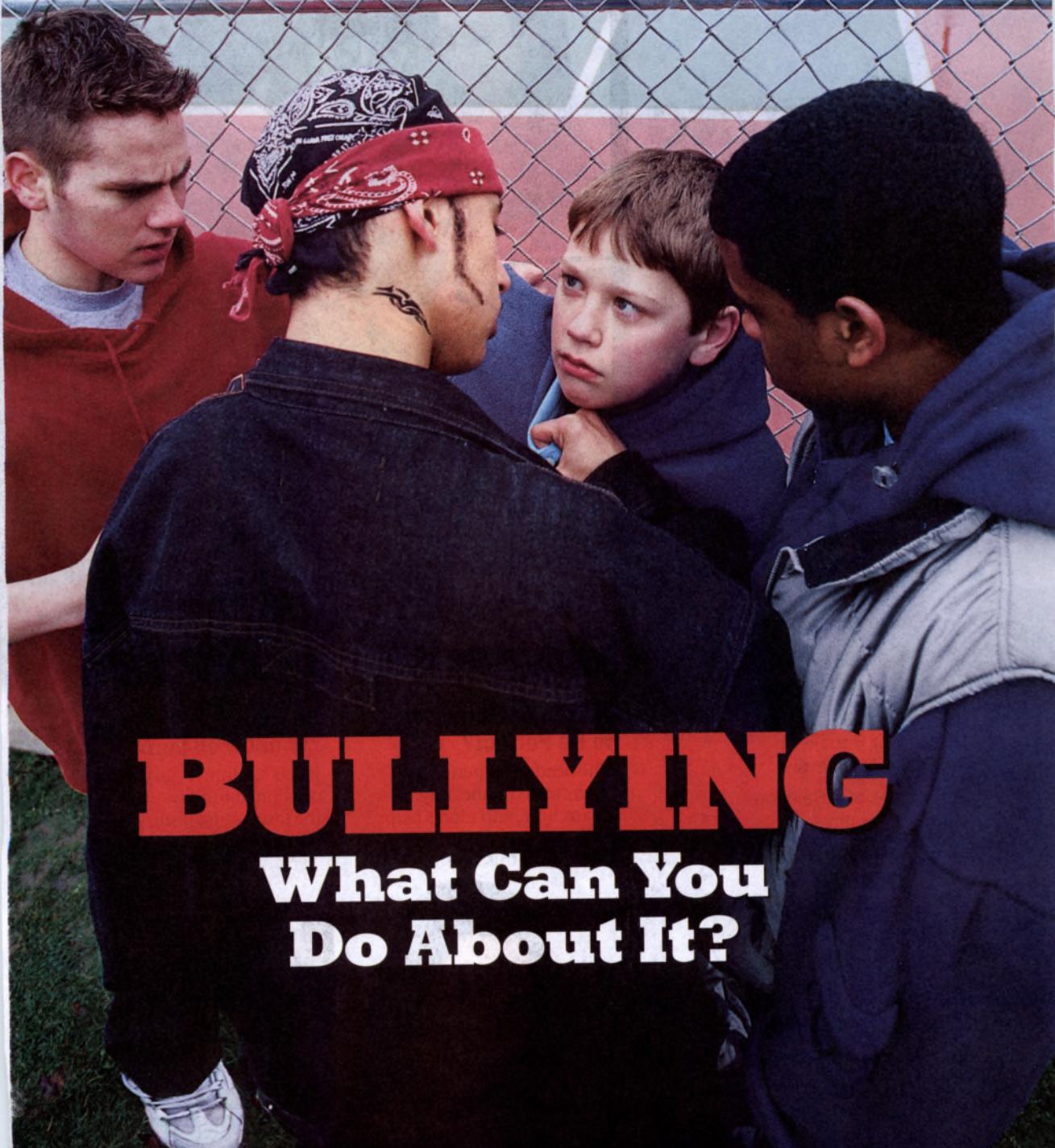


Awake!

AUGUST 22, 2003

BULLYING

**What Can You
Do About It?**



Awake!

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BULLYING

What Can You Do About It? 3-11

Why do some people bully others? What are the effects? What can be done about it? This issue of *Awake!* explores the answers to these questions.

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BULLYING

A Global Problem

"If you come to school tomorrow, we'll kill you."

—A Canadian student named Kristen received that telephone threat from an unidentified female caller.*

"I am not an emotional person, but I got to the point of not wanting to go to school. My stomach hurt, and every morning after breakfast, I threw up."

—Hiromi, a teenage student in Japan, recalls her experience with bullying.

HAVE you ever had to deal with a bully? Most of us have at one time or another. It may have been at school or in the workplace, or it may even have occurred right at home—where such abuse of power is played out with alarming frequency these days. A British source, for instance, estimates that 53 percent of adults are verbally bullied by a spouse or a live-in partner. Bullies and their victims may be of either gender and from any walk of life in any part of the world.¹

What exactly constitutes bullying? It is not quite the same as harassment or assault. It tends to involve many small incidents that accumulate over time rather than a single incident or a few of them. Psychologist Dan Olweus, a pioneer in the systematic study of bullying, identifies common elements of this behavior, such as deliberate aggressiveness and a marked inequality in terms of power.

Perhaps no single definition covers all aspects of bullying, but it has been called "a wilful, conscious desire to hurt another and put

him/her under stress." The stress is created not only by what actually happens but also by fear of what might happen. Tactics may include harsh teasing, constant criticism, insults, gossip, and unreasonable demands.—See the box on page 4.

Kristen, the teenager mentioned at the outset, was singled out by bullies during most of her school years. In elementary school, bullies put gum in her hair, teased her about her appearance, and threatened to beat her up. In high school, things got even worse—to the point that she received death threats over the telephone. Now 18, she laments: "School is a place where you're supposed to learn, not get death threats and get thrown around."

One mental-health professional comments: "It's a sad but common aspect of human dynamics. Some people feel better diminishing someone else." When such behavior escalates, it may lead to violent retaliation and even tragedy. For example, a transit employee who had a speech impediment was teased and bullied so much that he finally killed four of his coworkers and then shot himself.

* Some names have been changed.

¹ Although the bully is frequently referred to as "he" in these articles, the principles generally apply to female bullies as well.

Types of Bullies

- **Physical Bullies:** These are the easiest to identify. They act out their anger by hitting, shoving, or kicking their chosen target—or by damaging their victim's property.
- **Verbal Bullies:** They use words to hurt and humiliate their target, through either name-calling, insults, or persistent, harsh teasing.
- **Relationship Bullies:** They spread nasty rumors about their target. This behavior is predominantly adopted by female bullies.
- **Reactive Victims:** These are victims of bullying who turn into bullies themselves. Of course, their having been victims of bullying does not excuse their conduct; it only helps to explain it.

Source: *Take Action Against Bullying*, by Gesele Lajoie, Alyson McLellan, and Cindi Seddon

Bullying Is Global

Bullying among school-age children occurs worldwide. A survey published in *Pediatrics in Review* reveals that in Norway, 14 percent of children are either bullies or victims. In Japan, 15 percent of primary school pupils say that they are bullied, while in Australia and Spain, the problem prevails among 17 percent of students. In Britain one expert figures that 1.3 million children are involved in bullying.

Professor Amos Rolider of Emek Yizre'el College surveyed 2,972 pupils in 21 schools. According to *The Jerusalem Post*, the professor found that "65% complained of being smacked, kicked, pushed or molested by fellow pupils."

A new and insidious development is digital bullying—the sending of menacing text messages via cell phones and computers. Youths also create hate-filled Web pages about a victim, including personal information. According to Dr. Wendy Craig of Queen's University in Canada, this form of bullying is "extraordinarily damaging to the child who is being victimized by it."

The Workplace

Bullying in the workplace is one of the fastest-growing causes for complaints involving workplace violence. In fact, some countries report that it is more common than racial discrimination or sexual harassment. Each year, about 1 person in 5 in the U.S. work force faces bullying.

In Britain a report released in 2000 by the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology said that out of 5,300 employees in 70 organizations, 47 percent reported that they had witnessed incidents of bullying in the last five years. A 1996 European Union survey based on 15,800 interviews in its 15 member states showed that 8 percent—some 12 million workers—had been subjected to intimidation or bullying.

Whether in the school yard or workplace, all bullying seems to have a common trait—the use of power to hurt or humiliate another. Why, though, do some people bully others? What are the effects? And what can be done about it?

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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BULLYING

Some Causes and Effects

WHAT causes a child to begin bullying others? If you have ever been victimized by a bully, you may be tempted to say, "I don't care! There's no excuse for that kind of behavior." And you are probably right. But there is a big difference between a reason and an excuse. The reasons why a child becomes a bully do not *excuse* the wrong behavior, but they might help us *understand* it. And such insight can have real value. How so?

An ancient proverb says: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger." (Proverbs 19:11) Anger at the bully's conduct can blind us, filling us with frustration and even hatred. But insight into his behavior may help cool our anger. That, in turn, may allow us to see more clearly as we search for solutions. So let's consider some factors that give rise to this unacceptable behavior.

What Gives Rise to Bullying?

In many cases the bully's formative years are marred by poor parental example or by outright neglect.

Many bullies come from homes where the parents are cold or unininvolved or have, in effect, taught their children to use rage and violence to handle problems. Children raised in such an environment may not see their own verbal attacks and physical aggression as bullying; they may even think that their behavior is normal and acceptable.

One 16-year-old girl who had been bullied at home by her stepfather and at school by fellow students says that she became a bully herself when in the seventh grade. She admits: "Basically it was a lot of anger building up inside of me; I just picked on anybody and everybody.

Feeling pain is a big thing. Once you feel the pain, you want to dish it out." While such physical aggression may not be typical of girl bullies, the anger behind it is.*

* Female bullies more typically use such tactics as social exclusion and spreading rumors. However, increasing numbers seem to be resorting to physical violence as well.



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Many schools bring together large numbers of students from different backgrounds, who have been reared in widely varying ways. Sadly, some children are aggressive because they have been taught at home that intimidating others and verbally abusing them are the best means of getting their own way.

Unfortunately, such methods often seem to work. Shelley Hymel, associate education dean at the University of British Columbia, Canada, has been studying child behavior for two decades. She says: "We've got kids who are figuring out how to play the game and unfortunately, bullying works. They get what they want—they get power, status and attention."

Another factor that helps bullying to thrive is a lack of supervision. Many victims feel that they have no place to turn—and the tragedy is that in most cases they are right. Debra Pepler, director of the LaMarsh Centre for Research on Violence and Conflict Resolution at Toronto's York University, studied students in a school-yard situation and found that teachers detect and stop only about 4 percent of bullying incidents.

Yet, Dr. Pepler believes that intervention is crucial. She says: "Children are incapable of solving the problem because it's about power, and each time a bully picks on someone, the bully's power is enforced."

So why aren't more cases of bullying reported? Because victims of bullying are convinced that if they report the problem, it will only get worse. Thus, to some extent, many young people spend their school years in a permanent state of anxiety and insecurity. What are the effects of living that way?

Physical and Emotional Effects

A report from the National Association of School Psychologists in the United States says that every day more than 160,000 children miss school because they fear being bullied. Targets of bullying may stop talking about school or about a particular class or activity at school. They may try to go to school late each

day or miss classes or even make excuses to miss school entirely.

How might children who are being bullied be identified? Well, they may become moody, irritable, frustrated, or act tired and withdrawn. They may become aggressive with those at home or with peers and friends. Innocent bystanders who observe acts of bullying also suffer consequences. The situation induces considerable fear in them, which detracts from their ability to learn.

However, the journal *Pediatrics in Review* says: "The most extreme consequence of bullying for victims and society is violence, including suicide and murder. The sense of powerlessness experienced by children who are victimized can be so profound that some react with self-destructive acts or lethal retaliation."

Dr. Ed Adlaf, a research scientist and professor of public health sciences at the University of Toronto, expresses concern that "those who are involved in bullying are much more likely to experience emotional difficulties now and in the future." During the 2001 school year, more than 225,000 Ontario students were surveyed, and between one fourth and one third of them were involved in some form of bullying, either as a target or as a perpetrator. In the same group, 1 in 10 had seriously contemplated suicide.

Persistent bullying may erode a victim's self-confidence, induce serious health problems, and even ruin a career. Bullied individuals may experience headaches, sleeplessness, anxiety, and depression. Some develop post-traumatic stress disorder. Whereas physical attacks may bring on an outpouring of sympathetic support for the victim, emotional attacks may not elicit the same response. The damage is far less apparent. So instead of sympathizing, friends and family may tire of hearing the victim's complaints.

Bullying also has bad effects on the bullies themselves. If not stopped in childhood, they will likely grow up to bully others in the work-

place. In fact, some studies reveal that those who had been bullies as children developed behavior patterns that endured into adult life. They were also more likely to have a criminal record than those who were not bullies.

The Impact on the Family

Workplace bullying affects domestic stability and tranquillity. It can trigger an inexplicable urge for the target, or victim, to hurt loved ones at home. Furthermore, it can lead a spouse or family member to fight the bully in a misguided show of support for the victim. On the other hand, a spouse may blame his or her victimized mate for bringing on the trouble. When such cases of bullying drag on unresolved, even spouses who are otherwise supportive have been known to run out of patience. As years pass, the family may be more likely to disintegrate.

Bullying in the workplace is all too common

In some instances bullying results in a loss of career and livelihood, in separation and divorce, or even in suicide. Between one half and two thirds of Australian victims of workplace bullying reported bad effects on their close relationships, such as those with their partner, spouse, or family.

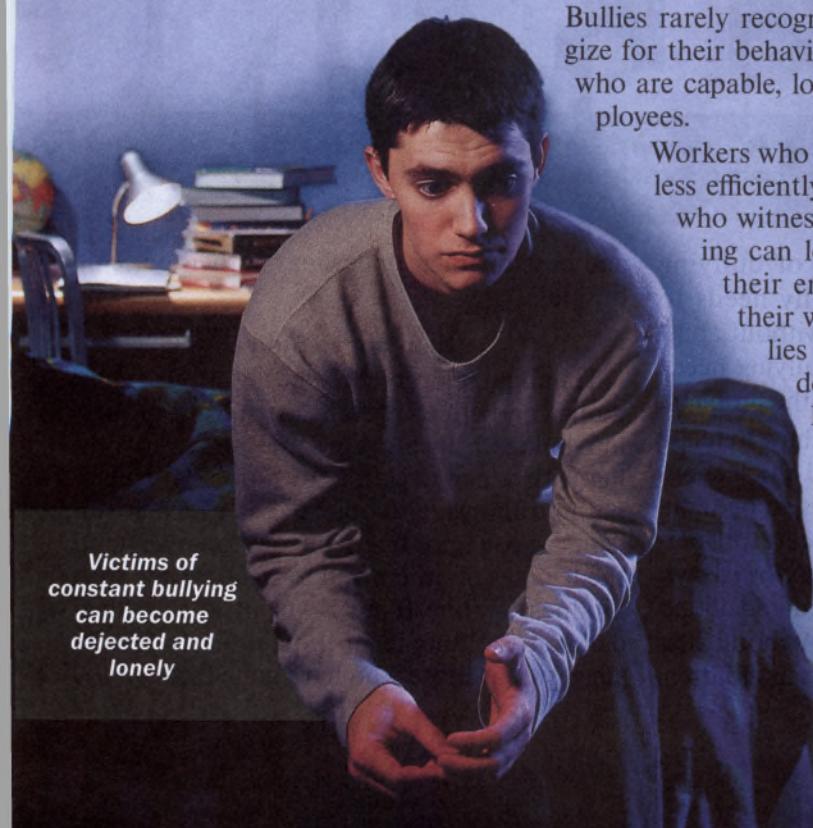
Bullying Is Costly

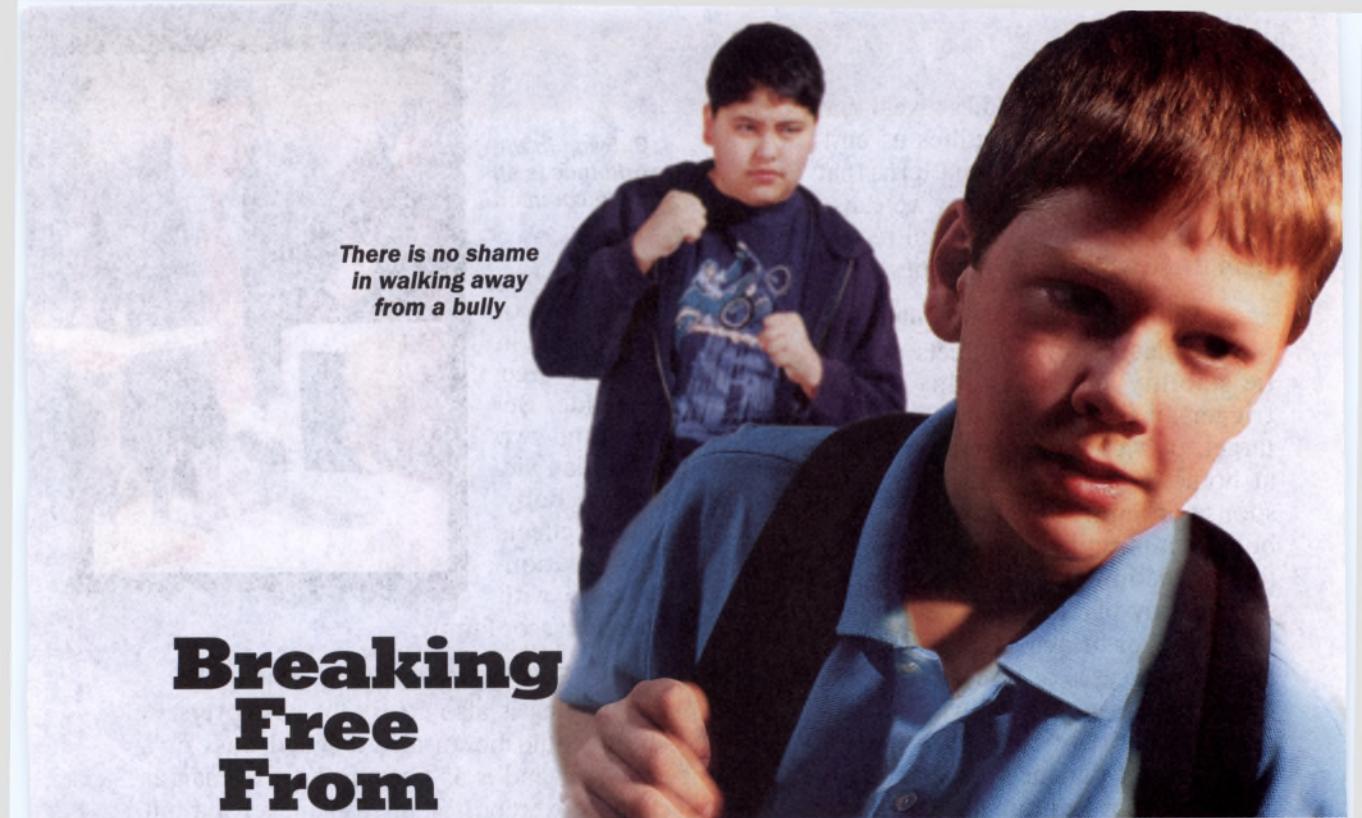
Workplace bullying is also costly for employers. A workplace bully could be an acid-tongued boss or a scheming coworker and is as likely to be a woman as a man. Such ones overcontrol, micromanage, and put others down with negative remarks and constant criticism, often humiliating their target in front of others. Bullies rarely recognize their impoliteness or apologize for their behavior. They often victimize workers who are capable, loyal, and well liked by fellow employees.

Workers who experience bullying tend to work less efficiently. The productivity of coworkers who witness bullying is also affected. Bullying can lead workers to feel less loyal to their employer and less committed to their work. One report claims that bullies cost industry in the United Kingdom an estimated three billion dollars each year. And it is said that such behavior is responsible for more than 30 percent of stress-related illnesses.

Clearly, bullying has an impact on society worldwide. The question is, Can anything be done to curb the problem and eliminate it?

Victims of constant bullying can become dejected and lonely





**There is no shame
in walking away
from a bully**

Breaking Free From

BULLYING

**'Bullying is learned behavior, and anything learned
can be unlearned.'—Dr. C. Sally Murphy.**

THE bully and the victim of bullying both need help. The bully needs to learn to relate to others without abusing power. And the victim of bullying needs some practical tools to cope with the problem.

Often, the bully does not know how to relate to others and fails to understand the feelings of those he intimidates. He needs to be monitored and taught to communicate properly. The book *Take Action Against Bullying* says: "Unless new behaviors are learned and adopted, bullies continue to bully throughout their lifetime. They bully their mates, their children,

and possibly their underlings in their place of business."

Help Not to Bully

Training children early in life to be empathetic can help to prevent them from turning into bullies. Educators in some lands are working with a new style of education called empathy training. The objective is to teach students as young as five years old to understand the feelings of others and to treat people with kindness. While there is yet little statistical data on the long-term impact, early results suggest that those who have gone through the

training are less aggressive than those who have not.

As a parent, you should not leave such training entirely to some school program. If you do not want your child to become a bully, you need to teach him by word and by example how to treat others with respect and dignity. What can assist you? Likely, you have readily available an excellent but underappreciated source of training in this regard—God's Word, the Bible. How can it help?

For one thing, it teaches clearly how God feels about bullying. He despises it! The Bible says of God: "Anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates." (Psalm 11:5) Furthermore, God is not blind to what is going on. The Bible records his feelings of regret, or sorrow, in connection with the Israelites when they suffered "because of their oppressors and those who were shoving them around." (Judges 2:18) On many occasions God punished those who abused their power and bullied the weak and defenseless.—Exodus 22:22-24.

The Bible also contains what may be the most famous instruction ever given regarding how to show empathy. Jesus stated: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) Teaching children to embrace

that Golden Rule—to love it and live by it—is not easy; it takes a good example, persistence, and hard work, particularly since young children are naturally self-centered. But all such effort is worthwhile. If your children learn to be kind and empathetic, they will find the very thought of bullying repulsive.

Help for the Victims

Victims of bullying, particularly the young, face a difficult challenge—that of maintaining balance under pressure. When someone bullies you, he is probably eager to throw you off balance emotionally. He is hoping that you will resort to extremes of anger or show terror. If you fly into a fit of rage or burst into tears and express hurt or fear, the bully is getting what he wants. So he may try to provoke the same reaction again and again.

What can you do? Consider the following suggestions. They are written primarily with the young in mind, but the principles may also apply to adults dealing with bullies.

■ **Keep cool. Don't give in to rage.** The Bible wisely advises: "Let anger alone and leave rage." (Psalm 37:8) When your temper is out of control, you give the bully power over you, and you are likely to do things you will only regret.—Proverbs 25:28.

In a healthy family atmosphere, children are taught to cope with all kinds of bullying



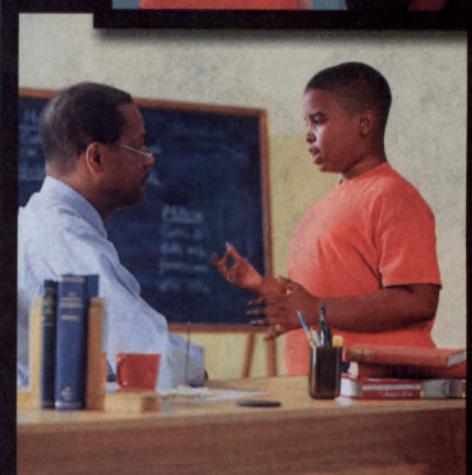
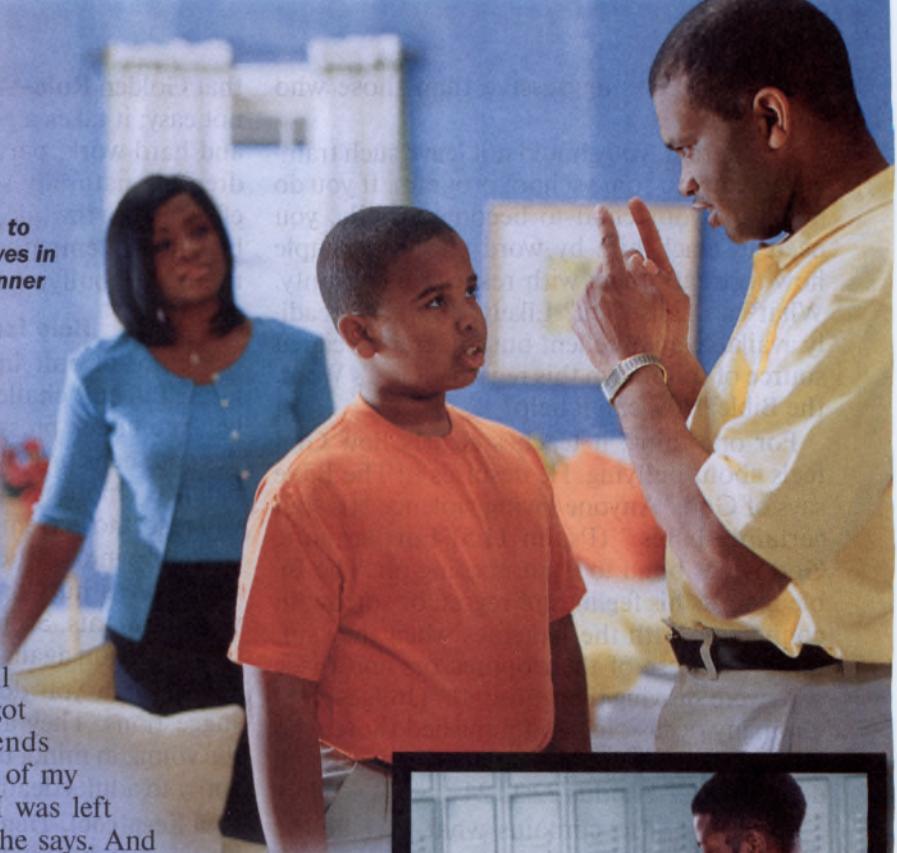
Teach your children to speak up for themselves in a firm yet tactful manner

■ Try to put thoughts of revenge out of your mind. Vengeance often backfires. At any rate, revenge is not really satisfying. One girl, who was beaten up by five youths when she was 16 years old, recalls: "I decided in my heart, 'I will get even with them.' So I got some help from my friends and took revenge on two of my attackers." The result? "I was left with an empty feeling," she says. And her own conduct worsened afterward. Remember the Bible's wise words: "Return evil for evil to no one."—Romans 12:17.

■ When things appear to be getting heated, get away quickly. The Bible says: "Before the quarrel has burst forth, take your leave." (Proverbs 17:14) In general, try to steer clear of those who tend to bully. Says Proverbs 22:3: "Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself, but the inexperienced have passed along and must suffer the penalty."

■ If bullying persists, you may need to speak up for yourself. Choose a moment when you are calm, look the bully in the eye, and speak in a firm, level voice. Tell him that you don't like what he is doing—that it is not funny and that it hurts. Do not resort to insults or challenges.—Proverbs 15:1.

■ Talk to a responsible, caring adult about the bullying. Be specific about the problem, and ask for help in handling it. Do the same in your prayers to God, and this can be a wonderful



source of help and comfort.—1 Thessalonians 5:17.

■ **Remember that you have value as a person.** The bully might want you to think that you don't matter, that you *deserve* to be treated badly. But he is not your judge. God is, and he looks for the good in each of us. It is the bully who becomes less worthwhile by resorting to such conduct.

Parents—Protect Your Children

Parents too can start early in preparing their children to deal wisely with bullies. They can, for example, use role-playing games with their children to demonstrate how to project a sense of confidence.

Even physical posture—standing up straight—can send a subtle message that dissuades some bullies. Making eye contact, keeping hands and arms relaxed, and speaking in a firm, steady voice may help too. Parents are urged to teach their child to walk away, to avoid bullies, and to ask a trustworthy adult for help, such as a schoolteacher.

Eliminating bullying behavior starts with educating the family. Parents who make themselves available to their children, listening patiently and empathetically to their concerns, instill in them a feeling that they are wanted, supported, and loved. Many professionals in the field of parenting and peer problems urge parents to provide their children with a positive view of themselves. Such a healthy outlook reduces their appeal as targets in the eyes of bullies.

But more is involved than simply talking. Each member of the family needs to learn to treat others with respect and dignity and to cultivate empathy. So do not tolerate any bullying behavior in your household. Make your home a safe haven, where respect and love prevail.

The End of Bullying

“Man has dominated man to his injury.” (Ecclesiastes 8:9) That is how the Bible sum-

marizes human history. Indeed, bullying has plagued mankind for thousands of years. A Bible writer said: “I myself returned that I might see all the acts of oppression that are being done under the sun, and, look! the tears of those being oppressed, but they had no comforter; and on the side of their oppressors there was power, so that they had no comforter.”—Ecclesiastes 4:1.

However, God surely sees all the bullying that is going on in the world, and he feels for those who are being oppressed. But will he ever do anything about it? Yes, he will! Note his promise found at Micah 4:4: “They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it.”

Think what the world will be like when that promise is fulfilled. No one to make others tremble in fear—no bullies! Does that not sound appealing? But God has done more than promise such a future. Right now a highly effective Bible education program is under way globally. It is reaping positive results. Those sharing in it are taught to alter their more aggressive personality traits, to remain at peace with one another, and to treat others with respect and dignity. (Ephesians 4:22-24) Very soon the effects of this superlative instruction will permeate the earth, and the problem of bullying will no longer exist. God's promises recorded in the Bible will be a reality. Everyone then living will enjoy a world without bullies!

In Our Next Issue

- Are You a Slave to Fashion?
- An Intriguing Encounter With Gray Whales
- Does God Bless Us With Riches?

Navigating by Water, Sky, and Wind

ARE you afraid of falling off the edge of the earth? Probably not. In times past, however, some sailors apparently had that very fear. Many sailed keeping land in sight. But other brave mariners cast off their fears and took to the open sea.

About 3,000 years ago, Phoenician seamen set out from their home ports on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean to carry on trade in Europe and North Africa. In the fourth century B.C.E., a Greek explorer named Pytheas sailed all around Britain and may have reached as far as Iceland. And long before European ships ever entered the Indian Ocean, Arab and Chinese sailors from the East had already been traversing it. In fact, the first European to sail to India, Vasco da Gama, arrived there safely with the help of an Arab pilot, Ibn Majid, who guided Da Gama's ships through the 23-day crossing of the Indian Ocean. How did such ancient navigators find their way at sea?

Dead Reckoning Kept Them Alive

Early mariners had to depend on dead reckoning. It requires that the navigator know three things, as shown in the illustration below: (1) his ship's starting point, (2) its speed, and (3) its heading (direction of travel). Knowing the starting point was easy. But how could the heading be determined?

To find his heading in 1492, Christopher Columbus used a compass. But compasses had been available in Europe only since the 12th century C.E. Without compasses, pilots navigated by the sun and the stars. When clouds obscured their view, sailors oriented themselves by the long, regular ocean swells produced by steady winds. They kept track of how these swells were aligned with the rising and setting of the sun and the stars.

How did they estimate speed? One way was to time how long it took the ship to pass an object cast into the water at the bow. A later, more precise method involved dropping overboard a piece of wood attached to a rope knot-

Dead Reckoning



Starting point ①

②



ted at specific regular intervals. The floating wood drew the rope out as the ship advanced. After a prescribed time, the rope was hauled in and the knots drawn out were counted. This indicated the ship's speed in knots—nautical miles per hour—a measuring unit still used today. Knowing his speed, the navigator could calculate the distance his ship had traveled in a day. On a *chart*, a map of the sea, he then drew a line to show his progress along his chosen heading.

Of course, ocean currents and side winds could push the ship off course. So the navigator periodically calculated and recorded the steering adjustments that were needed to keep the ship on track. Each day, he continued from where he had left off—measuring, calculating, drawing. When the ship finally dropped anchor, these daily notations on his charts formed a permanent record of how the ship had arrived at its destination. By means of dead reckoning, Columbus made his way from Spain to North America and back over 500 years ago. His carefully drawn charts allow modern seamen to retrace his remarkable voyage.

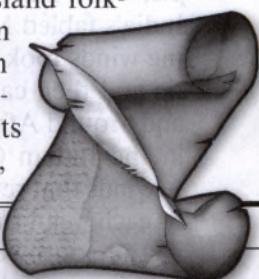
Sailing by the Sky

How did old-time navigators use the heavenly bodies to guide their vessels? The rising and setting sun indicated east and west. At dawn, sailors could note how much the sun had shifted by comparing its position with the fading stars. At night, they could get their bearings

from Polaris—the North Star—which appears to be almost directly above the North Pole after dusk. Farther south, a bright constellation known as the Southern Cross helped them to locate the South Pole. So on a clear night, sailors on all seas could check their heading by means of at least one celestial reference.

But these were not the only astral guideposts. The Polynesians and other seafarers of the Pacific, for instance, could read the night sky like a road map. One of their techniques involved setting a course toward a star that they knew rose or set on the horizon in the direction of their goal. Throughout the night, these navigators also checked other star alignments to make sure that they were on course. If their heading was wrong, the heavens showed them how to correct it.

How reliable was this system? At a time when European sailors often clung to shore in fear of plunging off the edge of a flat earth, Pacific mariners were apparently making long mid-ocean crossings between relatively tiny islets. For example, more than 1,500 years ago, Polynesians left the Marquesas Islands and headed north across the vast Pacific Ocean. By the time they went ashore in Hawaii, they had journeyed 2,300 miles! Island folklore tells of ancient Polynesian voyages back and forth between Hawaii and Tahiti. Some historians say that these accounts are mere legends. Nevertheless,



Dead reckoning was carefully documented for future navigation

Heading

Determined by observing currents, stars, the sun, and the wind



Compass



Sextant



State-of-the-art instruments make today's navigation an exact science

modern-day seafarers have repeated that voyage, navigating by the stars, ocean swells, and other natural phenomena—with out instruments.

Riding the Wind

Sailing ships were at the mercy of the winds. A breeze from behind moved a vessel along quite nicely, but a head wind slowed the boat considerably. No wind, as was often experienced in the *doldrums*—the region around the equator—meant no progress. In time, sailors discovered prevailing ocean winds that helped establish highways for sailing ships on the high seas. Navigators made good use of these winds.

Of course, if the winds were contrary, they could also bring misery and death. For example, when Da Gama set sail from Portugal to India's fabled Malabar Coast in 1497, prevailing winds took him out into the South Atlantic and then carried him back southeastward and around Africa's Cape of Good Hope. But in the Indian Ocean, he met the monsoons—winds that reverse direction seasonally. Early each year the summer monsoon rears up in the southwest part of the Indian Ocean, and for months it blows all that floats toward Asia. In late fall the winter monsoon takes over. Roaring in from the northeast, it blows back toward Africa. But Da Gama left India in August and soon faced unfavorable winds. Instead of the 23 days required for his eastward crossing, his return trip took nearly three months. Because of this delay, fresh food ran short, and he lost many of his men to scurvy.

Shrewd navigators on the Indian Ocean learned to check the calendar as well as the compass. Eastbound ships passing the Cape of Good Hope had to set out for India by early summer or risk waiting months for favorable winds. On the other hand, ships' captains departed India for Europe in late autumn to avoid battling the summer monsoon. Thus, the Indian Ocean route was like an alternating one-way street—marine traffic between Europe and India's Malabar Coast often moved in just one direction at a time.

Navigation Sails Onward

Time passed, and the art of navigation eventually set a new course. Mechanical instruments began to reduce dependence upon the naked eye and guesswork. The *astrolabe* and later the more accurate *sextant*—devices that determine the elevation of the sun or a star above the horizon—allowed mariners to find their latitude north or south of the equator. The *marine chronometer*—a reliable, seaworthy clock—gave them the ability to determine longitude, their east or west position. These instruments were far more precise than dead reckoning.

Today, *gyrocompasses* indicate north without a magnetic needle. The *Global Positioning System* can indicate one's exact location at the push of a few buttons. *Electronic displays* often replace paper charts. Yes, navigation has become an exact science. But all this advancement only increases our respect for the courage and skill of the ancient seafarers who guided their crafts through vast and empty seas with only their knowledge of water, sky, and wind.

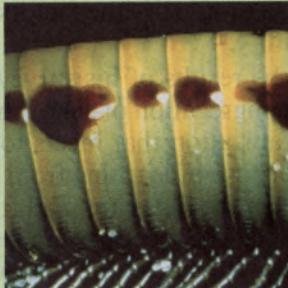


INSECT REPELLENT For Monkeys!

THE tropical forests of Venezuela are home to a highly intelligent primate, the wedge-capped capuchin monkey. When the rainy season descends on the monkey's jungle home, something else descends with it—clouds of merciless mosquitoes. Besides being a nuisance, these invading insects are dangerous. They often carry the eggs of the parasitic botfly, which can result in debilitating, festering cysts when they are deposited beneath the monkey's skin.

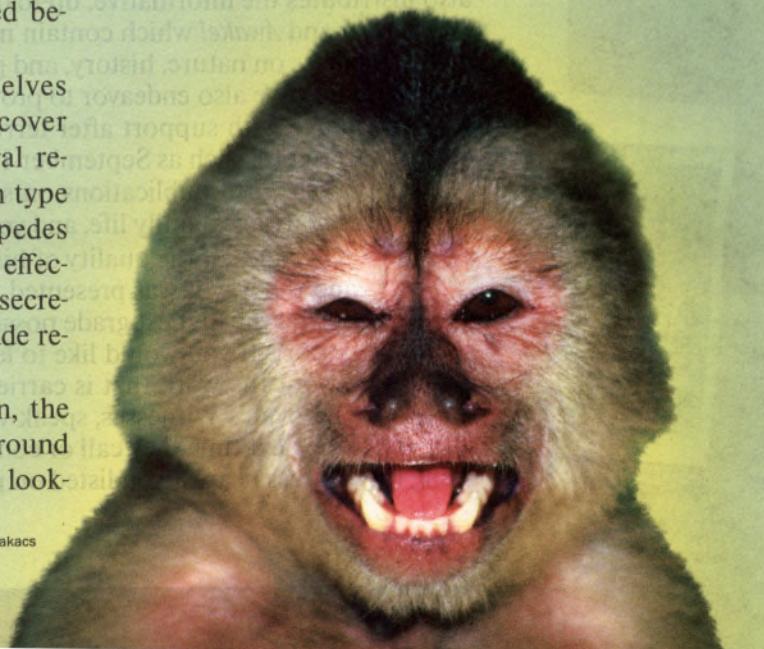
Apparently to protect themselves from the onslaught, capuchins cover their bodies with a potent natural repellent—the secretion of a certain type of jungle millipede. These millipedes secrete two compounds that are effective against insects. In fact, their secretion is even stronger than man-made repellents used by the military!

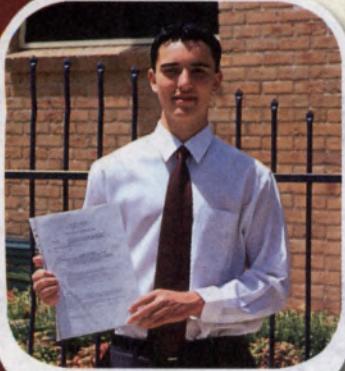
Hence, during the rainy season, the wedge-capped capuchin pokes around in tree bark or on termite mounds look-



Millipede secretion
Thomas Eisner/Cornell University

ing for the four-inch-long millipedes. When it finds one, it rubs the millipede all over itself—from head to foot. The "secretion is so avidly sought by the monkeys that up to four of them will share a single millipede," says the *Journal of Chemical Ecology*. Even the usual pecking order, evident at feeding time and on other occasions, is set aside when a millipede massage begins.





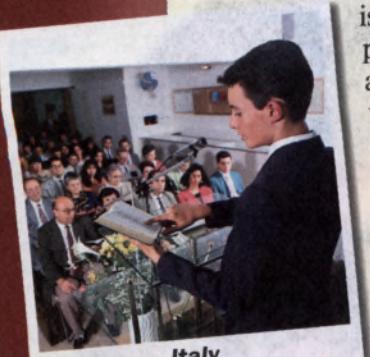
Philip

Profile of a Religious Community

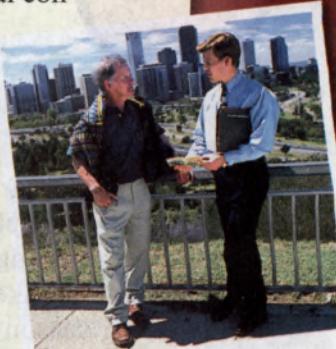
As part of his high-school geography course, 15-year-old Philip was assigned to investigate and report on one of the sporting, political, cultural, or religious communities in Sydney, Australia, his home city. Philip chose to report on the local congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, of which he and his family are members. The students were instructed to speak to 20 members of their chosen community to provide, among other things, a profile of "the factors that characterise the community."

After compiling the results of his survey, Philip wrote: "[The local] congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses is a religious organization that meets together primarily for the purpose of learning from the Bible. During these meetings, passages are read from the Bible and then explained. The meetings are also aimed at instructing us how best to teach others about the Bible. This is carried out by calling from door to door in order to meet people at their homes, where they are most comfortable. All members of the community take part in this work on a regular basis, in varying degrees, according to their circumstances. Along with learning the Bible themselves and teaching others about it, the community also distributes the informative, up-to-date journals *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* which contain many interesting articles on nature, history, and global and local issues. We also endeavor to provide distressed people with support after terrible world atrocities, such as September 11, and we provide helpful publications on such themes as marriage, family life, and youth."

Because of the quality of his research and the way it was presented, Philip received the highest grade possible for his report. If you would like to learn more about the work that is carried out by Jehovah's Witnesses, speak with them the next time they call or contact them using the address nearest you listed on page 5.



Italy



Australia



Brazil



Netherlands

Young People Ask...

How Can I Stop Trying to Be Perfect?

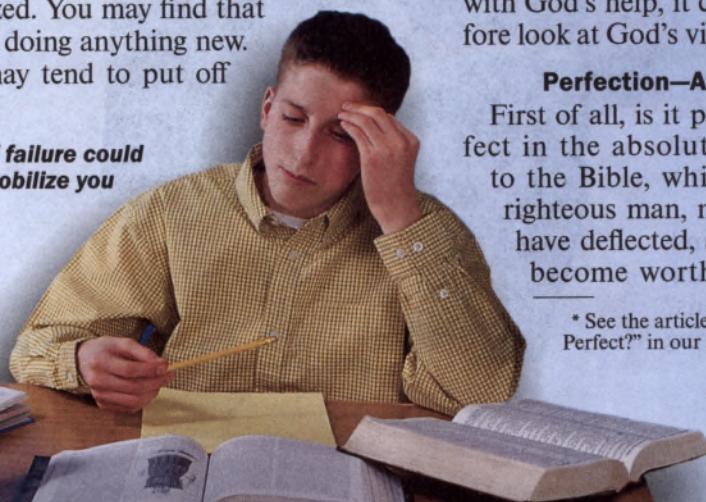
"Perfectionism has basically taken over my life."—Carly.

PERFECTIONISM—the belief that one has to be absolutely perfect in everything he or she does—afflicts the thinking of many youths.

Says the book *Perfectionism—What's Bad About Being Too Good?*: "There's a big difference between the healthy pursuit of excellence and the unhealthy striving for an impossible ideal. People who strive for excellence may have a strong need for order and organization and high expectations for themselves, but they also accept their own mistakes and have positive ways of coping. . . . Perfectionists, on the other hand, live in a constant state of anxiety about making errors. They have extremely high standards."

Does that describe you? If your standards are impossibly high, you can easily become immobilized. You may find that you avoid doing anything new. Or you may tend to put off

Fear of failure could immobilize you



doing important things because you are afraid you will fail. You may even feel inclined to reject anyone who fails to meet your standards, and you may find yourself friendless.

If the above is in any way true of you, consider the Bible's words at Ecclesiastes 7:16: "Do not become righteous overmuch, nor show yourself excessively wise. Why should you cause desolation to yourself?" Yes, a perfectionist can "cause desolation" to himself! In fact, perfectionism has even been linked to such life-threatening eating disorders as anorexia nervosa and bulimia.*

"How can I stop trying to be perfect?" you may therefore ask. Admittedly, changing one's thinking in this regard can be challenging. But with God's help, it can be done. Let us therefore look at God's view of perfectionism.

Perfection—An Attainable Goal?

First of all, is it possible for you to be perfect in the absolute sense? Not according to the Bible, which says: "There is not a righteous man, not even one . . . All men have deflected, all of them together have become worthless." (Romans 3:10-12)

* See the article "Why Do I Feel That I Have to Be Perfect?" in our July 22, 2003, issue.

Thought-provoking words, aren't they? They indicate that anyone who tries to be absolutely perfect is going to fail.

Consider the apostle Paul, who obviously was an outstanding example of spirituality. Yet, even Paul couldn't serve God without error. He confessed: "When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me. I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, but I behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members." (Romans 7:21-23) It was only with God's help that Paul could be faithful as a Christian.

Fortunately, God neither demands nor expects absolute perfection from any of us. "He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14) Only in God's new world will humans finally reach the state of perfection.

Revised Expectations

In the meantime, then, it is unrealistic to think that you can be absolutely perfect. In fact, you should expect to make mistakes from time to time. (Romans 3:23) Why, sometimes we are not even aware of our mistakes! Psalm 19:12 says: "No one can see his own errors." (*Today's English Version*) A youth named Matthew puts it this way: "You're not perfect—no one on Earth is. If you expect perfection of yourself, you're never going to be happy.... It's not realistic, it's not possible."

With that thought in mind, why not work on revising some of your expectations? For example, are you wearing

yourself out trying to be the very best at something? The Bible indicates that such an exhausting effort can, in effect, prove to be "vanity and a striving after the wind." (Ecclesiastes 4:4) The fact is, few ever succeed at being the best. And even when someone does, it's usually just a matter of time before another comes along who is better.

The apostle Paul advised: "I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think; but to think so as to have a sound mind." (Romans 12:3) Be realistic! Revise your expectations to reflect both your abilities and your limitations. Seek excellence, but don't seek perfection. Set a specific but attainable goal.

For example, Paul encouraged Timothy to become "a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth

Trying to learn new things can help you to cope with making mistakes



aright.” (2 Timothy 2:15) Yes, Paul encouraged excellence, but not perfection. In a similar way, set reasonable goals for yourself. And if you’re not sure what “reasonable” is, talk things over with your parents or another adult whom you trust.

Some even recommend that you deliberately try doing some things that you are not good at, such as taking up a new sport or playing a musical instrument. True, as you learn something new, you’re bound to make lots of mistakes. But that is not entirely a bad thing. Perhaps it will help you to see that making mistakes is simply part of the learning process.

Whatever you seek to accomplish—whether it’s writing a school report or mastering a piano sonata—consider another piece of advice from the apostle Paul: “Do not loiter at your business.” (Romans 12:11) Yes, do not put things off, or procrastinate, simply because you’re afraid to fail.

One youth made a practice of putting off school projects by using the excuse that she was “organizing herself.” While personal organization may be a good thing, be careful that it is not an excuse for procrastination. This girl came to realize that “faced with the choice between turning in a school paper that doesn’t completely satisfy you and not turning one in at all, the better choice is always to turn one in.”

Banish Self-Defeating Thoughts!

Admittedly, it may not be easy to handle doing a less-than-perfect job. Critical, negative thoughts may still flood your mind. What can you do? The fact is that dwelling on negative thoughts is destructive, self-defeating. So make a conscious effort to push from your mind unreasonable thoughts about yourself. Have a sense of humor regarding your mistakes. After all, there is “a time to laugh.” (Ecclesiastes 3:4) Remember, too, that Jehovah does not approve of abusive speech—even when we direct it toward ourselves.—Ephesians 4:31.

Instead of constantly berating yourself, apply the words of Proverbs 11:17: “A man of loving-kindness is dealing rewardingly with his own soul, but the cruel person is bringing ostracism upon his own organism.” So consider this question, Has having excessively high standards made it easy for you to have friends? Probably not. Maybe you’ve even rejected people because they were not perfect. So, what can you do?

Apply the Bible’s command: “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely if anyone has a cause for complaint against another.” (Colossians 3:13) Yes, by being more reasonable in what you expect of others, you will make it more possible to enjoy friendships!

‘Why,’ you may wonder, ‘would people tend to avoid me because of my perfectionism?’ Well, consider the effect that voicing high expectations for yourself may have on others. The book *When Perfect Isn’t Good Enough* explains: “Complaining excessively whenever you get less than an A on an exam may be insulting to friends who have to struggle to get a B or C.” So work on being less negative and self-centered. People will find you much more pleasant to be around.

Young Carly sums the matter up when she says: “I have to basically tell my perfectionism to back off.” How can you do that? Meditate on God’s view of matters. If you still have difficulty managing your thinking in this regard, talk to your parents or to a mature Christian in your congregation. Go to God in prayer and ask for his help in changing your thinking. Prayer can be a powerful tool in fighting perfectionism.—Psalm 55:22; Philippians 4:6,7.

Always remember that Jehovah does not demand perfection; he simply expects us to be faithful to him. (1 Corinthians 4:2) If you are striving to be faithful, you can truly be happy with who you are—even though you are not perfect.

DISASTER AT SEA TRAGEDY ON LAND

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN SPAIN

AN ECOLOGICAL and economic disaster began on November 13, 2002, when in heavy seas the oil tanker *Prestige* developed a leak. Efforts to save the stricken ship failed, and after six days—during which close to 20,000 tons of oil had leaked—the tanker finally split in two and sank, some 130 miles off the coast of Spain.

The tanker carried over 50,000 tons of oil down with it, and the hull continued leaking about 125 tons a day. New oil slicks formed and drifted inexorably toward the coast. The viscosity and toxic nature of the heavy fuel oil made its environmental impact especially tragic.

The fumes overcame a number of volunteers who tried to clean up the beaches. Furthermore, the fuel oil formed a heaving mass of tar that stuck to the rocks like black chewing gum. “It is one of the worst oil slicks of history,” lamented Michel Girin, director of the Centre of Documentation, Research and Experimentation on Accidental Water Pollution.

Heroic Efforts

For weeks, hundreds of fishermen put out to sea to battle oil slicks that threatened their livelihood. The fishermen fought heroically to collect the oil before it blackened their beaches and ruined one of the richest fishing banks in the world. Some men lifted chunks of the greasy sludge out of the water by hand. “It was backbreaking work, but those of us in small boats had no other option,” explained Antonio, a local fisherman.

While the fishermen fought the oil at sea, thousands of volunteers from all over Spain worked to clean up the beaches. Dressed in disposable white coveralls and wearing masks, they looked as if they were engaged in biological warfare. But their task consisted of labo-



riously shoveling the oil into buckets so that it could be carried away. Like the fishermen, some volunteers even used their hands to remove oil that had stained the beaches.

Tragic Effects

"I thought I would die of grief when I first saw the black waves hurling oil against the quay in Muxía," said Rafael Mouzo, mayor of Corcubión in northern Galicia, where the coastline was devastated. "The oil spill has affected the livelihood of so many people in our town."

Sadly, Spain's beautiful new national park, Las Islas Atlánticas (Atlantic Islands), bore the brunt of one of the oil slicks. Huge colonies of seabirds nested in these five previously unspoiled islands off the coast of Galicia. The surrounding sea shelf was especially rich in marine species.

By the beginning of December, 95 percent of the park's coastline had been contaminat-

ed with oil. Ornithologists calculated that some 100,000 birds would be affected. Divers even saw large lumps of solidified oil bobbing on the seabed and damaging the delicate marine ecosystem.

Jay Holcomb, who organized a bird rescue center, reported: "Usually, the birds die from either drowning or hypothermia. The oil impregnates the feathers, destroying their insulating and water-resistant properties. Furthermore, the heavy oil drags them down, just like sodden clothes can drag down a swimmer. . . . It is a source of great satisfaction to rescue some birds, even if the numbers are relatively few."

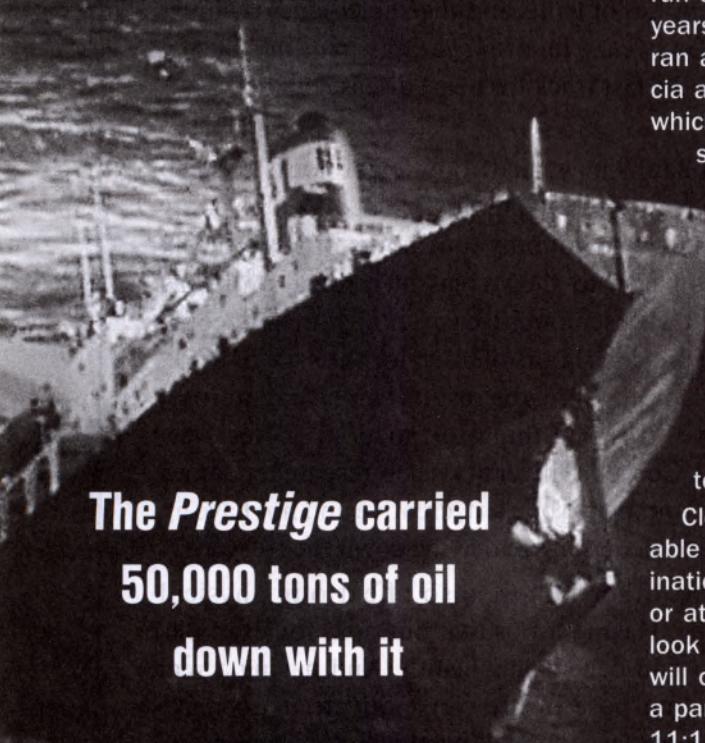
'An Accident Waiting to Happen'

The world depends on oil for energy, but to keep costs down, oil is often transported in dangerous, badly maintained vessels. Therefore, *The New York Times* described that situation as "an accident just waiting to happen."

The *Prestige* is the third tanker to run aground off Galicia's coast in the last 26 years. Some ten years ago, the *Aegean Sea* ran aground near La Coruña in northern Galicia and spilled 40,000 tons of crude oil, from which some stretches of nearby coastline have still not recovered. And in 1976 the *Urquio-la* sank in the same estuary, unleashing a disastrous oil slick of over 100,000 tons.

In light of the latest disaster, the European Union has decided to ban all fuel-oil tankers that do not have a double hull. It remains to be seen, though, whether that measure will prove sufficient to protect Europe's battered coastline.

Clearly, human governments have been unable to guarantee a world free from contamination—whether it be oil slicks, toxic waste, or atmospheric pollution. Christians, however, look forward to the time when God's Kingdom will oversee the conversion of our planet into a paradise that will never be polluted.—Isaiah 11:1, 9; Revelation 11:18.



**The *Prestige* carried
50,000 tons of oil
down with it**



Choices That Affect Your Health

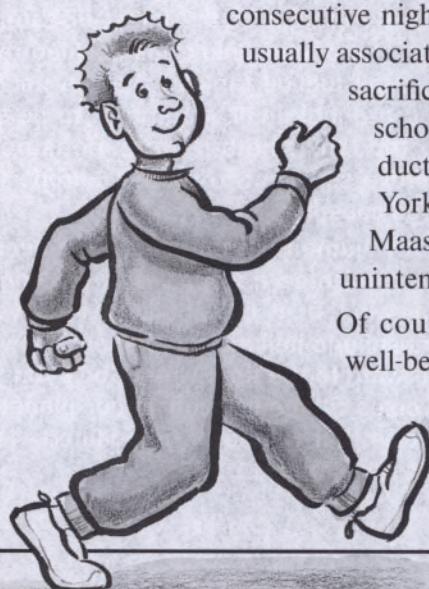
EATING right and keeping fit often present a challenge. Under today's pressures, it seems more convenient to eat processed "comfort foods" than to prepare fresh dishes and easier to spend free time in front of the TV or computer than to take part in physical activity. These choices, however, may be condemning a growing number of adults and children to serious health problems.

In Asia, says *Asiaweek* magazine, "rich diets and increasingly sedentary habits are creating a diabetes epidemic." Disturbingly, the disease is striking ever younger members of society. And in Canada "researchers found that only one in seven preteens eat sufficient quantities of fruits and vegetables [and] that just over half play enough to ever break a sweat," reports *The Globe and Mail*. Such a life-style puts these youngsters "on the fast track for heart disease by their 30s," states the report.

Similarly, sleep experts say that adults may need about eight hours of sleep every night and that young people may need even more. In fact, in a University of Chicago study, healthy young men who got only four hours of sleep on six

consecutive nights began to show signs of medical problems usually associated with senior citizens. Though many people sacrifice precious hours of sleep for the sake of work, school, or pleasure, the results can be counterproductive. "It's one thing to function," notes New York's Cornell University sleep researcher James Maas, "another to be alert, creative and not have an unintended sleep seizure driving down the freeway."

Of course, other factors also affect our physical well-being. Having a positive outlook, for example, can benefit our health. And having a real purpose in life can motivate us to make choices that will help us to stay healthy.





BY A WAKE! WRITER IN RUSSIA

ST. PETERSBURG RUSSIA'S “WINDOW ON EUROPE”

“I love thee, work of Peter's hand! / I love thy stern, symmetric form; / The Neva's calm and queenly flow / Betwixt her quays of granite-stone.”

—ALEKSANDR SERGEYEVICH PUSHKIN.

PUSHKIN'S famous poem about St. Petersburg, partially quoted here, draws attention to the city's founder and to its location in the far north, where the Neva River enters the Baltic Sea. ‘But how,’ you may wonder, ‘did this major city of the world come into existence in a northern marshland?’

By the late 17th century, Russia's growth was stymied by its lack of access to the sea. The dream of Russia's young czar, Peter the Great, was to establish for Russia a “window on Europe” in the form of an outlet to the sea. To the south, access to the Black Sea was blocked by the Ottoman Empire. So Peter turned his attention north to where Sweden

possessed the territory that borders the Baltic Sea.

To fulfill his dream, in August 1700, Peter declared war on Sweden. Although his military efforts were at first repelled, he did not give up. By November 1702, Peter had forced a Swedish withdrawal from Lake Ladoga. This largest lake in Europe is connected by the Neva River to the Baltic Sea, about 40 miles away. The Swedes became entrenched in a fortress on a tiny island near where the Neva flows from the lake. Peter was able to wrest this island fortress from Swedish control and rename it Shlissel'burg.

Later the Swedes took their stand in a fortress called Nienshants, near where the Neva



Peter the Great,
founder of the city





The Peter-Paul Fortress with its cathedral, where the foundations of St. Petersburg were laid

flows into the Baltic. In May 1703 the Swedish garrison there was overwhelmed. This victory put the Russians in control of the entire delta. Immediately, Peter began building a fortress on nearby Zayachy Island for defending the mouth of the Neva. Thus, on May 16, 1703, about 300 years ago, Peter the Great laid the first stone of what is known today as the Peter-Paul Fortress. This is the accepted date of the founding of St. Petersburg, named after the czar's patron saint, the apostle Peter.

The Making of a Capital

Unlike many capital cities, St. Petersburg was from the outset planned and built to be an impressive capital. Despite its location in the far north—the latitude is that of present-day Anchorage, Alaska—Peter forged ahead with construction. Wood was brought in from the area of Lake Ladoga and from Novgorod. One way that Peter obtained stones for

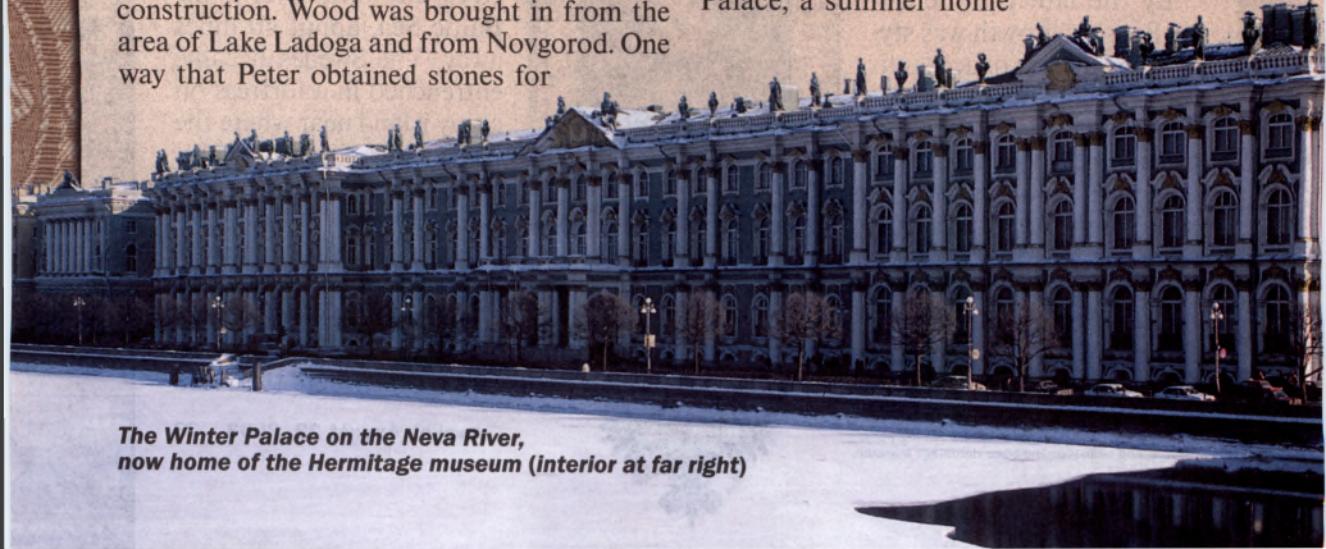
building was by imposing a quota. Any Russian bringing goods into St. Petersburg had to bring a certain number of stones as well. Also, Peter banned the construction of stone houses, first in Moscow and then in the rest of his empire. As a result, unemployed masons turned up in St. Petersburg.

Construction of the city proceeded at what *The Great Soviet Encyclopedia* calls “an exceptional pace for that time.” Drainage canals, foundation piles, streets, buildings, churches, hospitals, and government offices soon appeared. In the year of the city’s founding, construction started on a shipyard, known as the Admiralty, which in time became the headquarters of the Russian fleet.

By 1710 construction began on the Summer Palace, a summer home



The Winter Palace on the Neva River, now home of the Hermitage museum (interior at far right)





The Great Palace

**St. Petersburg has been called
the Venice of the North**

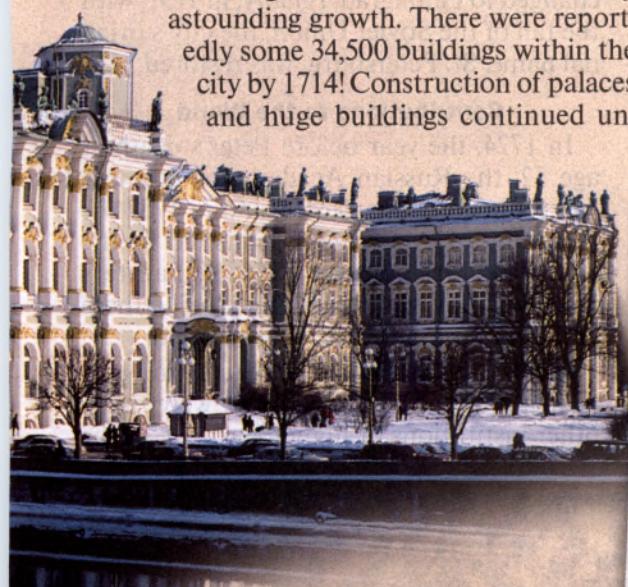
for the czars. In 1712, Russia's capital with its many governmental offices was moved from Moscow to St. Petersburg. The city's first stone palace, still preserved, was finished in 1714. It was built for the city's first governor, Aleksandr Menshikov. That same year, work also began on the Peter-Paul Cathedral inside the fortress of the same name. Its towering steeple is a city landmark. The Winter Palace on the Neva River was also built, and it was rebuilt several times. Later the present Winter Palace of some 1,100 rooms was built. This grand palace has become the city's center and home to the famous Hermitage, the State museum.

St. Petersburg's first decade was marked by astounding growth. There were reportedly some 34,500 buildings within the city by 1714! Construction of palaces and huge buildings continued un-

abated. The powerful influence of religion in Russia's history is evidenced by many of the city's buildings.

For example, there is Kazan Cathedral, with its semicircular shape and frontal colonnade. Its striking appearance on the city's foremost street, Nevsky Prospekt, played a role in the street's being called one of the world's great thoroughfares. Later, construction began on St. Isaac's Cathedral. Some 24,000 piles were driven into the underlying marshy ground to support the structure, and 220 pounds of pure gold were used to gild its massive cupola.

Building in the outlying areas of St. Petersburg was also dramatic. Work on the Great Palace, a residence for Peter, was begun in 1714 in Peterhof, now Petrodvorets. Meanwhile, in the nearby town of Tsarskoe Selo, now called Pushkin, the lavish Catherine Palace for Peter's wife was built. In the latter



The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg



The world-renowned Mariinsky Theater

Steve Raymer/National Geographic Image Collection



Photo by Natasha Razina



St. Petersburg's subway stations have been described as "underground palaces"

part of the same century, two grand palaces were constructed in the two southern suburbs, Pavlovsk and Gatchina.

The beauty of this newly developed city was largely amplified by the hundreds of bridges constructed over its many river channels and canals. Thus, St. Petersburg has often been described as the "Venice of the North." French, German, and Italian architects worked along with talented Russian counterparts to produce what *The Encyclopædia Britannica* states is "one of the most splendid and harmonious cities of Europe."

Endurance Despite Adversity

Little did Peter's opponents realize with what tenacity the Russians would hold on to their window on Europe. The book *Peter the Great—His Life and World* explains: "From the day that Peter the Great first set foot on the mouth of the Neva, the land and the city which arose there have always remained Russian."

Indeed, as the above-quoted book says, "through the centuries, none of the conquerors who subsequently entered Russia with great armies—Charles XII, Napoleon, Hitler—was able to capture Peter's Baltic port, although Nazi armies besieged the

city for 900 days in World War II." During that long siege, some one million people in the city died. Many perished from cold and famine during the winter of 1941/42, when temperatures fell to 40 degrees below zero. This temperature happens to be the point at which the Celsius and Fahrenheit scales register the same.

In 1914, when World War I began, the city's name was changed to Petrograd. When the first head of the Soviet Union, Vladimir Lenin, died in 1924, its name was changed to Leningrad. Finally, in 1991, with the fall of the Soviet Union, the city's original name, St. Petersburg, was restored.

Contributions to the World

In 1724, the year before Peter's death at age 52, the Russian Academy of Sciences was founded by his decree, and in 1757 the Academy of Arts was established in the city. The 19th-century Russian painters Karl Bryullov and Ilya Repin studied there and went on to international acclaim.

In 1819 the St. Petersburg State University was founded, and in time so were many other institutions of higher learning. In the

late 19th century, as a resident of St. Petersburg, the Nobel Prize-winning Russian physiologist Ivan Pavlov developed the concept of the conditioned reflex. And here the Russian chemist Dmitry Mendeleev composed his periodic table of elements, or Mendeleev's table, as it is known in Russia.

The city's cultural life also drew international attention. In 1738 a dancing academy was founded, eventually becoming the world-renowned Mariinsky Ballet. Soon many ballet and concert halls and theaters graced the city. Famous composers made their home in St. Petersburg, including Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky. He is known for such enduring music as the classical ballet scores of *Sleeping Beauty*, *Swan Lake*, and *The Nutcracker* as well as his famous composition the *1812 Overture*.

St. Petersburg also nurtured a host of celebrated Russian poets and writers who made their residence here. Young Aleksandr Sergeyevich Pushkin became what many consider to be Russia's "greatest poet and the founder of modern Russian literature." The Russian answer to Shakespeare is Pushkin, whose works have been translated into all major languages and include the ode to his adopted city, which was quoted at the outset. In addition, there is Dostoyevski, who *The Encyclopædia Britannica* says is "usually regarded as one of the finest novelists who ever lived."

So it might be said that whatever St. Petersburg received from Europe in its humble beginnings, it gave back generously many times over. Through the years its residents have certainly enriched world culture.

A Time for Reflection

During the week of May 24 to June 1, hundreds of thousands of visitors to St. Petersburg shared in the celebration of its 300-year anniversary. As they enjoyed the results of the massive preparatory work, many reflected on the city's beauty and remarkable history.

Coincidentally, just the week before, many had visited St. Petersburg for the dedication of

the enlarged facilities of the Russia branch of Jehovah's Witnesses, located in the city's suburbs. The following day, 9,817 met in the Kirov Stadium in St. Petersburg to hear both a review of the dedication program and encouraging reports about the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in many countries.

More Than Can Be Seen

Visitors to St. Petersburg often feel that there is so much to see that they do not know where to start. Such is the dilemma in the Hermitage. It has been estimated that if one were to spend a minute on each object in the hundreds of display rooms, it would take years to complete the tour.

Others consider one of St. Petersburg's richest treats to be its ballet. For example, in the famous Mariinsky Theater, one may sit beneath ornate crystal chandeliers surrounded by shimmering interior facades and walls, gilded with almost 900 pounds of gold. In this setting, what is possibly some of the best ballet in the world can be seen.

A simple walk in this city of about five million inhabitants can yield the rewarding experience of seeing elegant buildings along the Neva River. Just traveling by the city's marvelous underground metro, one of the deepest in the world, can itself be a cultural treat. Over two million people a day ride the metro, traveling between its more than 50 stations on about 60 miles of track. Some stations are among the most beautiful to be found anywhere. In 1955, the year of the metro's opening, *The New York Times* called the stations "a series of twentieth century underground palaces."

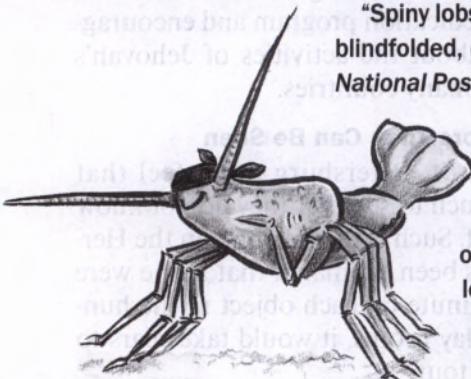
Indeed, it is difficult not to be impressed by St. Petersburg—by its spectacular creation and development as well as its enduring legacy of beauty, art, culture, education, and music. Whatever their interests are, visitors may well agree with the reference work that calls St. Petersburg "one of the most beautiful cities of Europe."

Watching the World

Lobsters Navigate Home

"Spiny lobsters have an uncanny ability to find their way home, even after being blindfolded, driven in circles and plunked in unfamiliar waters," states Canada's *National Post* newspaper. The researchers captured dozens of lobsters off the Florida Keys, placed them in dark tanks, and released them up to

23 miles from where they were caught. Though their eyes were covered, the lobsters always gravitated toward their place of capture. The researchers suggest that this is the most advanced form of navigation yet found in an invertebrate. "No matter what we did, the lobsters figured out the direction that they needed to walk in order to go back home," said Dr. Kenneth Lohmann, who headed the research. "It's really a rather remarkable finding if you think about it—these little crustaceans being able to somehow determine their position under conditions in which humans would be completely lost."



European Union Expansion

"A half-century after the Cold War divided the Continent in two, negotiators reached a deal . . . to unite Western and Central Europe," states the Paris daily *International Herald Tribune*. By accepting the invitation to join the European Union in 2004, the ten invited countries—Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, and Slovenia—will add an additional 75 million people. Thus, "a single market of 450 million people" will result in a combined economic output of \$10.7 trillion. This roughly equals the United States' output of \$11.5 trillion. "For the first time in history, Europe will become one," declared Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission. Among the numerous difficulties facing the expanded Union will be the challenge of handling business in 21 official languages.

Western-Style Weddings in Japan

Although a mere 0.8 percent of Japan's populace claim to be Christian, Western-style wedding ceremonies—replete with white wedding gown, flower bouquets, and an aisle to march down—are gaining popularity, reports *The Japan Times*. One magazine's survey of 4,132 couples who got married in 2001 showed that 61.2 percent had Western-style weddings, 20.1 percent had Shinto weddings, and 0.9 percent had Buddhist ceremonies. For Western-style weddings, wedding companies usually hire "nonclergy foreigners with Caucasian faces," as these are often preferred by their clients. "Many young couples think a foreigner performing the rites can add a more sophisticated or even solemn atmosphere to their weddings," said a wedding company spokeswoman. These "weekend pastors" sim-

ply administer the wedding vows and recite Bible passages before an audience.

Dangerous Herbs

"The popular belief that because plants are natural they do not in any way harm the body is false," reports the newspaper *El Financiero* of Mexico City. According to Abigail Aguilar Contreras of the Mexican Institute of Social Security, self-medicating with herbs can be dangerous. "Improper use of medicinal plants can harm the body and even cause death, as they contain active substances or drugs," the paper states. An example is yellow oleander, also called friar's elbow, which is used for weight loss. This herb can cause diarrhea and vomiting and can damage the heart. Therefore, one may wish to consult a skilled herbalist before deciding to use herbs for curative purposes.

"Stock Trading Addicts"

"Stock trading addicts" are now commanding the attention of one German therapist, reports the Hamburg newspaper *Die Welt*. According to addiction counselor Joachim Otto, the addicts were lured by the "euphoric appeal of quick profit." They engaged in stock trading "for fear they would otherwise miss the chance of a lifetime" but then lost control and got hooked by "the terrific speed of transfers, the risk, the permanent state of excitement." Now many have large debts. Without the knowledge of their wives, some have gambled away all their savings or mortgaged their home. Most go for therapy only when their families cannot stand it any longer.

Twins Born in Different Years

"Twins Caleigh and Emily Johnson have a lot in common but not their birthday—they arrived in different years," reports New York's *Daily News*.

Caleigh was born at 11:24 p.m. Dec. 31. Emily came into the world at 12:19 a.m. Jan. 1." Their mom, Dawn Johnson, of Barnegat, New Jersey, was elated. "Even though they're twins, I wanted them to have their own separate identities," she said. "They proved it right from the start." The twins, slated to be born on February 2, arrived a month early.

Internet Language Invades Classrooms

"The breezy abbreviated language of Internet chat rooms and instant messaging is invading high school English classrooms," says the *Toronto Star* newspaper. Some educators believe that the "new technologies are influencing not just the way their students write, but the way they think." Students have adopted a new language of English abbreviations. Such abbreviations are regularly used to speed up conversations when chatting on line or when sending notes by cell phone. Now this hybrid of writing

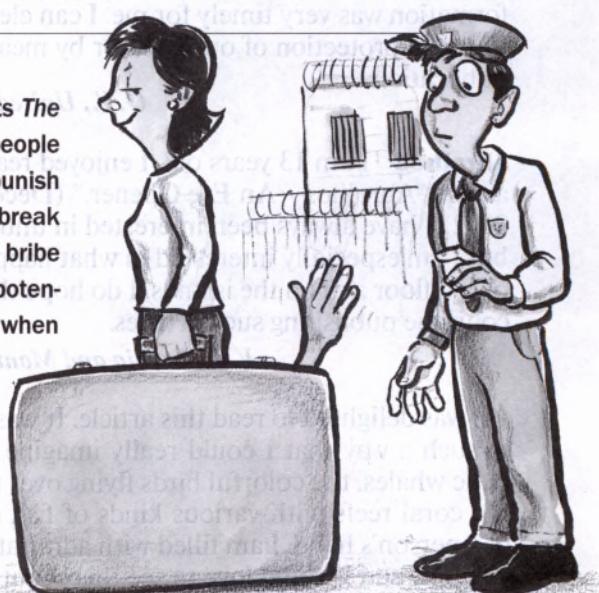
ten words and abbreviations is showing up in homework assignments.

New Findings on Coffee

"Decaffeinated coffee is no healthier than conventional coffee and may be just as likely to keep drinkers awake all night," states *The Times* of London. Research by scientists at University Hospital, in Zurich, Switzerland, suggests that because both forms of coffee affect the cardiovascular and nervous systems in almost identical ways, caffeine may not be the problem. Lead researcher Dr. Roberto Conti admits: "Until now we have attributed the cardiovascular effects of coffee to caffeine, but we found [that] non-coffee drinkers given decaffeinated coffee also display these effects. This demonstrates how little we know about the effects of one of our most popular beverages, and the most abundantly consumed stimulant worldwide."

No Crime Committed

"Escaping from prison is not a crime in Mexico," reports *The Korea Herald*. "Mexico's legal system recognizes that all people have a fundamental desire to be free. And it does not punish them for pursuing it." Prisoners are charged only if they break laws while escaping, injure someone, damage property, bribe someone, or conspire with other prisoners. There is a potential hazard though. Prison guards are authorized to shoot when anyone attempts to escape. This has led to the use of some very ingenious escape methods. In 1998, for example, a convicted murderer dieted until he weighed only 110 pounds so that his wife could carry him out in the suitcase she used for taking home his dirty laundry. He was apprehended nine months later but escaped again and has not been seen since.



From Our Readers

Electronic Games I am 13 years old. When I saw the magazine with the cover series "Electronic Games—Is There a Dark Side?" I knew it was for me! (December 22, 2002) On page 7, a game was described

that I was addicted to at one time. I want to thank you for putting those articles in the magazine because they helped me to change my ways and to love Jehovah more.

J. L., United States



I am almost 15 years old, and at school we had to give a report on a current topic of our choice. This *Awake!* came just in time. My report was a big hit with the class. I got good grades too! Please keep writing such articles.

J. A., Germany

I have always wanted to express appreciation for the information provided through the magazines you publish, but when I read the articles on electronic games, I decided to write this note immediately. I am a mother of two children, aged 11 and 3. Hence, the information was very timely for me. I can clearly see the love and protection of our Creator by means of such publications.

O. V., United States

Abrolhos I am 13 years old. I enjoyed reading the article "Abrolhos—An Eye-Opener." (December 22, 2002) I have always been interested in unusual birds, but I am especially interested in what happens on the ocean floor and on the islands. I do hope that you will continue publishing such articles.

V. J., Serbia and Montenegro

I was delighted to read this article. It was written in such a way that I could really imagine the acrobatic whales, the colorful birds flying over the sea, and the coral reefs with various kinds of fish eating out of a person's hand. I am filled with admiration for the Creator, and I would love to see this beautiful corner

of the world. In the meantime, I will use this article when talking to people who think it would be boring to live forever on earth.

M. P., Poland

Faith Under Trial I enjoyed the article "Faith Under Trial in Slovakia." (December 22, 2002) As soon as I finished reading it, I began writing this letter. Just as Ján Bali overcame his trials, we will have to remain faithful. The most beautiful part of the article was his recollection of the vivid mental picture of paradise described in the 1924 book *The Way to Paradise*. I enjoyed this part because it talks about the new world. I am nine years old.

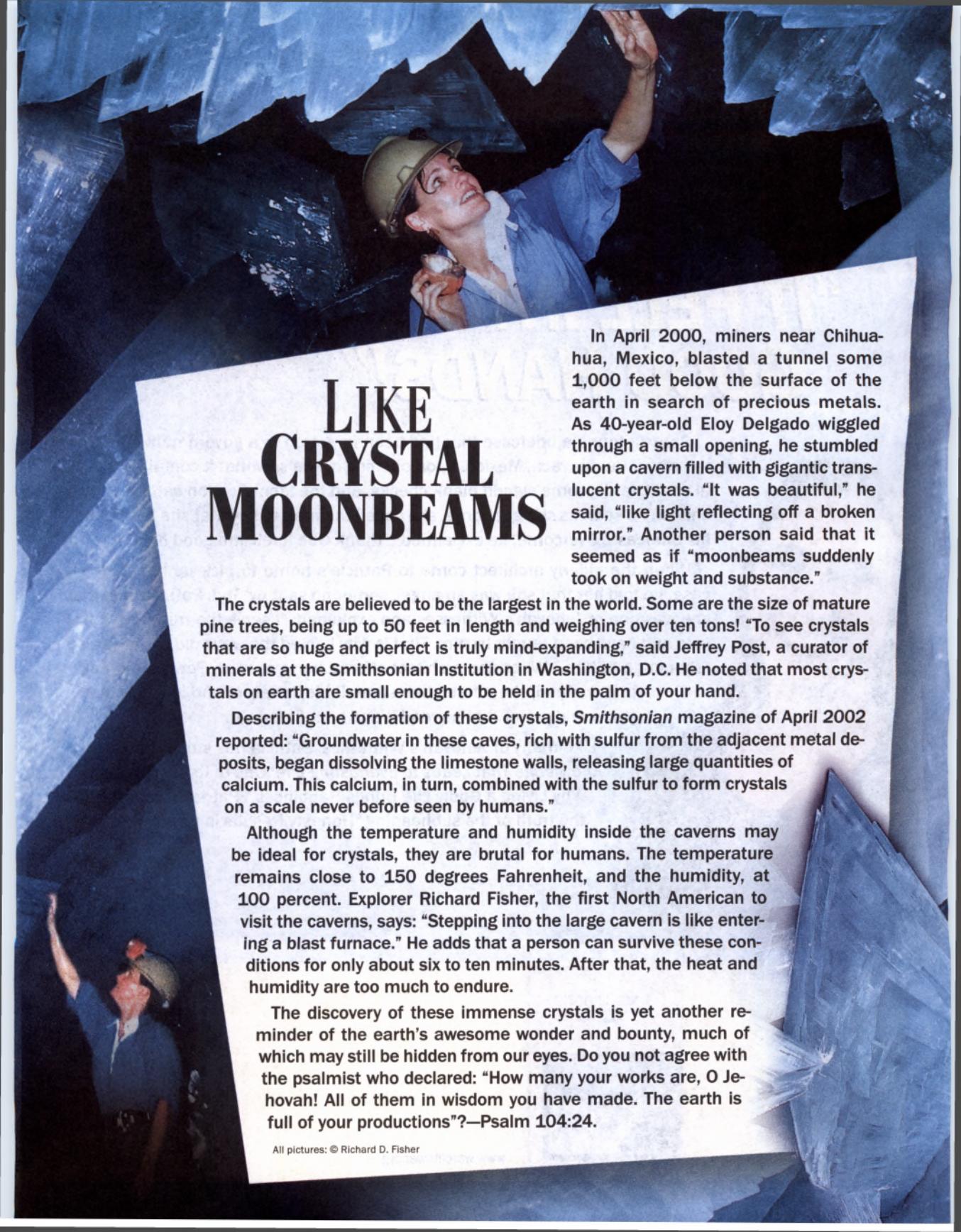
E. K., Hungary

Peer Pressure As a family we have always wanted to write and thank you for the wonderful magazines. Finally, we decided to do so after reading the article "Young People Ask . . . How Can I Deal With Peer Pressure?" (December 22, 2002) This article helped us to see how well young David knew Jehovah and how much he confided in Him. David was successful because he did not rely on his own perception or that of other humans. Really, if Jehovah is on our side, why should we fear our peers?

F. H., Estonia

I have been reading *Awake!* for two years, and I have never been as touched and inspired as I was when reading this article. I felt as if it were written just for me. Thank you so much for the timely information.

T. C., United States



LIKE CRYSTAL MOONBEAMS

The crystals are believed to be the largest in the world. Some are the size of mature pine trees, being up to 50 feet in length and weighing over ten tons! "To see crystals that are so huge and perfect is truly mind-expanding," said Jeffrey Post, a curator of minerals at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. He noted that most crystals on earth are small enough to be held in the palm of your hand.

Describing the formation of these crystals, *Smithsonian* magazine of April 2002 reported: "Groundwater in these caves, rich with sulfur from the adjacent metal deposits, began dissolving the limestone walls, releasing large quantities of calcium. This calcium, in turn, combined with the sulfur to form crystals on a scale never before seen by humans."

Although the temperature and humidity inside the caverns may be ideal for crystals, they are brutal for humans. The temperature remains close to 150 degrees Fahrenheit, and the humidity, at 100 percent. Explorer Richard Fisher, the first North American to visit the caverns, says: "Stepping into the large cavern is like entering a blast furnace." He adds that a person can survive these conditions for only about six to ten minutes. After that, the heat and humidity are too much to endure.

The discovery of these immense crystals is yet another reminder of the earth's awesome wonder and bounty, much of which may still be hidden from our eyes. Do you not agree with the psalmist who declared: "How many your works are, O Jehovah! All of them in wisdom you have made. The earth is full of your productions"?—Psalm 104:24.

In April 2000, miners near Chihuahua, Mexico, blasted a tunnel some 1,000 feet below the surface of the earth in search of precious metals. As 40-year-old Eloy Delgado wiggled through a small opening, he stumbled upon a cavern filled with gigantic translucent crystals. "It was beautiful," he said, "like light reflecting off a broken mirror." Another person said that it seemed as if "moonbeams suddenly took on weight and substance."

"IT FELL INTO GOOD HANDS!"

Patricia found a briefcase that had been forgotten in a government office in the city of Cuernavaca, Mexico. Upon opening it, she saw that it contained several credit cards, some signed blank checks, and the identification card of an architect. As soon as she got home, she called the man to say that she had found his briefcase. Overcome, he exclaimed: "Thank God it fell into good hands!"

When the elderly architect came to Patricia's home to pick up his briefcase, he told her that she was an angel, someone sent by God. Patricia said that she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses and explained: "I serve the true God, Jehovah, and have been taught by him. That is why I acted the way I did. So all praise should go to him." When the architect offered her a reward, Patricia did not accept it. Instead, she offered him some Bible literature and told him that she would prefer that he read it and benefit from it.

Like many of Jehovah's Witnesses, Patricia has studied the book *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*. One of its 19 chapters is "Why Living a Godly Life Brings Happiness." Patricia experienced the truth of the subheading "Honesty Results in Happiness."

KNOWLEDGE
That Leads to Everlasting Life



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