tion of returning to their homeland as long as their oppressors remain in power. Further, as notes Lije, “many parents who saw family members raped and murdered cannot bear to bring their children back to where those tragedies occurred.” To help those who have experienced such trauma, brothers in lands receiving refugees need to have “fellow feeling, brotherly affection, tender compassion, and humility.” (1 Pet. 3:8) Persecution has caused some refugees to become withdrawn, and they may feel ashamed to talk about their suffering, especially in the presence of their children. Ask yourself, ‘If I were in their position, how would I like to be treated?’—Matt. 7:12.

PREACHING TO NON-WITNESS REFUGEES

¹⁷ Many of today’s refugees come from countries where our preaching work is restricted. Thanks to zealous Witnesses in the lands receiving refugees, thousands of refugees are hearing “the word of the Kingdom” for the first time. (Matt. 13:19, 23) Many who are “loaded down” are finding spiritual refreshment at our meetings and quickly acknowledge: “God is really among you.”—Matt. 11:28-30; 1 Cor. 14:25.

¹⁸ Those who preach to refugees need to be “cautious” and even “shrewd.” (Matt. 10:16; Prov. 22:3) Listen patiently to their concerns, but do not discuss politics. Follow directions from the branch office and from local authorities; never put yourself or others at risk.

17. How does preaching to refugees bring them relief?

18, 19. How can we show wisdom when preaching to refugees?

Learn and respect refugees’ religious and cultural sensitivities. For instance, people from some lands have strong feelings about proper dress for women. Therefore, when preaching to refugees, dress so as not to cause needless offense.

¹⁹ Like the neighborly Samaritan in Jesus’ illustration, we want to help suffering people, including those who are not Witnesses. (Luke 10:33-37) The best way to do so is by sharing the good news with them. “It is important to make clear right away that we are Jehovah’s Witnesses and that our primary mission is to help them spiritually, not materially,” notes an elder who has helped many refugees. “Otherwise, some may associate with us only for personal advantage.”

JOYFUL RESULTS

²⁰ Showing Christian love to “foreign residents” brings good results. A Christian sister related that her family fled the persecution in Eritrea. After four of her children made an exhausting eight-day journey across the desert, they arrived in Sudan. She said: “The brothers there treated them like close relatives, providing food, clothes, shelter, and transportation. Who else would welcome strangers into their home just because they worship the same God? Only Jehovah’s Witnesses!” —**Read John 13:35.**

²¹ What about the many children who arrive with their parents, both refugees and other immigrants? In the following article, we will consider how all of us can help them to serve Jehovah joyfully.

20, 21. (a) What good comes from showing refugees Christian love? (b) What will we consider in the following article?



Helping the Children of “Foreign Residents”

“No greater joy do I have than this: that I should hear that my children go on walking in the truth.”—3 JOHN 4.

SONGS: 134, 133

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can parents set a good example for their children?

How can family heads decide which language congregation the family will attend?

How can others help immigrant parents and their children?

“FROM infancy, I spoke my immigrant parents’ language at home and in the congregation,” relates Joshua. “But after I started school, I began to prefer the local language. Within a few years, the shift was complete. I couldn’t understand the meetings, and I didn’t identify with my parents’ culture.” Joshua’s experience is not uncommon.

² Today, more than 240,000,000 people live outside the land of their birth. If you are an immigrant parent, how can you give your children the best possible opportunity to become spiritual children who “go on walking in the truth”? (3 John 4) And how can others help?

PARENTS, SET A GOOD EXAMPLE

³ Parents, your example is essential to start your children on the path to endless life. When your children see you “seeking first the Kingdom,” they learn to depend on Jehovah for their daily needs. (Matt. 6:33, 34) So live modestly. Sacrifice

- 1, 2. (a) What problem do many immigrant children experience?
(b) What questions will this article discuss?
- 3, 4. (a) How can parents set a good example for their children?
(b) What should parents not expect of their children?

material things for spiritual benefits—not the other way around. Strive to stay out of debt. Seek “treasure in heaven”—Jehovah’s approval—and not riches or “the glory of men.”—**Read Mark 10:21, 22; John 12:43.**

⁴ Never get so busy that you do not have time for your children. Let them know that you are proud of them when they decide to put Jehovah first instead of seeking prestige or riches—for themselves or for you. Avoid the unchristian view that children should provide their parents with a life of ease. Remember, “children are not expected to save up for their parents, but the parents for their children.”—2 Cor. 12:14.

PARENTS, BRIDGE THE LANGUAGE BARRIER

⁵ As foretold, people “out of all the languages of the nations” are flocking to Jehovah’s organization. (Zech. 8:23) But a language barrier can make it difficult for you to teach your children the truth. Your children are the most important Bible students you will ever have, and their “coming to know” Jehovah means their eternal life. (John 17:3) In order for your children to learn Jehovah’s teachings, you must “speak of them” on all appropriate occasions.—**Read Deuteronomy 6:6, 7.**

⁶ Your children will likely learn the local language at school and in their environment, but they learn your language primarily by *frequently* interacting with you in your language. Besides enabling your children to have heart-

to-heart conversations with you, knowing your language gives them other advantages. Being bilingual sharpens your children’s thinking ability and enhances their social skills. It may also open opportunities for them to expand their ministry. “Being in a foreign-language congregation has been fun,” says Carolina, whose parents are immigrants. “And it’s cool to be helping where there is a greater need.”

⁷ Yet, as children of immigrants assimilate the local culture and language, some of them may lose much of their desire and even their ability to communicate in their parents’ mother tongue. Parents, if that describes your children, can you learn at least some of the local language? You will be in a much better position to raise your children as Christians if you understand their conversations, entertainment, and schoolwork and if you can communicate directly with their teachers. Granted, learning a new language takes time, effort, and humility. But if your child somehow became deaf, would you not try to learn sign language in order to communicate with him? A child who communicates best in another spoken language deserves the same concern, would you not agree?*

⁸ Realistically, it may not be possible for some immigrant parents to become fluent in their children’s new language. The resulting barrier may make it hard for parents to impart to their children a

* See the article “You Can Learn Another Language!” in *Awake!* of March 2007, pp. 10-12.

5. Why must parents speak with their children about Jehovah?

6. How may your children benefit from learning your language? (See opening picture.)

7. What can you do if there is a language barrier in your family?

8. How can you help your children if your language ability is limited?

deep knowledge of “the holy writings.” (2 Tim. 3:15) If that is your situation, you can still help your children to come to know and love Jehovah. “Our single mom’s grasp of the language we understood best was limited, and my sisters and I didn’t speak her language very well,” recalls an elder named Shan. “But when we saw her studying, praying, and doing her best to conduct family worship every week, we understood that getting to know Jehovah was very important.”

⁹ Some children may need to learn about Jehovah in two languages—their school language and the language that is spoken at home. To that end, some parents make use of printed literature, audio recordings, and videos in both languages. Clearly, immigrant parents must devote more time and show more initiative in order to help their children develop a strong relationship with Jehovah.

TO WHICH LANGUAGE CONGREGATION SHOULD YOU BELONG?

¹⁰ When “foreign residents” live far from other Witnesses who speak their language, they need to associate with a local-language congregation. (Ps. 146:9) But if there is a congregation nearby that uses your mother tongue, the question arises: Which language congregation is best for your family? After careful thought and prayer and consultation with his mate and children, a family head must decide. (1 Cor. 11:3) What factors will the family head take into consideration? What principles apply? Let us consider some.

9. How can parents help children who may need to study in two languages?

10. (a) Who must decide which language congregation to attend? (b) What should he do before making a decision?

¹¹ Parents must evaluate their children’s needs realistically. Of course—regardless of language—to gain a firm grasp of the truth, a child needs much more than just a few hours of spiritual education each week at meetings. But consider this: At meetings conducted in the language they understand best, children may absorb instruction simply by being present, perhaps learning more than their parents realize. That may not be the case when children do not fully understand the language. (**Read 1 Corinthians 14:9, 11.**) And a child’s native language will not necessarily remain the language of his mind or even of his heart. In fact, some children can learn to give comments, presentations, and talks in their parents’ language without the words really coming from their heart.

¹² Furthermore, a child’s heart is influenced by more than just language. That was the case with Joshua, quoted at the outset. As his sister, Esther, notes, “to young children, their parents’ language, culture, and religion come bundled together.” If children do not identify with their parents’ culture, they may resist learning their parents’ language—and their faith. What can immigrant parents do?

¹³ Christian parents put their children’s spiritual well-being ahead of personal preferences. (1 Cor. 10:24) Joshua and Esther’s father, Samuel, relates: “My wife and I observed our children to see

11, 12. (a) How does language affect what a child absorbs at meetings? (b) Why do some children resist learning their parents’ language?

13, 14. (a) Why did one immigrant couple move their family to a local-language congregation? (b) How did the parents stay spiritually strong?

in which language they thrived spiritually, and we prayed for wisdom. The answer was not what we personally found convenient. But when we saw that they were getting little benefit from the meetings in our language, we decided to move to the local-language congregation. Together, we regularly attended meetings and shared in the ministry. We also invited local friends to join us for meals and excursions. All of this helped our children to get to know the brothers and to get to know Jehovah, not only as their God but also as their Father and Friend. We considered this to be much more important than their mastering our language.”

¹⁴ Samuel adds: “To keep ourselves spiritually strong, my wife and I also attended meetings in *our* language. Life was very busy, and we were tired. But we thank Jehovah for blessing our efforts and sacrifices. Our three children are all serving Jehovah in the full-time ministry.”

WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO

¹⁵ Adult children may come to realize that they could better serve Jehovah in a congregation that uses the language that they understand best. If so, their parents need not feel that their children are rejecting *them*. “I knew the basics of my parents’ language, but the language spoken at the meetings was over my head,” recalls Kristina. “When I was 12, I attended a convention in my school language. For the first time, I understood that what I was hearing was the truth! Another turning point came when

15. Why did a sister named Kristina feel that she could do better in a local-language congregation?

I began to pray in my school language. I could speak to Jehovah from my heart!” (Acts 2:11, 41) When she reached adulthood, Kristina discussed the matter with her parents and decided to move to a local-language congregation. She recalls: “Learning about Jehovah in my school language moved me to action.” Before long, Kristina became a joyful regular pioneer.

¹⁶ Young people, do you think that you would prefer being part of a local-language congregation? If so, ask yourself why. Would moving to such a congregation help you draw closer to Jehovah? (Jas. 4:8) Or might you want to move because you expect to have less supervision or less work? “When my siblings and I got into our teens, we wanted to switch to the local-language congregation,” says Nadia, who now serves at Bethel. But her parents knew that such a move would not be in their children’s best spiritual interest. “Now we’re grateful that our parents worked hard to teach us their language and kept us in the foreign-language congregation. It has enriched our lives and broadened our opportunities to help others get to know Jehovah.”

HOW OTHERS CAN HELP

¹⁷ Jehovah has assigned *parents*—not grandparents or anyone else—the privilege of raising their children in the truth. **(Read Proverbs 1:8; 31:10, 27, 28.)** Still, parents who do not know the local language may need help to reach their children’s heart. Arranging for such help

16. Why is a sister named Nadia glad she stayed in the foreign-language congregation?

17. (a) Whom has Jehovah assigned to raise children? (b) How can parents get help in teaching their children the truth?



Both children and parents benefit from association with the congregation (See paragraphs 18, 19)

need not mean abdicating their spiritual responsibility; rather, it can be part of bringing up their children “in the discipline and admonition of Jehovah.” (Eph. 6:4) For example, parents may ask elders in the congregation for suggestions on conducting family worship and for help in providing good association for their children.

¹⁸ For instance, parents may invite other families to join them in family worship from time to time. Further, many young people thrive under the influence of spiritually balanced companions who may, for example, accompany them in the ministry and share with them in wholesome recreation. (Prov. 27:17) “I well remember the brothers who took me under their wing,” recalls Shan, quoted earlier. “When they helped me with student talk assignments for the meeting, I always learned more. And I enjoyed the leisure activities we shared in as a group.”

¹⁹ Of course, those whom the parents choose to help their children should al-

ways build up the young ones’ respect for their parents, speaking positively about them, not taking over their responsibility. Moreover, those who help should avoid any conduct that could be misinterpreted by some inside or outside the congregation as morally questionable. (1 Pet. 2:12) Parents must not merely turn their children over to others for spiritual training. They must monitor the help given by companions and continue to teach their children themselves.

²⁰ Parents, pray to Jehovah for help, and try your best. (**Read 2 Chronicles 15:7.**) Put your child’s friendship with Jehovah ahead of your own interests. Do whatever you can to ensure that God’s Word reaches your child’s heart. Never stop believing that your child can become a fine servant of Jehovah. When your children follow God’s Word and your good example, you will feel as the apostle John did about his spiritual children: “No greater joy do I have than this: that I should hear that my children go on walking in the truth.”—3 John 4.

18, 19. (a) How can spiritually-minded brothers and sisters benefit young ones? (b) What must parents continue to do?

20. How can parents help their children to become fine servants of Jehovah?



Being Deaf Has Not Held Me Back From Teaching Others

AS TOLD BY WALTER MARKIN

I was baptized in 1941 at the age of 12. But it wasn't until 1946 that I really understood Bible truth. How did this come to be? Let me tell you my story.

IN THE 1910's my parents immigrated to Canada from Tbilisi, Georgia, and settled in a small prairie farmhouse near Pelly, Saskatchewan, in western Canada. I was born in 1928, the youngest of six children. Father died six months before I was born, and Mother died while I was still an infant. Lucy, my oldest sister, died not much later, at the age of 17. Thereafter, my uncle Nick took me and my siblings into his care.

One day when I was a toddler, my family saw me pulling at the tail of one of the farm horses, a stallion. Horrified that the horse might kick me, they screamed at me to stop—but I did not react. My back was turned toward them, and I did not hear their screams. Happily, I was not harmed, but that was the day my family discovered that I was deaf.

A family friend suggested that I be educated with other deaf children, so Uncle Nick enrolled me in the school for the deaf located in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I was moved to a location several hours away from my family, and since I was only five years old, I was terrified. I could visit my family only on holidays and during summer vacations. Eventually, I learned sign language and had fun playing with the other children.

LEARNING BIBLE TRUTH

In 1939, my oldest surviving sister, Marion, married Bill Danylchuck, and they took my sister Frances and me into their care. They were the first in my family to have contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. During my summer vacations, they shared with me to the best of their ability what they were learning from the Bible. To be honest,



With a group of deaf people
at a convention in Cleveland,
Ohio, in 1946

Street witnessing in the early 1950's



communicating with them was not easy, since they did not know sign language. But they evidently saw in me a sincere love for spiritual things. I understood that there was a connection between what they were doing and what the Bible says, so I went with them as they preached. Before long, I wanted to get baptized, and on September 5, 1941, Bill baptized me in a steel drum filled with water pumped out from a well. The water was very, very cold!

In 1946 when I returned home for the summer, we attended a convention in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A. On the first day of the convention, my sisters took turns writing notes in order to help me follow the program. On the second day, however, I was thrilled to find out that a deaf group with a sign-language interpreter was there. Finally, I could enjoy the program, and it was wonderful at last to understand Bible truth clearly!

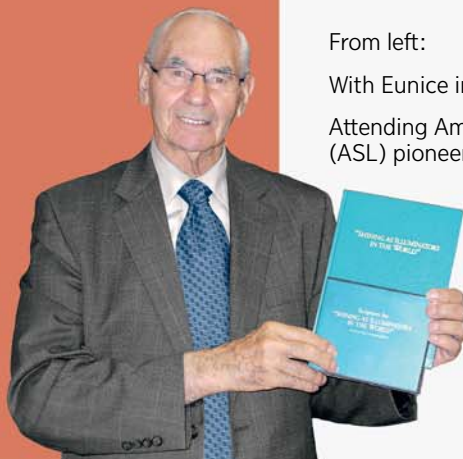
TEACHING THE TRUTH

At that time, World War II had just ended and nationalism was running high. I returned from the convention determined to take my stand for my faith in school. So I stopped participating in the flag salute and in the national anthem. I also withdrew from taking part in holiday celebrations

and from attending mandatory church services. The school staff was not happy and tried using intimidation and lies to make me change my mind. All of this caused quite a stir among my school-mates, but it created opportunities for me to give a witness. Such fellow students as Larry Androssoff, Norman Dittrick, and Emil Schneider eventually accepted the truth, and they are serving Jehovah loyally to this day.

When visiting other cities, I have always made it a point to witness to the deaf. For example, in Montreal at a deaf club, I witnessed to Eddie Tager, a young man who was part of a gang. Until his death last year, he belonged to the sign-language congregation in Laval, Quebec. I also met young Juan Ardanez who like the Bereans eagerly did research to confirm the truthfulness of the Bible message. (Acts 17:10, 11) He too came in the truth and served faithfully as an elder in Ottawa, Ontario, up until his death.

In 1950, I moved to Vancouver. Although I love to preach to the deaf, I will never forget an experience I had with a hearing woman named Chris Spicer whom I witnessed to on the street. She accepted a magazine subscription and wanted me to meet her husband, Gary. So I visited their home, and we had a lengthy discussion using written



From left:

With Eunice in 1960 and in 1989

Attending American Sign Language (ASL) pioneer school at age 79

notes. That was the only contact we had until a few years later when, to my surprise, they spotted me in a crowd at a convention in Toronto, Ontario. Gary was to be baptized that very day. That wonderful experience reminded me of the importance to keep preaching because we never know where or when the truth will take root.

Later, I moved back to Saskatoon. There I met a mother who asked me to study the Bible with her deaf twin daughters, Jean and Joan Rothenberger, who were students at the same school for the deaf that I once attended. Before long, the two girls shared with their classmates what they were learning. Eventually, five from their class became Jehovah's Witnesses. One was Eunice Colin. I had first met Eunice at that school for the deaf when I was in my senior year. At that time, she gave me a piece of candy and asked if we could be friends. She would later become a very important part of my life—she became my wife!

When Eunice's mother found out that she was studying the Bible, she had the school principal try to dissuade her. He even confiscated her study materials. However, Eunice was determined to keep Jehovah her main focus. When she wanted to get baptized, her parents told her, "Become one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and you will have to

leave our home!" At the age of 17, Eunice did leave home, and a local Witness family kindly took her into their care. She continued her study and later got baptized. When we got married in 1960, her parents did not come to our wedding. However, as the years passed, they came to respect us because of our beliefs and the way we raised our children.

My son Nicholas and his wife, Deborah, serve at London Bethel



JEHOVAH HAS CARED FOR ME

As deaf parents, we raised seven hearing boys. This was challenging, but we made sure that they knew sign language so that we could communicate well and teach them the truth. Brothers and sisters in the congregation were of great help. For example, a parent wrote us a note informing us that one of our boys was saying bad words in the Kingdom Hall. We were able to take care of the matter then and there. Four of my sons—James, Jerry, Nicholas, and Steven—are serving Jehovah faithfully with their wives and families. All four sons serve as elders. In addition, Nicholas and his wife, Deborah, help with sign-language translation in the Britain branch while Steven and his wife, Shannan, are part of the sign-language translation team in the United States branch.

A month before our 40th wedding anniversary, Eunice lost her battle with cancer. She was very brave throughout that difficult time. Her faith in the resurrection kept her strong. I long for the day when I will see her again.

In February of 2012, I fell and broke my hip, and it became clear that I would need help. So I moved in with one of my sons and his wife. We are now part of the Calgary Sign-Language Congre-

gation, where I continue to serve as an elder. Actually, this is the very first time that I have been part of a sign-language congregation. Imagine that! Being in an English congregation all those years—since 1946—how did I fare spiritually? Jehovah has lived up to his promise to care for fatherless children. (Ps. 10:14) I am grateful for the collective effort of all who have been willing to write notes, learn sign language, and help interpret for me as best they could.

To be honest, there have been times when I felt frustrated and wanted to give up because I could not understand what was being said or because it seemed as if the needs of the deaf were not understood. However, during those moments, I thought of Peter's words to Jesus: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life." (John 6:66-68) Like many other deaf brothers and sisters from my generation, I have learned to be patient. I have learned to wait on Jehovah and his organization, and how I have benefited from doing so! Now I have a wealth of spiritual food in my own language, and I can enjoy association at the meetings and conventions in ASL. I have, indeed, had a happy and rewarding life in service to Jehovah, our great God.

My sons James, Jerry, and Steven along with their wives support the preaching work in sign language in various ways



Faye and James



Jerry and Evelyn



Shannan and Steven



Do Not Let Your Love Grow Cold

“Because of the increasing of lawlessness, the love of the greater number will grow cold.”—MATT. 24:12.

ONE facet of the sign that Jesus gave regarding “the conclusion of the system of things” was that “the love of the greater number [would] grow cold.” (Matt. 24:3, 12) In the first century, the Jews, who claimed to be God’s people, allowed their love for God to grow cold.

² On the other hand, most Christians at that time kept busy “declaring the good news about the Christ” and showing love for God, for fellow Christians, and for unbelievers. (Acts 2: 44-47; 5:42) Nevertheless, some of Jesus’ followers in the first century did allow their love to grow cold.

³ Speaking to first-century Christians living in Ephesus, the resurrected Jesus Christ said: “I hold this against you, that you have left the love you had at first.” (Rev. 2:4) What may have been one reason for this? These early disciples of Christ

1, 2. (a) To whom did Jesus’ words at Matthew 24:12 initially apply? (b) How does the book of Acts indicate that most early Christians kept showing love? (See opening picture.)

3. What may have caused the love of some Christians to grow cold?

SONGS: 38, 128

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How can we keep our love for Jehovah strong?

How can we deepen our love for Bible truth?

Why is it important to have affection for our brothers?

may have been influenced by the fleshly-minded world. (Eph. 2:2, 3) Like many cities today, first-century Ephesus was filled with vice. It was a fabulously wealthy city in which people placed much emphasis on luxuries, leisure, and comfortable living. Selfish pleasures evidently crowded out unselfish love. In addition, brazen conduct and gross immorality were rampant.

⁴ Jesus' prophecy about diminishing love extends to our day. People today have less and less love for God. Millions have turned their backs on him and look to human institutions to solve mankind's problems. Hence, among people who do not worship Jehovah God, love continues to grow cold. Still, as conditions in the first-century congregation in Ephesus illustrate, true Christians today could become complacent and allow *their* love to falter. We will now consider three areas in which our love could be tested: (1) Love for Jehovah, (2) love for Bible truth, (3) and love for our brothers.

LOVE FOR JEHOVAH

⁵ Earlier on the same day that Jesus warned about the loss of love, he emphasized the most important love of all. He said: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment." (Matt. 22:37, 38) Indeed, having deep love for God helps us to obey Jehovah's commandments, to endure, and to hate what is bad. **(Read**

4. (a) In what ways has love grown cold in our day? (b) In what three areas could our love be tested?

5. Why must we have love for God?

Psalm 97:10.) However, Satan and his world strive to undermine our love for God.

⁶ The world around us has a distorted view of love. Rather than direct love to the Creator, people are "lovers of themselves." (2 Tim. 3:2) This world ruled by Satan fosters "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16) The apostle Paul warned fellow Christians against pleasing the flesh, saying: "Setting the mind on the flesh means death . . . because setting the mind on the flesh means enmity with God." (Rom. 8:6, 7) Indeed, those who have spent their lives on pursuing material things or gratifying sexual desires have ended up disappointed and deeply hurt.—1 Cor. 6:18; 1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

⁷ In some lands, outspoken atheists, agnostics, and evolutionists promote ideas designed to erode not just love for God but also belief in him. They have convinced many that a person must be either naive or unintelligent to believe in a Creator. At the same time, scientists are revered, which draws the attention of the people away from our Creator. (Rom. 1:25) If we give ear to such teachings, we could drift away from Jehovah, and our love could grow cold.—Heb. 3:12.

⁸ Succumbing to discouragement can also weaken our faith and cause our love for God to grow cold. In this wicked sys-

6. What has resulted from the loss of love for God?

7. What dangers are faced by Christ's followers today?

8. (a) Many of Jehovah's people face what discouraging circumstances? (b) What assurance do we find in Psalm 136?

tem controlled by Satan, all of us at times face discouraging circumstances. (1 John 5:19) Perhaps we are presently confronted with problems caused by old age, poor health, or economic pressures. Or we may be struggling with feelings of inadequacy, with unfulfilled expectations, or with personal failings. Yet, we should never allow such circumstances or feelings to convince us that Jehovah has left us. Instead, we should meditate on reassuring words about Jehovah's enduring love for us. We find such words at Psalm 136:23, which states: "He remembered us when we were low, for his loyal love endures forever." Indeed, Jehovah's loyal love for his servants is constant. Therefore, we can be sure that he hears our "pleas for help" and responds to them.—Ps. 116:1; 136:24-26.

⁹ Like the psalmist, Paul found strength in reflecting on Jehovah's constant support. Paul wrote: "Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?" (Heb. 13:6) That firm confidence in Jehovah's loving care helped Paul to grapple with life's problems. He did not allow negative circumstances to weigh him down. In fact, while he was a prisoner, Paul wrote several encouraging letters. (Eph. 4:1; Phil. 1:7; Philem. 1) Yes, even when he was sorely tried, Paul maintained his love for God. What gave him the strength to do so? He kept leaning on "the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our trials." (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) How can we imitate Paul's example and keep our love for Jehovah strong?

9. What gave Paul the strength to maintain his love for God?

¹⁰ One principal way to keep our love for Jehovah strong is stated by Paul himself. He wrote to fellow believers: "Pray constantly." Later he wrote: "Persevere in prayer." (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12) Communication through prayer is the foundation of a close relationship with God. (Ps. 86:3) When we take sufficient time to express to Jehovah our deepest thoughts and innermost feelings, we cannot help but be drawn closer to our heavenly Father, the "Hearer of prayer." (Ps. 65:2) In addition, when we discern that Jehovah answers our prayers, our love for him grows. We come to realize ever more that "Jehovah is near to all those calling on him." (Ps. 145:18) That confidence in Jehovah's loving support will help us to cope with further tests of faith.

LOVE FOR BIBLE TRUTH

¹¹ As Christians, we cherish and embrace truth. God's Word is the ultimate source of truth. In prayer to his Father, Jesus said: "Your word is truth." (John 17:17) Therefore, love for truth starts with gaining an accurate knowledge of God's Word. (Col. 1:10) However, more is involved than simply acquiring head knowledge. Note how the inspired writer of Psalm 119 helps us to understand what it means to love Bible truth. (**Read Psalm 119:97-100.**) Do we take the time to ponder, or dwell on, Scriptural passages throughout the day? Our appreciation for Bible truth will grow when we meditate on ways we benefit from applying it in our lives.

10. How can we keep our love for Jehovah strong?

11, 12. How can we develop a deep love for Bible truth?



Show love for Jehovah
(See paragraph 10)



Show love for Bible truth
(See paragraph 14)

¹² The psalmist went on to say: “How sweet your sayings are to my palate, more so than honey to my mouth!” (Ps. 119:103) Similarly, we can savor the tasty Bible-based spiritual food that we receive from God’s organization. We can allow it to linger on our figurative palate so that we can recall the “delightful words” of truth and use them to help others.—Eccl. 12:10.

¹³ The prophet Jeremiah loved Scriptural truth. Notice the effect that God’s words had on his heart. “Your words were found, and I ate them; and your word became to me the exultation and the rejoicing of my heart, for your name has been called on me, O Jehovah God of armies.” (Jer. 15:16) Jeremiah figuratively ate and digested God’s precious words by meditating on them. In that way he developed a heartfelt appreciation for the privilege of having God’s name called on him. Has our love for Bi-

13. What helped Jeremiah to love Scriptural truth, and how did it affect him?

ble truth moved us to recognize the unique privilege we have to bear God’s name and to proclaim his Kingdom in this time of the end?

¹⁴ Besides reading the Bible and our Bible-based publications, how else can we develop a deep love for Bible truth? We can enhance our love for Bible truth by regularly attending congregation meetings. The weekly study of the Bible with the help of *The Watchtower* is a principal means by which we are taught. To get the sense of the subject that is considered, we need to prepare well for each *Watchtower* Study. One way we can do so is by looking up each of the cited Bible texts. Nowadays, *The Watchtower* can be downloaded from the jw.org website or viewed on the *JW Library* app in many languages. Some electronic formats allow us to access quickly the cited texts from each study article. But whatever method we use, reading

14. How can we enhance our love for Bible truth?



Show love for the brothers and sisters
(See paragraph 17)

these scriptures carefully and meditating on them will deepen our love for Bible truth.—**Read Psalm 1:2.**

LOVE FOR OUR BROTHERS

¹⁵ On his last night on earth, Jesus said to his disciples: “I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”—John 13:34, 35.

¹⁶ Having love for our brothers and sisters is linked to the love we have for Jehovah. In fact, we cannot have one without the other. The apostle John wrote: “The one who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” (1 John 4:20) Furthermore, our love for Jehovah and our brothers is linked to our love for

the Bible. Why? Because love for Bible truth moves us to obey from the heart the Scriptural commandments to love God and to love our brothers.—1 Pet. 1:22; 1 John 4:21.

¹⁷ **Read 1 Thessalonians 4:9, 10.** What are some examples of practical ways in which we can show love in our congregation? An elderly brother or sister may be in need of transportation to Christian meetings. A widow may need help with some repairs on her home. (Jas. 1:27) Whether young or old, brothers and sisters who are discouraged or depressed or who face other trials need our attention, encouragement, and comfort. (Prov. 12:25; Col. 4:11) We give proof that we truly love our brothers when we show by words and deeds that we have deep concern for “those related to us in the faith.”—Gal. 6:10.

¹⁸ The Bible foretold that “the last days” of this wicked system of things would be marked by a spirit of selfishness and greed. (2 Tim. 3:1, 2) As Christians, we must therefore work hard to grow in our love for God, for Bible truth, and for one another. True, we may at times have minor disagreements with fellow believers. However, what a blessing it is for all in the congregation when love motivates us to settle any differences in a loving manner! (Eph. 4:32; Col. 3:14) So may we never allow our love to grow cold! Rather, may we continue to have intense love for Jehovah, his Word, and our brothers.

15, 16. (a) According to John 13:34, 35, what obligation do we have? (b) How is the love we have for our brothers linked to our love for God and the Bible?

17. What are some ways in which we can show love?

18. What will help us to overcome minor disagreements with fellow believers?



“Do You Love Me More Than These?”

“Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

—JOHN 21:15.

SONGS: 143, 65

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How do we keep secular work in its proper place?

What can help us to have a balanced view of recreation?

How can we successfully fight materialism?

SEVEN of Jesus’ disciples had just spent the entire night fishing in the Sea of Galilee but had not caught anything. From the beach, the resurrected Jesus observed the group. Then he said to them: “‘Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.’ So they cast it, but they were not able to haul it in because of the large number of fish.”—John 21:1-6.

² After serving them breakfast, Jesus turned to Simon Peter and said: “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?” To what was Jesus referring? Peter was quite attached to fishing. So it seems that Jesus was asking him where his true affection lay. Did he have greater affection for the fish and the fishing business than for Jesus and the things that he taught? In answer, Peter said: “Yes, Lord, you know I have affection for you.” (John 21:15) Peter certainly lived up to his word. From that point forward, he proved his love for Christ by busying himself in the disciple-making work,

1, 2. After spending a night fishing, what experience did Peter have?

becoming a pillar in the first-century Christian congregation.

³ What can we learn from the words that Jesus spoke to Peter? We need to be careful not to allow our love for Christ to weaken and let ourselves be distracted from Kingdom interests. Jesus was keenly aware of the pressures associated with the anxieties of this system of things. In his illustration of the sower, Jesus said that some would accept “the word of the Kingdom” and make initial progress but that “the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches” would “choke the word.” (Matt. 13:19-22; Mark 4:19) Indeed, if we are not careful, the everyday concerns of life could entice our heart and cause us to slow down spiritually. Thus, Jesus warned his disciples: “Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life.”—Luke 21:34.

⁴ Just as Peter did after his experience with the resurrected Jesus, we prove the depth of our love for Christ by putting the work he has given us to do in first place. How can we make sure that we continue to do so? From time to time, we need to ask ourselves: ‘Where does my true affection lie? Does most of my joy come from engaging in mundane activities or in spiritual activities?’ In this regard, let us consider three areas of life that if not kept in their proper place could weaken our love for the Christ and for spiritual things—secular work, recreation, and material things.

3. To what dangers do Christians need to be alert?

4. What will help us to examine the depth of our love for Christ? (See opening picture.)

KEEP SECULAR WORK IN ITS PROPER PLACE

⁵ To Peter, fishing was more than a mere hobby—it was his livelihood. Family heads today recognize that they have a Scriptural responsibility to provide for their family’s material needs. (1 Tim. 5:8) They must work hard to fulfill this obligation. However, in these last days, secular work is often a source of anxiety.

⁶ As a result of fierce competition for a limited number of jobs, many employees feel compelled to work more hours, sometimes for less pay. Also, the constant push for increased production takes a heavy toll on people physically, mentally, and emotionally. Employees who are unwilling to make such sacrifices for their company risk losing their jobs.

⁷ As Christians, we owe our primary loyalty to Jehovah God, not to our employer. (Luke 10:27) Secular work is simply a means to an end. We work to provide our basic material needs and to support our ministry. If we are not careful, however, secular work could interfere with our worship. For example, a brother in Thailand related: “My secular work of repairing computers was very interesting, but it involved working long hours. As a result, it left me almost no time for spiritual matters. I finally realized that in order to put Kingdom interests first, I needed to change my line of work.” What did this brother do?

5. What Scriptural responsibility do family heads have?

6. What stresses exist in the modern workplace?

7, 8. (a) Where does our primary loyalty lie? (b) What valuable lesson did a brother in Thailand learn about his work?

⁸ “After planning for about a year,” he explained, “I decided to become a street vendor and sell ice cream. In the beginning, I struggled financially and got discouraged. When I met my former workmates, they would laugh at me and ask why I thought selling ice cream was better than working with computers in an air-conditioned environment. I prayed to Jehovah, asking him to help me to cope and to reach my goal of having more time for spiritual activities. Before long, things began to improve. I got better acquainted with my customers’ tastes and became more skillful in making ice cream. Soon, I was selling all my ice cream every day. Actually, I was better-off financially than when I worked with computers. It has made me happier because I do not have the stress and worry that I had with my former job. And most important, I now feel closer to Jehovah.”—**Read Matthew 5: 3, 6.**

⁹ Industriousness is a godly quality, and hard work is rewarding. (Prov. 12: 14) Still, as the brother mentioned above learned, secular work needs to be kept in its proper place. Jesus said: “Keep on, then, seeking first the Kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things [basic material needs] will be added to you.” (Matt. 6:33) To help determine whether we have a balanced view of secular matters and spiritual responsibilities, it is good to ask ourselves: ‘Do I find my secular work interesting and exciting but view my spiritual activities as ordinary or routine?’ Thinking about and meditating on

9. How can we maintain a balanced view of our secular work?

how we feel about our secular and spiritual activities can help us to determine where our true affection lies.

¹⁰ Jesus set the standard in balancing secular interests and spiritual matters. On one occasion, Jesus visited the home of Mary and her sister, Martha. While Martha scurried about preparing a meal, Mary chose to sit at Jesus’ feet and listen to him. When Martha complained that Mary was not helping, Jesus told Martha: “Mary chose the good portion, and it will not be taken away from her.” (Luke 10:38-42) Jesus was teaching Martha a valuable lesson. To avoid being distracted by secular matters and to prove our love for Christ, we must continue to choose “the good portion,” to give priority to spiritual things.

OUR VIEW OF RECREATION AND ENTERTAINMENT

¹¹ We need some time to relax and find refreshment from our hard work and busy schedules. God’s Word states: “There is nothing better for a man than to eat and drink and find enjoyment in his hard work.” (Eccl. 2:24) Jesus recognized the need to rest on occasion. Following one particularly intense witnessing campaign, he told his disciples: “Come, you yourselves, privately into an isolated place and rest up a little.” —Mark 6:31, 32.

¹² Indeed, recreation and entertainment fill an important need. However, the danger exists that having a good

10. What valuable lesson did Jesus teach about setting priorities?

11. What do the Scriptures teach about rest and relaxation?

12. Regarding recreation and entertainment, what caution is in order? Give an example.

time could become the primary focus of our life. Back in the first century, many had the attitude “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die.” (1 Cor. 15: 32) That same spirit prevails in many parts of the world today. For example, years ago a young man in Western Europe began attending Christian meetings. But his fascination with entertainment was so strong that he stopped associating with Jehovah’s people. In time, however, he understood that his focus on entertainment had only led to problems and disappointments. So he resumed his Bible study and eventually qualified to become a publisher of the good news. After his baptism, he said: “The only regret I have is that I lost so much time before I realized that serving Jehovah brings far more happiness than pursuing the entertainment offered by this world.”

¹³ The purpose of recreation is to refresh and rejuvenate us. To achieve that, how much time should we spend on it? Think of this comparison: Many of us love to eat a dessert once in a while, but we realize that a steady diet of cakes and candies will harm our health. Therefore, we mainly eat nutritious food. Similarly, a steady diet of recreation and entertainment will weaken our spiritual health. To prevent that, we regularly engage in Kingdom activities. How can we determine if we have a balanced view of recreation? We could select a week and keep a record of the number of hours we spend on spiritual activities, such as attending meetings, sharing

13. (a) Illustrate the dangers related to recreation and entertainment. (b) What could help us to maintain a balanced view of recreation and entertainment?

in the field ministry, and engaging in personal and family Bible study. Then we could compare that figure to the number of hours we spent that same week on recreational activities, such as participating in sports, enjoying hobbies, watching television, or playing video games. What does the comparison reveal? Might there be a need to cut back on “dessert”?—**Read Ephesians 5: 15, 16.**

¹⁴ Individuals and family heads are free to choose the recreation they prefer, as long as it consists of activities that are in harmony with Jehovah’s guidelines expressed in Bible principles.* Wholesome recreation is a “gift of God.” (Eccl. 3:12, 13) Of course, we realize that choices in recreation may differ from one person to the next. (Gal. 6: 4, 5) Whatever entertainment we may choose, we want to keep it in its proper place. Jesus said: “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matt. 6:21) Thus, our heartfelt love for Jesus will move us to focus our thoughts, speech, and actions primarily on Kingdom activities rather than on the everyday affairs of life.—Phil. 1:9, 10.

OUR FIGHT AGAINST MATERIALISM

¹⁵ Many today are obsessed with the latest fashions, electronic gadgets, and so forth. Therefore, each Christian regularly needs to examine his own desires

* See the article “Is Your Recreation Beneficial?” in *The Watchtower* of October 15, 2011, pp. 9-12, pars. 6-15.

14. What should guide us in choosing our recreation and entertainment?

15, 16. (a) In what way could materialism become a snare for a Christian? (b) What wise counsel did Jesus give regarding material things?

by asking himself such questions as: 'Have material things become so important to me that I spend more time researching and thinking about the latest cars or fashions than I do preparing for congregation meetings? Have I become so preoccupied with the everyday affairs of life that I spend less time praying or reading the Bible?' If we realize that our love for material things is eclipsing our love for the Christ, we should reflect on Jesus' words: "Guard against every sort of greed." (Luke 12:15) Why did Jesus give that serious warning?

¹⁶ Jesus stated that "no one can slave for two masters." He added: "You cannot slave for God and for Riches." That is because both "masters" require exclusive devotion. We will either "hate the one and love the other" or "stick to the one and despise the other," said Jesus. (Matt. 6:24) As imperfect people, all of us need to keep up our fight against "the

desires of our flesh," including materialism.—Eph. 2:3.

¹⁷ Fleshly-minded people have difficulty cultivating a balanced view of material things. Why? Because their spiritual senses are dulled. **(Read 1 Corinthians 2:14.)** Once their powers of discernment have become clouded, it becomes more difficult for them to distinguish right from wrong. (Heb. 5:11-14) As a result, some develop an uncontrolled desire for material things—a desire that can never be fully satisfied. (Eccl. 5:10) Thankfully, there is an antidote to being poisoned by materialistic thinking: a healthy dose of God's Word, the Bible, taken on a regular basis. (1 Pet. 2:2) Just as meditating on divine truth fortified Jesus to reject temptation, so applying Bible principles helps us to fight against materialistic desires. (Matt. 4:8-10) By doing so, we show Jesus that we love him more than any material thing.

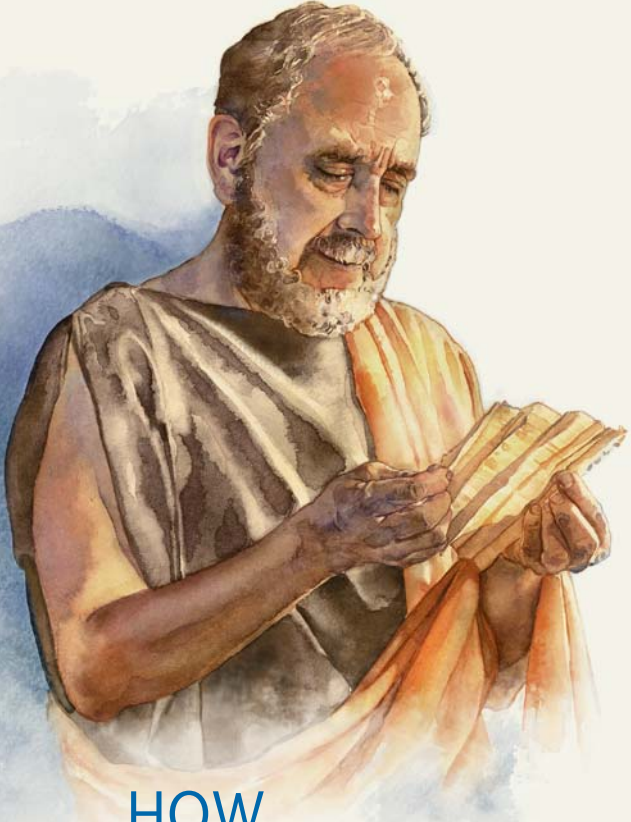
¹⁸ When Jesus asked Peter: "Do you love me more than these?" he was reminding Peter of the need to put spiritual things first in his life. Peter, whose name means "A Piece of Rock," indeed lived up to his name, for he displayed rocklike qualities. (Acts 4:5-20) We today are likewise determined to remain steadfast in our love for Christ, keeping secular work, recreation, and material things in their proper place. May our choices in life reflect that we share the sentiments of Peter, who told Jesus: "Lord, you know I have affection for you."

What are your priorities in life?
(See paragraph 18)



17. (a) Why do fleshly-minded people have difficulty cultivating a balanced view of material things? (b) What helps us to fight materialistic desires?

18. What are you determined to do?



HOW GAIUS HELPED HIS BROTHERS

GAIUS and other Christians in the late first century faced challenges. Individuals who were spreading false teachings tried to weaken and divide congregations. (1 John 2:18, 19; 2 John 7) A man named Diotrophes was spreading “malicious talk” about the apostle John and others, was refusing to extend hospitality to traveling Christians, and was trying to persuade others to follow his example. (3 John 9, 10) That was the situation when John wrote to Gaius. The apostle’s letter, written about 98 C.E.,

appears in the Christian Greek Scriptures as “The Third of John.”

Despite the challenges he faced, Gaius continued to serve Jehovah faithfully. How did he show his faithfulness? Why do we want to imitate Gaius’ example today? How can John’s letter help us to do so?

A LETTER TO A CHERISHED FRIEND

The writer of Third John calls himself “the older man.” That was enough for his beloved spiritual child Gaius to recognize him as the apostle John. John warmly addressed Gaius as “the beloved, whom I truly love.” Then John expressed his hope that the physical health of Gaius was as good as his spiritual health. What a fine sentiment and beautiful compliment!—3 John 1, 2, 4.

Gaius might well have been a congregation overseer, but the letter does not specifically say so. John praised Gaius for hosting the brothers even though they were strangers to him. John considered this to be proof of Gaius’ faithfulness, since showing hospitality has always distinguished God’s servants.—Gen. 18:1-8; 1 Tim. 3:2; 3 John 5.

John’s words of appreciation for the hospitality that Gaius showed to the brothers indicate that Christians regularly traveled between the apostle John’s location and the congregations, and these travelers evidently told John about what they had encountered. Perhaps it was by this means that John received news about these congregations.

Traveling Christians would certainly want to stay with fellow believers. Inns had terrible reputations, offered bad service, and were dens of immoral conduct. Where possible, therefore, wise travelers stayed with friends; traveling Christians with Christian hosts.

“IN BEHALF OF HIS NAME . . . THEY WENT OUT”

John encouraged Gaius to show hospitality again, for the apostle asked him to “send [the travelers] on their way in a manner worthy of God.” In this case, sending guests on their way meant meeting their needs for the next leg of the journey and supplying them with everything required until they arrived at their destination. It was evident that Gaius had already done this for his previous guests, since they had brought John a report of their host’s love and faith.—3 John 3, 6.

The guests may have been missionaries, John’s envoys, or traveling overseers. Whatever the case, they traveled for the sake of the good news. John said: “It was in behalf of his name that they went out.” (3 John 7) John had just referred to God (see verse 6), so the expression “in behalf of his name” appears to refer to Jehovah’s name. Hence, the brothers were part of the Christian congregation and deserved a warm reception. It is as John wrote: “We are under obligation to show hospitality to such ones, so that we may become fellow workers in the truth.”—3 John 8.

HELP WITH A TRIALSOME SITUATION

John’s reason for writing to Gaius was not just to thank him. John also wanted to help him deal with a serious problem. For some reason, a member of the Christian congregation named Diotrephes was not willing to show hospitality to traveling Christians. He even tried to hinder others from showing hospitality.—3 John 9, 10.

No doubt, faithful Christians would not have wanted to stay with Diotrephes even if that were possible. He liked to have the first place in the congregation, he received nothing from John with respect, and he was spreading malicious talk about

the apostle and others. Although John never called him a false teacher, Diotrephes was resisting the apostle’s authority. Diotrephes’ desire for prominence and his unchristian attitude called into question his loyalty. The case of Diotrephes illustrates the divisive influence that ambitious and arrogant individuals may try to exert in a congregation. John therefore told Gaius and, by extension, each of us: “Do not imitate what is bad.”—3 John 11.

AN EXCELLENT REASON TO DO GOOD

Unlike Diotrephes, a Christian named Demetrius is mentioned by John as a good example. “Demetrius has been well-reported-on . . . In fact, we too are bearing witness about him,” wrote John, “and you know that the witness we give is true.” (3 John 12) It may have been that Demetrius needed Gaius’ assistance, and Third John may have served as the apostle’s letter of introduction and recommendation. Demetrius himself may well have delivered the letter to Gaius. As one of John’s envoys, or perhaps a traveling overseer, Demetrius likely reinforced what John had written.

Why did John urge Gaius to continue showing hospitality when he was already doing so? Did John see the need to bolster Gaius’ courage? Was the apostle worried that Gaius might hesitate because Diotrephes was attempting to throw hospitable Christians out of the congregation? Whatever the case, John reassured Gaius by saying: “The one who does good originates with God.” (3 John 11) That is an excellent reason to do good and to keep on doing so.

Did John’s letter motivate Gaius to continue being hospitable? The fact that Third John was preserved in the Bible canon and was passed on to encourage others to “imitate what is good” suggests that it did.

LESSONS FROM THIRD JOHN

No more is known about our dear brother of old, Gaius. Nevertheless, this brief glimpse into his life can teach us a number of lessons.

First, to some extent, most of us owe our knowledge of the truth to faithful ones who were willing to travel in order to make it known to us. Of course, not all members of the present-day Christian congregation travel great distances for the sake of the good news. However, like Gaius, we can in some way support and encourage those who do travel, such as the circuit overseer and his wife. Or we may be able to give practical support to brothers and sisters who move to areas within the country, or even abroad, to serve where the need for Kingdom publishers is greater. So let us “follow the course of hospitality.”—Rom. 12:13; 1 Tim. 5:9, 10.

Second, we should not be surprised if on rare occasions challenges to authority arise in the congregations today. John’s authority was challenged; so was that of the apostle Paul. (2 Cor. 10:7-12; 12:11-13) How, then, should we react if we encounter simi-

lar difficulties from some within the congregation? Paul advised Timothy: “A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach, showing restraint when wronged, instructing with mildness those not favorably disposed.” When we maintain a mild temper even when provoked, some critical individuals may gradually be moved to adjust their disposition. In turn, Jehovah “may give them repentance leading to an accurate knowledge of truth.”—2 Tim. 2:24, 25.

Third, fellow Christians who serve Jehovah loyally despite opposition need to be acknowledged and warmly commended for their faithful course. The apostle John surely encouraged Gaius and reassured him that he was doing what was right. Likewise, elders today should follow John’s example by encouraging their brothers and sisters so that they will “not grow weary.”—Isa. 40:31; 1 Thess. 5:11.

With only 219 words in its Greek text, the letter from the apostle John to Gaius is the shortest book in the Bible. Yet, it truly is of great value to Christians today.

In what ways can we
“follow the course
of hospitality”?





The Joy of Leading a Simple Life

DANIEL AND MIRIAM married in September 2000 and settled down in the city of Barcelona, Spain. “We led a so-called normal life,” relates Daniel. “Our jobs allowed us to eat in fine restaurants, travel abroad, and wear quality clothes. We also shared regularly in the field ministry.” But then a change occurred.

At a convention in 2006, Daniel was deeply touched by a talk that raised the question: “Are we doing all we can to help those who are ‘staggering to the slaughter’ to get on the road to everlasting life?” (Prov. 24:11) It stressed the responsibility to make known the Bible’s lifesaving message. (Acts 20:26, 27) Daniel recalls, “I had the feeling that Jehovah was talking to *me*.” The talk also mentioned that expanding one’s ministry leads to more joy. Daniel knew that this was true. Miriam had already begun pioneering and was experiencing joyful blessings.

Daniel says, “I concluded that it was time for me to make a 180-degree turn.” And he did. He cut back on his hours at work, began pioneering, and thought about the joy he and Miriam could have by serving where the need for Kingdom preachers is greater.

FIRST THE CHALLENGES—THEN THRILLING NEWS

In May 2007, Daniel and Miriam quit their jobs and set out for Panama, a country they had visited before. Their new territory was made up of several islands in the Bocas del Toro Archipelago in the Caribbean Sea, mostly inhabited by the indigenous Ngabe people. Daniel and Miriam thought that by using their savings, they could stay in Panama for about eight months.

They traveled the islands by boat and bicycle, and they well remember their first cycling trip—about 20 miles (32 km) over steep hills, under the blazing sun. Daniel nearly fainted from exhaustion. Yet, in the homes along that route, the Ngabe families received them hospitably, especially after the couple learned some expressions in the local language. Before long, they were conducting 23 Bible studies.

When their savings ran out, however, the couple’s joy turned to sorrow. Daniel recalls: “With tears in our eyes, we began thinking about our return to Spain. We were so sad to leave our Bible students behind.” But then, a month later, they received thrilling news. Miriam says: “We were invited to serve as special pioneers. What a joy to be able to stay in our assignment!”

THEIR GREATEST JOY

In 2015, as a result of adjustments in the organization, Daniel and Miriam were asked to continue their service as regular pioneers. What to do? They trusted in the promise found at Psalm 37:5: “Commit your way to Jehovah; rely on him, and he will act in your behalf.” They found secular work to support themselves as pioneers, and today they serve in a congregation in the province of Veraguas, Panama.

Daniel relates: “Before we left Spain, we were not sure if we would be able to live a simple life. Today we do, and we lack nothing of real importance.” What is their greatest joy? They say, “To help humble people learn about Jehovah is a joy beyond compare!”

“With More Zeal and Love in Our Hearts Than Ever Before”

THE temperature had already started to climb that Friday morning in September 1922 as 8,000 people crowded into the auditorium. The chairman announced that during this important session, anyone was free to leave, but no one would be allowed to reenter the hall.

Songs were sung during the opening “Praise Service,” after which Joseph F. Rutherford stepped up to the speaker’s stand. Most in the audience sat in suspense. A few restlessly paced about in the heat. The speaker earnestly urged them to sit down and listen. As the talk began, did anyone notice the large cloth roll neatly tied and hung high overhead?

Brother Rutherford spoke on the theme “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” For about an hour and a half, his powerful voice reverberated through the hall as he discussed how the prophets of old had fearlessly announced the coming Kingdom. Reaching the climax, he asked, “Do you believe that the King of glory has begun his reign?” The audience responded with a mighty shout: “Yes!”

“Then back to the field, O ye sons of the most high God!” Brother Rutherford thundered. “Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore, advertise, advertise, advertise.”

At that moment, the cloth roll overhead gracefully unfurled, revealing the slogan: “Advertise the King and Kingdom.”

“The audience was electrified,” recalled Ray Bopp. Anna Gardner described how “the rafters shook with the applause.” “The whole audience rose to its feet as one,” stated Fred Twarosh.

Evangelos Scouffas said, “It was as if a mighty power pulled us up from our seats, and we stood up and our eyes filled with tears.”

Many at that convention had already been spreading the Kingdom good news. Yet, they now felt infused with a new sense of purpose. Ethel Bennecoff related that the Bible Students went forth “with more zeal and love in [their] hearts than ever before.” Odessa Tuck, who at the time was 18, left the convention determined to answer the call “Who will go?” She said: “I did not know where or how or what. The one thing I did know was that I wanted to be like Isaiah, who said: ‘Here I am! Send me!’” (Isa. 6:8) “That celebrated day,” said Ralph Leffler, “was the real beginning of the Kingdom advertising campaign that today has encircled the earth.”

Those Mysterious Signs

The letters “ADV” were everywhere—on trees, on buildings, even on the convention program! Those signs had the delegates bursting with curiosity.*

“On every post and doorway were white cards on which were printed in large, black type, ADV. We asked what the letters meant, but no one seemed to know, or if they did, they would not tell us.”—Edith Brenisen.

* The signs are still a mystery. To date, no photographs of them have been located by our Archives.

No wonder that this 1922 Cedar Point, Ohio, convention has gone down in history as a theatrical milestone! George Gangas said, “That convention generated in me the desire never to miss one.” As far as he could recall, he never did. Julia Wilcox wrote: “I simply can’t describe the thrill I get every time Cedar Point 1922 is referred to in our literature. I always want to say,

‘Thank you, Jehovah, for permitting me to be there.’”

Likely, many of us today have similar precious memories of a convention that especially thrilled our hearts and filled us with zeal and with love for our great God and his King. As we reflect on such memories, we too are moved to say, “Thank you, Jehovah, for permitting me to be there.”



Behind the Scenes, an Answer to a Prayer

Arthur and Nellie Claus arrived early to get good seats. “I was hanging on to every word,” Arthur said. Suddenly, he began having abdominal cramps. Reluctantly, he left the hall, knowing that he could not reenter. An usher asked, “How can you leave at a time like this?” Arthur knew he must.

On his return, Arthur heard loud applause from inside the hall. Searching for a spot outside the

hall where he could hear what was going on inside, he discovered a place to climb up onto the roof, about 16 feet (4.8 m) high. Then he made his way toward a large skylight with open windows.

There Arthur found several brothers in a quandary, peering down on the speaker. They had instructions to cut several cords simultaneously to release a banner. But to cut the cords all at once, they needed one more knife. Did Arthur have a sharp pocketknife? To their great relief, he did. Arthur and the others took their positions and waited for the appointed signal. When Brother Rutherford said “Advertise!” for the second time, they were to cut the cords.

Eyewitnesses described how smoothly the large, three-colored banner unfurled. In the center was a painting of Jesus.

Afterward, the brothers explained to Arthur that they had climbed a ladder to the roof and then the ladder had been taken away. They could not go for help, so they prayed to Jehovah to send a brother with a knife. Those brothers were convinced that Jehovah had answered their prayer in a most interesting way.



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