

OCTOBER 1, 2006

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**LIVING
FOREVER**
Is It Possible?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

October 1, 2006

Average Printing Each Issue: 27,055,000

Vol. 127, No. 19

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Man's Quest for Everlasting Life
- 4 You Can Live Forever
- 8 Is the Bible Too Restrictive?
- 11 Jehovah Helped Me Meet Life's Challenges
- 16 Courageous Through Faith and Godly Fear
- 21 Courage Strengthened by Love
- 26 Hope in Jehovah, and Be Courageous
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 Finding the Way in a Vast Ocean

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

OCTOBER 30–NOVEMBER 5:

Courageous Through Faith and Godly Fear.

Page 16. Songs to be used: 27, 144.

NOVEMBER 6–12:

Courage Strengthened by Love.

Page 21. Songs to be used: 35, 134.

NOVEMBER 13–19:

Hope in Jehovah, and Be Courageous.

Page 26. Songs to be used: 206, 107.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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Man's Quest for EVERLASTING LIFE

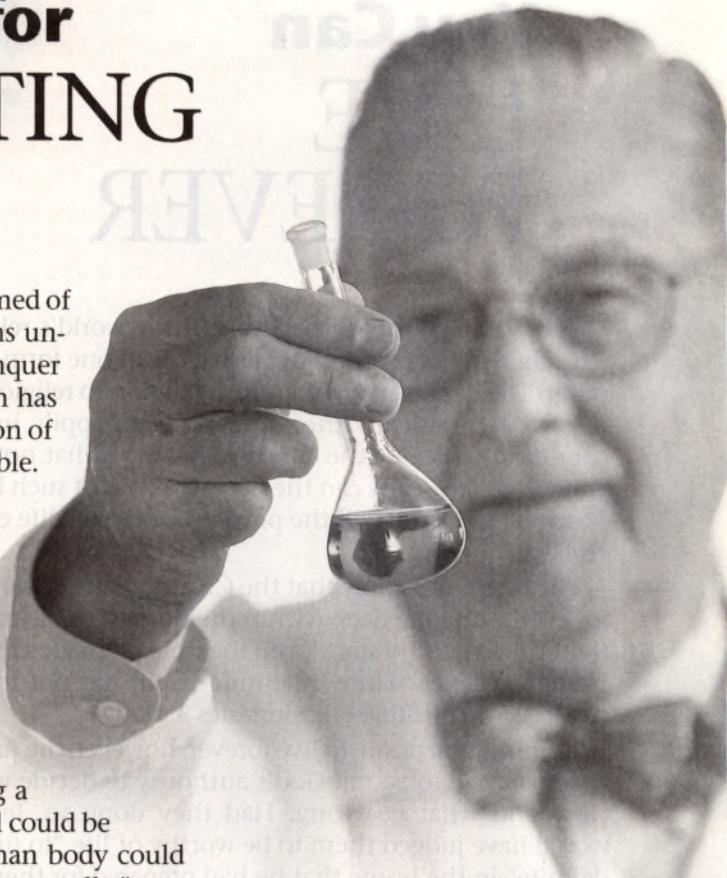
FROM earliest times, mankind has dreamed of living forever. Yet, that dream remains unfulfilled—no one has found a way to conquer death. Recently, though, medical research has renewed the hope that a dramatic extension of the human life span might really be possible. Consider what is being pursued in various fields of scientific study.

Biologists are experimenting with the enzyme telomerase in an attempt to overcome an apparent limit to the number of times that cells regenerate themselves. Scientists know that old, deteriorating cells are eliminated and replaced by new ones. In fact, most of the body is renewed several times during a person's lifetime. If the process of renewal could be extended, researchers theorize, "the human body could regenerate itself for a very long time—even eternally."

Therapeutic cloning, a controversial field of research, could theoretically provide patients with new and perfectly compatible livers, kidneys, or hearts for transplantation. Such organs would be cultivated using the patient's own stem cells.

Researchers in nanotechnology foresee a time when doctors will introduce cell-size robots into the bloodstream to find and destroy cancer cells and harmful bacteria. Some believe that this field of science, along with gene therapies, will eventually allow the human body to sustain itself indefinitely.

Proponents of cryonics deep-freeze the bodies of those who have died. The idea is to preserve them until medical breakthroughs enable doctors to cure diseases, reverse the effects of aging, and restore both life



and health to the dead. The *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* calls this concept "a present-day counterpart to the mummification of the ancient Egyptians."

Man's relentless quest for immortality shows how hard it is to accept the idea of an end to his existence. Is it really possible for mankind to attain everlasting life? What does the Bible say on this subject? The following article will provide the answers.

You Can LIVE FOREVER

THE vast majority of believers in the world's religions cherish the prospect of eternal life in one form or another. The details may differ from religion to religion, but the hope is basically the same—to live happily in ideal conditions without the threat of death. Is that not what you too desire? How can the pervasiveness of such beliefs be explained? And will the prospect of eternal life ever be realized?

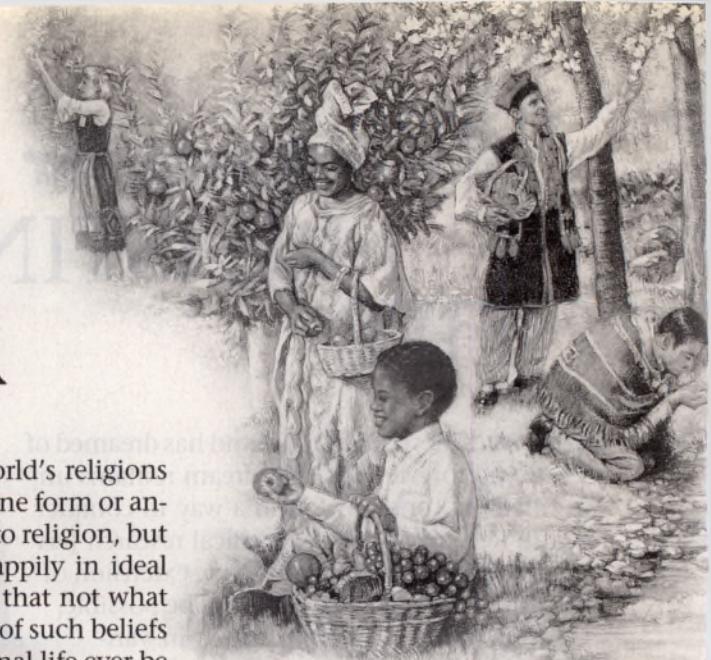
The Scriptures show that the Creator planted the desire for everlasting life deep within the human consciousness right from the very start, from the time he created the first human couple. "Time indefinite [God] has put in their heart," says the Bible.—Ecclesiastes 3:11.

To fulfill that desire to live forever, however, the first human pair had to accept God's authority to decide what is right and what is wrong. Had they done so, Jehovah would have judged them to be worthy of life "to time indefinite" in the home that he had prepared for them, the garden of Eden.—Genesis 2:8; 3:22.

Everlasting Life Lost

The Bible record shows that God planted in the garden "the tree of the knowledge of good and bad," the fruit of which he prohibited Adam and Eve from eating, on pain of death. (Genesis 2:9, 17) Adam and Eve's abstaining from eating that fruit would show God that they acknowledged his authority. Eating from the tree, on the other hand, would indicate their rejection of God's authority. Adam and Eve disobeyed Jehovah's instructions and sided with Satan, a spirit creature who had rebelled against God's authority. As a result, God rightly determined that Adam and Eve were unfit to live forever.—Genesis 3:1-6.

What God had offered was life or death, existence or nonexistence. The result of disobedience was death and



the complete end of their existence. It was not possible for Adam and Eve or any of their progeny to keep on living by virtue of a certain magical potion or an immortal soul.*

All of Adam's offspring suffered because of his rebellion. The consequences are explained by the apostle Paul. He wrote: "Through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned."—Romans 5:12.

Everlasting Life Regained

The apostle Paul illustrated the condition of Adam's offspring by likening it to that of a first-century slave. Because of

* For a full discussion of the teaching of the immortality of the soul, please see the brochure *What Happens to Us When We Die?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

inherited sin, Adam and Eve's children were inescapably born "slaves of sin," destined to die. (Romans 5:12; 6:16, 17) Inescapably, that is, were it not for the legal remedy that Jehovah provided in order to purchase the freedom of such slaves. Paul explained: "As through one trespass [that of Adam] the result to men of all sorts was condemnation, likewise also through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life." That "act of justification" led to Jesus' sacrifice of his own perfect human life as "a corresponding ransom for all." Jehovah recognized the ransom's legal power to release mankind from "the judgment" of "condemnation."—Romans 5:16, 18, 19; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

That is why scientists will never find the key to endless life in man's genetic code. The key lies elsewhere. According to the Bible, the root cause of mankind's death is moral and legal, not biological. The means for restoring everlasting life—Jesus' ransom sacrifice—is likewise legal. The ransom is also a manifes-

tation of God's righteousness and loving-kindness. Who, then, will benefit from the ransom and receive everlasting life?

The Gift of Immortality

Jehovah God is "from time indefinite to time indefinite." He is immortal. (Psalm 90:2) The first person to whom Jehovah granted the gift of immortality was Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul explains: "Christ, now that he has been raised up from the dead, dies no more; death is master over him no more." (Romans 6:9) Indeed, contrasting the resurrected Jesus with earthly rulers, Paul describes him as the only one among them having immortality. Jesus will remain "alive forever." His life is "indestructible."—Hebrews 7:15-17, 23-25; 1 Timothy 6:15, 16.

Jesus is not the only one to receive such a gift. Spirit-anointed Christians chosen to rule as kings in heavenly glory receive the same kind of resurrection that Jesus did. (Romans 6:5) The apostle John shows that this

An Enduring Dream

The Epic of Gilgamesh, a Mesopotamian saga thought to date back to the second millennium B.C.E., describes a hero's search for eternal youth. Ancient Egyptians mummified the dead, with the idea that souls, which were believed to be immortal, would be able to use their bodies again. Consequently, some Egyptian tombs were filled with all that the dead might need in the so-called afterlife.

Among Chinese alchemists, belief in physical immortality appears to date back at least to the eighth century B.C.E., and the possibility of attaining it by means of magic potions, to the fourth century B.C.E. Medieval European and Arabic alchemists searched for and tried to concoct their own elixirs of life. Some of their mixtures contained salts of arsenic, mercury, and sulfur. Who knows how many poisoned themselves trying these preparations!

Also widespread at one time were legends about a so-called Fountain of Youth—a spring said to restore vigor to all who drank from it.



privilege is granted to 144,000 individuals. (Revelation 14:1) They too receive immortality. Regarding their resurrection, Paul says: "Flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom . . . The trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality." Death has no hold on those who receive such a resurrection.—1 Corinthians 15:50-53; Revelation 20:6.

This divine revelation is remarkable indeed. Despite their spirit nature, not even angels were created immortal. This is shown by the fact that those spirit creatures who joined Satan's rebellion will be executed. (Matthew 25:41) Jesus' corulers, on the other hand, receive the gift of immortality, which is proof of Jehovah's unshakable confidence in their faithfulness.

Does this mean that only 144,000 individuals, a relatively small number when compared with the billions of humankind who have ever lived, will live forever? No. Let us see why.

Everlasting Life on a Paradise Earth

The Bible book of Revelation presents the beautiful scene of an innumerable crowd of people who are granted everlasting life on a paradise earth. Along with them are those who died but who are resurrected and restored to youthful health and vigor. (Revelation 7:9; 20:12, 13; 21:3, 4) They are led to "a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God." Along its banks are "trees of life . . . , and the leaves of the trees were for the curing of the nations." Jehovah God's gracious invitation is: "Let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free."—Revelation 22:1, 2, 17.

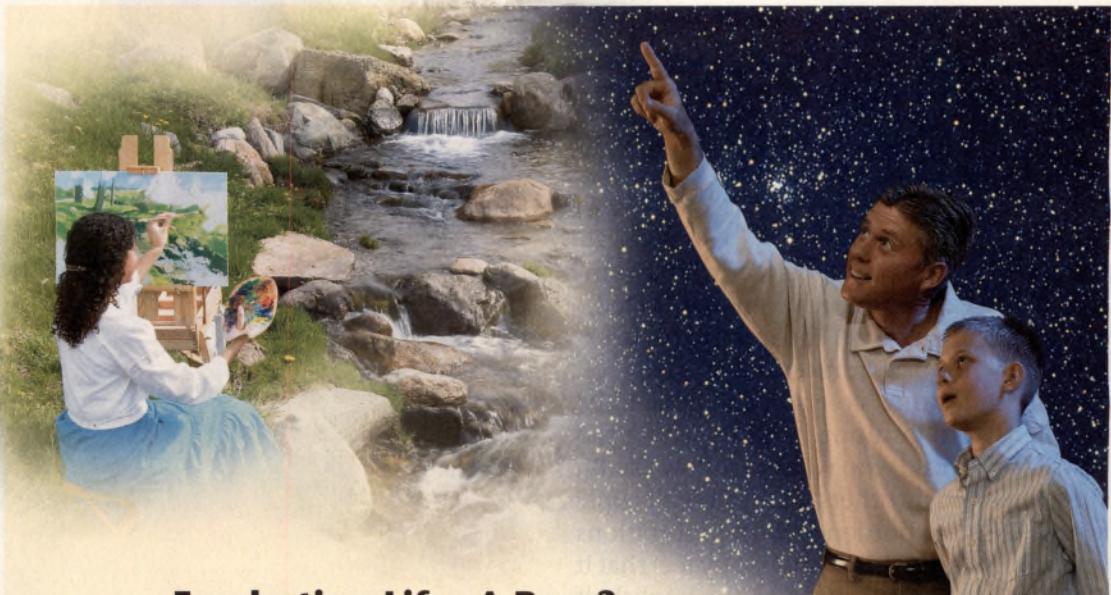
These trees and waters are no elixir of life or fountain of youth, such as those sought after centuries ago by alchemists and explorers. Rather, they represent God's provisions through Jesus Christ for restoring mankind to the perfect condition that existed originally.

God's purpose to give eternal life on earth to obedient mankind has not changed. That purpose will be fulfilled, for Jehovah is loyal. Psalm 37:29 states: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." This promise moves us, along with those of mankind who are granted heavenly immortality, to declare: "Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal?"—Revelation 15:3, 4.

Do you desire the precious gift of eternal life? If so, you must prove yourself loyal and obedient to the "King of eternity." You need to learn about Jehovah and the one through whom such life is made possible, Jesus Christ. To all who are willing to accept God's standards of right and wrong will be granted the gift of "everlasting life."

—John 17:3.





Everlasting Life—A Bore?

Some object that everlasting life would be boring, no more than a frittering away of eternity with meaningless pastimes endlessly repeated. Perhaps the eternity they imagine is an endless extension of present lifestyles and conditions that to many would seem to be boring and meaningless. Yet, in the Paradise that God will restore, he promises man “exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.” (Psalm 37:11) Such a life will give mankind the opportunity to acquire knowledge of Jehovah’s creations and to dedicate time to developing any or all of the fascinating skills, studies, and occupations that we can now only dream about.

Dr. Aubrey de Grey, a Cambridge University geneticist engaged in life-extension research, observes: “People with a good education and the time to use it never get bored today and can’t imagine ever running out of new things they’d like to do.” Even so, says God’s inspired Word, “mankind [will] never find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish.”—Ecclesiastes 3:11.

Is the Bible Too Restrictive?

AS A child, I was not taught any Bible standards. God was never even mentioned," relates a young man in Finland. Such a background is not uncommon today. Many, especially the young, consider the Bible to be hopelessly old-fashioned and its advice too restrictive. Those who want to follow the Bible are viewed by others as oppressed people whose lives are burdened with prohibitions and commandments. Thus, many feel that it is better to leave the Bible on the bookshelf and seek guidance elsewhere.

That view of the Bible is due, in large measure, to the long history of oppression by the churches of Christendom. During the period that some historians have called the Dark Ages, for example, the Catholic Church in Europe dominated virtually every aspect of people's life. Anyone who dared to disagree with the church risked torture and even execution. The Protestant churches, which emerged later, also restricted personal freedom. Today, such terms as "Calvinist" or "Puritan" bring to mind not just the followers of certain beliefs but the harsh discipline associated with such groups. Consequently, because the churches were oppressive, people wrongly conclude that the teachings of the Bible must be oppressive.

In recent centuries, the churches have lost much of their grip on people's lives, at least in some lands. In the wake of traditional religious beliefs came the notion that people have the right to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. With what result? Ahti Laitinen, a professor of criminology



and judicial sociology, explains: "Respect for authority has decreased, and people's understanding of what is acceptable and what is unacceptable is getting more vague." Ironically, even church leaders have given in to this way of thinking. A prominent Lutheran bishop stated: "I tend to shun the interpretation that moral questions are solved by turning to the Bible or some religious authority."

Unlimited Freedom Desirable?

The idea of unlimited freedom may sound appealing, especially to young people. Few enjoy being patronized or having to live according to a list of dos and don'ts. However, should everyone be free to do whatever he wants? To answer this question, consider an illustration. Imagine a city with no traffic laws. No driver's license or driving test is required. People can drive any way they like, even when intoxicated, with no need to worry about speed limits, stop signs, traffic lights, one-way streets, or pedestrian crossings. Would such "freedom" be desirable? Certainly not! The result would be chaos,

confusion, and catastrophe. Though traffic laws restrict people's freedom, we understand that these laws protect drivers as well as pedestrians.

Similarly, Jehovah gives direction on how we should live. This benefits us. Without such guidance, we would have to learn things by trial and error, and in so doing, we could harm ourselves and others. Such an atmosphere of moral anarchy would be as undesirable and hazardous as driving in a city without traffic laws. The truth is, we need rules and laws of some kind—a fact that most people readily admit.

"My Load Is Light"

Traffic laws may entail a lengthy and detailed list of regulations—in some places the number of parking rules alone is staggering. In contrast, the Bible does not set out a long

list of rules. Rather, it sets out basic principles, and these are not burdensome or oppressive. Jesus Christ extended an appealing invitation to his contemporaries: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. For my yoke is kindly and my load is light." (Matthew 11: 28, 30) In a letter to the Christian congregation in Corinth, the apostle Paul wrote: "Where the spirit of Jehovah is, there is freedom."—2 Corinthians 3:17.

That freedom, however, is not unlimited. Jesus clearly pointed out that God's requirements include some simple commandments. For example, Jesus said to his disciples: "This is my commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you." (John 15:12) Imagine what life would be like if everyone applied that commandment! Hence, the freedom that Christians enjoy is not without limitations. The apostle Peter wrote: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God."—1 Peter 2:16.

Thus, even though Christians are not bound by a detailed list of laws, they do not act according to their own ideas of right and wrong. Humans need the guidance that only God can give them. The Bible plainly states: "It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step." (Jeremiah 10:23) If we obey God's direction, we will benefit greatly.—Psalm 19:11.

One of the benefits is happiness. The young man mentioned at the outset, for example, had been a thief and a liar. He was also promiscuous. Upon learning the Bible's high standards, he changed his way of life to conform to them. "Although I was not able to follow all of the Bible's standards at once," he said, "I did understand their value. My previous way of life did not produce the happiness that I now enjoy. Living



Jesus said that God's requirements would be refreshing

according to Bible standards simplifies your life. You know where you are headed and what is right and what is wrong.”

Millions of people have had a similar experience. Among other things, the guidance found in the Bible has helped them to enjoy improved human relations, to cultivate a balanced view of work, to refrain from habits that are harmful, and thus to live a happier life. Markus,* a young man who has lived both with and without Bible standards, says of his own life: “By living according to the Bible, I have been able to improve my self-respect.”[#]

What Is Your Choice?

So is the Bible restrictive? The answer is yes—for the benefit of all of us. But is the Bible *too* restrictive? The answer is no. Unlimited freedom leads only to difficulties. The Bible’s standards are balanced, and they pro-

mote our well-being and happiness. Markus says: “Time has proved the wisdom of applying God’s Word in life. Although in many ways my life is different from that of people in general, I don’t think for a moment that I have missed out on anything worthwhile in life.”

When you begin to experience the blessings of living by Bible standards, your appreciation for God’s Word will increase. This will lead to an even greater blessing—you will come to love its divine Source, Jehovah God. “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.”—1 John 5:3.

Jehovah is both our Creator and our heavenly Father. He knows what is best for us. Rather than restrict us, he gives us loving direction for our good. In poetic language Jehovah urges us: “O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments! Then your peace would become just like a river, and your righteousness like the waves of the sea.”—Isaiah 48:18.

* The name has been changed.

[#] For more information about the way of life outlined in the Bible, see chapter 12 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

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**Obeying God’s direction
brings happiness and
self-respect**





JEHOVAH HELPED ME MEET LIFE'S CHALLENGES

AS TOLD BY
DALE IRWIN

"EIGHT IS ENOUGH! QUADS DOUBLE THE TROUBLE."

So read a local newspaper headline announcing the addition of quadruplets to our family of four girls. As a young man, I had had no intention of getting married, let alone having children.

Yet, here I was—the father of eight!

I WAS born in 1934 in the town of Mareeba, Australia. I was the youngest of three children. Our family later moved to Brisbane, where my mother taught Sunday school at the Methodist church.

Early in 1938, local newspapers reported that Joseph F. Rutherford from the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses might be refused entry into Australia. "Why are they doing this to him?" Mum asked the next Witness who called at our home. The Witness replied: "Didn't Jesus say that people would persecute his followers?" Mum then accepted

the booklet *Cure*, which outlined many differences between true religion and false.* Impressed with the booklet, Mum took us children to a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses the following Sunday. At first, my father strongly objected, but occasionally he wrote out Bible questions for Mum to give to one of the brothers. The brother, in turn, wrote out the Scriptural answers for Mum to give to Dad.

One Sunday my father came to the meeting with us, intending to voice his

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.

dissatisfaction with the Witnesses. However, after talking with the traveling overseer who was visiting the congregation at the time, Dad changed his attitude and even allowed our home to be used as a center for a weekly Bible study, attended by interested ones in our area.

In September 1938, my parents were baptized. My siblings and I were baptized in December 1941 at a national convention held at Hargreave Park in Sydney, New South Wales. I was seven years old. Thereafter, I regularly shared in the field ministry with my parents. In those days, the Witnesses took portable phonographs from door to door and played recorded Bible discourses to the householders.

One Witness who stands out vividly in my memory is Bert Horton. He had a sound car—an automobile equipped with a powerful amplifier and a large speaker mounted on the roof. Working with Bert was exciting, especially for a lad my age. For example, when broadcasting a Bible discourse from the top of a hill, we often saw a police car heading our way. Bert would quickly turn his equipment off, drive to another hill miles away, and play another recording. I learned a lot about trust in Jehovah and boldness from Bert and other loyal, courageous brothers like him.—Matthew 10:16.

When I was 12 years old, I regularly witnessed on my own after school. On one occasion, I met a family named Adshead. In time, both parents, their eight children, and many grandchildren learned the truth. I thank Jehovah for allowing me, a mere boy, to introduce Bible truth to this fine family.—Matthew 21:16.

Early Privileges of Service

At 18 years of age, I became a full-time pioneer minister and was assigned to Maitland, New South Wales. In 1956, I was invited to

serve at the Australia branch office in Sydney. Of the staff of 20, about one third were of the anointed, with the hope of ruling with Christ in his heavenly Kingdom. What a privilege it was to work alongside them!—Luke 12:32; Revelation 1:6; 5:10.

My resolve to remain single melted away when I met Judy Helberg, an attractive pioneer sister who had been invited to the branch office temporarily to help me with a large project. Judy and I fell in love, and we were married two years later. Thereafter, we commenced circuit work, which involved visiting one congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses each week to encourage the brothers.

In 1960, Judy gave birth to our first daughter, Kim. Today, having a child would mean having to leave the circuit work and settle down. But to our great surprise, we were invited to continue visiting congregations. After much prayer, we accepted the invitation, and over the next seven months, Kim traveled 8,000 miles with us by coach, plane, and train as we served far-flung congregations in Queensland and the Northern Territory. We did not own a car at the time.

We always stayed in the homes of the brothers and sisters. Because of the tropical

With Mum, my older brother Garth, and my sister Dawn, ready to travel to the 1941 convention in Sydney



climate, bedrooms in those days usually had curtains instead of doors, which added to our stress when Kim cried at night. The responsibility of caring for a baby and our assignment eventually proved too difficult. So we settled in Brisbane, and I took up sign painting, a form of commercial art. Two years after Kim's birth, we had another daughter, Petina.

Coping With Tragedy

In 1972, when the girls were 12 and 10 years old, Judy died of Hodgkin's disease, a type of lymphoma. This loss was almost unbearable for our family. Nevertheless, during Judy's illness and after her death, Jehovah comforted us through his Word, his holy spirit, and the brotherhood. We also received strength from the *Watchtower* magazine that we received right after the tragedy. It contained an article dealing with personal trials, including bereavement, and showed how trials can help us to develop such godly qualities as endurance, faith, and integrity.* —James 1:2-4.

After Judy's death, the girls and I became much closer. But I must admit, it was a struggle trying to fill the role of both father and mother. My two wonderful daughters, however, made the job much easier.

Remarriage and an Enlarged Family

In time, I remarried. My new wife, Mary, and I had much in common. She too had lost her marriage mate to Hodgkin's disease. She also had two daughters—Colleen and Jennifer. Colleen was about three years younger than Petina. So now our family consisted of four girls, aged 14, 12, 9, and 7.

Mary and I decided that initially each of us would discipline his or her own biological children until the other children felt com-

* See *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1972, pages 174-80.



With Judy and baby Kim when I was in the circuit work in Queensland

fortable accepting direction from the step-parent. In our own relationship as husband and wife, Mary and I had two important rules. One, we never aired our differences in front of the children, and two, in harmony with the Bible principle recorded at Ephesians 4:26, we talked until we sorted matters out—even if that took hours!

Everybody adjusted surprisingly well to life as a stepfamily, but the memory of our losses did not fade overnight. For example, Monday night became "cry night" for Mary. After our family study, when the girls had gone to bed, Mary's pent-up emotions often came pouring out.

Mary wanted us to have a child of our own. Sadly, she had a miscarriage. When Mary became pregnant again, a big surprise awaited us. An ultrasound revealed that she was carrying, not one baby, but four! I was in a state of stunned disbelief. Here I was, 47 years old and soon to be the father of eight! The quadruplets were born by Cesarean section on

February 14, 1982, at 32 weeks. In order of birth, they were Clint, 3.5 pounds; Cindy, 4.2 pounds; Jeremy, 3.1 pounds; and Danette, 3.8 pounds. No two looked alike.

Just after the birth, Mary's doctor came and sat beside me.

"Are you worried about caring for the children?" he asked.

"Well," I said, "I've never been down this road before."

His next words really startled and encouraged me.

"Your congregation won't let you down," he said. "You will only have to sneeze, and a thousand tissues will be offered to you!"

Thanks in no small part to this outstanding obstetrician and his medical team, four reasonably healthy babies went home from the hospital within just two months.

The Challenge of Raising Quadruplets

In the interests of orderliness, Mary and I drew up a 24-hour schedule. The four older girls were most helpful as nursemaids. And the doctor's words proved true—a mere "sneeze" and the congregation rallied to our help. Earlier, longtime friend John MacArthur had organized Witnesses who were tradesmen to extend our house. When the babies came, a team of sisters helped in the

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Taking in Knowledge of God—How?

Roman Roads—Monuments to Ancient Engineering

Weddings That Are Honorable in the Sight of God and Man

nursery. All these kindnesses were a demonstration of Christian love in action.—1 John 3:18.

In a way, the quadruplets were "congregation babies." Even to this day, they view as family the many loving brothers and sisters who helped us out. As for Mary, she has proved to be an outstanding wife and mother who has selflessly cared for her children. She has really applied what she has learned from God's Word and organization. There is no better advice!—Psalm 1:2, 3; Matthew 24:45.

Christian meetings and the preaching work remained an important part of our weekly routine, although it was a struggle to manage with four babies. A blessing at the time were the Bible studies we conducted with two married couples, who kindly came to our home. Even though this made things easier for us, Mary was sometimes so tired that she dozed off during the study, a baby asleep in her arms. In time, both couples became our spiritual brothers and sisters.

Spiritual Training at an Early Age

Even before the babies could walk, Mary, the older girls, and I took them out in the field ministry. During the toddler period, Mary and I each took two, and they were no burden. In fact, they often became a talking point with friendly householders. One day I met a man who claimed that if you were born under a certain astrological sign on a particular day, your personality would follow a certain pattern. I did not challenge him, but I asked if I could return later in the morning. He agreed, so I came back with the quadruplets. As he looked on in astonishment, I lined them up in birth order. We then had a friendly discussion, not just about their obvious physical differences but also about the big differences in their personalities, which was a blow to his theory. "Fancy me bringing

up this theory to you," he said. "I'll have to do more research, won't I?"

As toddlers, the four of them resented group discipline when they misbehaved, so we corrected them individually. Nevertheless, they learned that the same rules applied to all. When they faced issues of conscience at school, they remained firm for Bible principles and supported one another, Cindy becoming their spokesperson. People soon learned that a set of quadruplets is a force to be reckoned with!

Mary and I had the usual challenges in helping the children to remain loyal to Jehovah during their teen years. We can only say that the job would have been much harder had it not been for the support of a loving congregation and the abundance of spiritual food we received from the visible part of Jehovah's organization. We endeavored to have a regular family Bible study and to keep the lines of communication open, although this was not always easy. Still, the effort has been worth it because all eight of our children have chosen to serve Jehovah.

After the birth of the quadruplets, our four older girls and the congregation rallied to our help



Coping With Advancing Age

Over the years, I have enjoyed many spiritual privileges: congregation elder, city overseer, and substitute circuit overseer. I have also served as a member of the local Hospital Liaison Committee, whose function is to help doctors cooperate with Witness patients when blood transfusion becomes an issue.

For 34 years I have also had the privilege of being registered to perform marriages. I have conducted about 350 marriage ceremonies, including those of my six daughters.

I thank Jehovah constantly for the loyal support that I have received, first from Judy and now from Mary. (Proverbs 31:10, 30) While supporting me in my work as a congregation elder, they also set a fine example in the ministry and helped to inculcate spiritual qualities into the children.

In 1996, I was diagnosed with a brain disorder that causes hand tremors and upsets my balance. Hence, I could no longer work at sign painting. However, I still find much joy in Jehovah's service, although my pace has slowed. On the positive side, I have developed more empathy for other older ones.

As I reflect on my life, I thank Jehovah for always being there to help me and my family to meet our many challenges with joy. (Isaiah 41:10)

Mary and I, along with our eight children, are also thankful for a wonderful, supportive family of spiritual brothers and sisters. All have proved their love in more ways than we could ever recount.—John 13:34, 35.

COURAGEOUS THROUGH FAITH AND GODLY FEAR

"Be courageous and strong . . . Jehovah your God is with you."—JOSHUA 1:9.

IN 1473 B.C.E., the nation of Israel was poised to enter the Promised Land. Regarding the challenges ahead, Moses reminded the people: "You are today crossing the Jordan to go in and dispossess nations greater and mightier than you, cities great and fortified to the heavens, a people great and tall, the sons of Anakim, about whom you yourself have . . . heard it said, 'Who can make a firm stand before the sons of Anak?'" (Deuteronomy 9:1, 2) Yes, these giant warriors were proverbial! Furthermore, some Canaanites had well-equipped armies, with horses and chariots that had iron scythes on the wheels.—Judges 4:13.

² Israel, on the other hand, had been a nation of slaves and had just spent 40 years in the wilderness. Hence, from a human point of view, their chances of being victorious would seem remote. Yet, Moses had faith; he could 'see' Jehovah leading them. (Hebrews 11:27) "Jehovah your God is crossing before you," Moses told the people. "He will annihilate them, and he himself will subdue them before you." (Deuteronomy 9:3; Psalm 33:16, 17) After Moses' death, Jehovah reassured Joshua of His backing, saying: "Get up, cross this Jordan, you and all this people, into the land that I am giving to them, to the sons of Israel. Nobody will take a firm stand before you all the days of your life. Just as I proved to be with Moses I shall prove to be with you." —Joshua 1:2, 5.

1, 2. (a) From a human point of view, what were Israel's prospects of victory over the Canaanites? (b) What reassurance did Joshua receive?

³ To have Jehovah's support and guidance, Joshua must read and meditate on God's Law and live by it. "Then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely," said Jehovah. "Have I not commanded you? Be courageous and strong. Do not suffer shock or be terrified, for Jehovah your God is with you wherever you go." (Joshua 1:8, 9) Because Joshua listened to God, he proved to be courageous, strong, and successful. Most of his generation, however, did not listen. As a result, they were not successful, and they died in the wilderness.

A Faithless People Lacking Courage

⁴ Forty years earlier when Israel first approached Canaan, Moses sent 12 men to spy out the land. Ten returned fearful. "All the people whom we saw in the midst of it are men of extraordinary size," they cried. "There we saw the Nephilim, the sons of Anak, who are from the Nephilim; so that we became in our own eyes like grasshoppers." Were "all the people"—not just the Anakim—giants? No. Were the Anakim descendants of the pre-Flood Nephilim? Of course not! Still, because of these distortions, a wave of fear spread through the camp. The people even wanted to return to Egypt, the land of their slavery!—Numbers 13:31-14:4.

⁵ Two of the spies, Joshua and Caleb, however, were eager to enter the Promised Land.

3. What contributed to Joshua's faith and courage?
- 4, 5. (a) How did the attitude of the ten spies compare with that of Joshua and Caleb? (b) What was Jehovah's response to the people's lack of faith?

The Canaanites “are bread to us,” they said. “Their shelter has turned away from over them, and Jehovah is with us. Do not fear them.” (Numbers 14:9) Were Joshua and Caleb being foolishly optimistic? By no means! Along with the rest of the nation, they had seen Jehovah humiliate mighty Egypt and its gods by means of the Ten Plagues. Then they saw Jehovah drown Pharaoh and his military force in the Red Sea. (Psalm 136:15) Clearly, the fear shown by the ten spies and those who were influenced by them was inexcusable. “How long will they not put faith in me for all the signs that I performed in among them?” said Jehovah, expressing his deep hurt.—Numbers 14:11.

⁶ Jehovah went right to the heart of the problem—the cowardly attitude of the people betrayed their lack of faith. Yes, faith and courage are intimately related, so much so that the apostle John could write concerning the Christian congregation and its spiritual warfare: “This is the conquest that has conquered the world, our faith.” (1 John 5:4) Today, faith like that of Joshua and Caleb has resulted in the preaching of the good news of the Kingdom worldwide by over six million Witnesses of Jehovah, young and old, strong and frail. No enemy has been able to silence this mighty, courageous army.—Romans 8:31.

6. In what way is courage related to faith, and how is this seen in modern times?

*Jehovah commanded Joshua:
“Be courageous and strong”*

Do Not “Shrink Back”

⁷ Jehovah’s servants today courageously preach the good news because they are of the same mind as the apostle Paul, who wrote: “We are not the sort that shrink back to destruction, but the sort that have faith to the preserving alive of the soul.” (Hebrews 10:39) To “shrink back,” as Paul mentioned, does not mean just to experience a temporary bout of fear, for many faithful servants of God have at times been afraid. (1 Samuel 21:12; 1 Kings 19:1-4) Rather, it means “to draw back, withdraw,” to be “remissive in holding the truth,” explains one Bible dictionary. It adds that “shrink back” may be a metaphor based on “lowering a sail and so slackening the course” in regard to God’s service. Of course, those with strong faith give no consideration to “slackening the course” when difficulty arises—be it persecution, ill health, or some other trial. Instead, they press on in serving Jehovah, aware that he deeply cares for them and knows their limitations. (Psalm 55:22; 103:14) Do you have that kind of faith?

7. What does it mean to “shrink back”?



⁸ At one time the apostles felt that their faith was lacking, so they said to Jesus: "Give us more faith." (Luke 17:5) Their sincere request was answered, especially at Pentecost 33 C.E., when the promised holy spirit came upon the disciples and gave them deeper insight into God's Word and purpose. (John 14:26; Acts 2:1-4) Their faith strengthened, the disciples embarked on a preaching campaign that despite opposition took the good news to "all creation that is under heaven."—Colossians 1:23; Acts 1:8; 28:22.

⁹ In order to build our faith and to press on in our ministry, we too must study and meditate on the Scriptures and pray for holy spirit. Only by impressing God's truth on our mind and heart—as Joshua, Caleb, and the early Christian disciples did—will we have faith that gives us the courage needed to endure in our spiritual warfare and to come off victorious.—Romans 10:17.

Faith—More Than Just Belief

¹⁰ As demonstrated by integrity-keepers of old, faith that leads to courage and endur-

8, 9. (a) How did Jehovah strengthen the early Christians' faith? (b) What can we do to build our faith?

10. What does true faith embrace?

ance embraces more than mere belief in God. (James 2:19) It requires that we come to know Jehovah as a person and have full confidence in him. (Psalm 78:5-8; Proverbs 3:5, 6) It means believing with all our heart that paying heed to God's laws and principles is in our very best interests. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Faith also involves having full assurance that Jehovah will fulfill all his promises and become "the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him."—Hebrews 11:1, 6; Isaiah 55:11.

¹¹ Such faith is not static. It grows as we live the truth, "taste" the benefits, "see" answers to our prayers and, in other ways, sense Jehovah's direction in our life. (Psalm 34:8; 1 John 5:14, 15) We can be certain that the faith of Joshua and Caleb deepened as they tasted God's goodness. (Joshua 23:14) Consider these points: They survived the 40-year trek in the wilderness, as God had promised they would. (Numbers 14:27-30; 32:11, 12) They were given an active role in the six-year conquest of Canaan. Finally, they enjoyed an abundance of life and health and even received their own personal inheritances. How Jehovah rewards those who faithfully and

11. In what way were Joshua and Caleb blessed for their faith and courage?

Obadiah cared for and protected God's prophets



courageously serve him!—Joshua 14:6, 9-14; 19:49, 50; 24:29.

¹² God's loving-kindness to Joshua and Caleb calls to mind the psalmist's words: "You have magnified your saying even above all your name." (Psalm 138:2) When Jehovah attaches his name to a promise, the fulfillment of that promise is "magnified" in that it exceeds all expectations. (Ephesians 3:20) Yes, Jehovah never disappoints those who "take exquisite delight" in him.—Psalm 37:3, 4.

A Man Who "Pleased God Well"

¹³ We can learn much about faith and courage by considering the example set by another pre-Christian witness—Enoch. Even before he commenced prophesying, Enoch likely knew that his faith and courage would be put to the test. How so? Because Jehovah had stated in Eden that enmity, or hatred, would exist between those who serve God and those who serve Satan the Devil. (Genesis 3:15) Enoch also knew that this hatred had erupted early in human history when Cain murdered his brother Abel. Indeed, their father, Adam, lived for nearly 310 years after Enoch was born.—Genesis 5:3-18.

¹⁴ Despite these facts, however, Enoch courageously "went on walking with the true God" and condemned "the shocking things" that people said against Jehovah. (Genesis 5:22; Jude 14, 15) This fearless stand for true worship apparently made Enoch many enemies, putting his life in danger. In this instance, Jehovah spared his prophet the pangs of death. After revealing to Enoch "that he had pleased God well," Jehovah "transferred" him from life to death, perhaps during a prophetic trance.—Hebrews 11:5, 13; Genesis 5:24.

12. How does Jehovah 'magnify his saying'?

13, 14. Why did Enoch need faith and courage?



Enoch boldly spoke God's word

¹⁵ Immediately after mentioning Enoch's transference, Paul again stressed the importance of faith, saying: "Moreover, without faith it is impossible to please [God] well." (Hebrews 11:6) Yes, having faith gave Enoch the courage to walk with Jehovah and to proclaim His judgment message to a godless world. In this, Enoch set a fine example for us. We have a similar work to do in a world that is opposed to true worship and that is filled with every form of badness.—Psalm 92:7; Matthew 24:14; Revelation 12:17.

Courage Borne of Godly Fear

¹⁶ Besides faith, there is another quality that contributes to courage, namely the reverential fear of God. Let us consider an outstanding example of a God-fearing man who lived in the days of the prophet Elijah and of King Ahab, who ruled over the northern kingdom of Israel. During Ahab's rule, Baal worship infected the northern kingdom on an unprecedented scale. In fact, 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the sacred pole

15. What fine example did Enoch set for Jehovah's servants today?

16, 17. Who was Obadiah, and in what circumstances did he find himself?

were “eating at the table of Jezebel,” Ahab’s wife.—1 Kings 16:30-33; 18:19.

¹⁷ A ruthless enemy of Jehovah, Jezebel tried to eradicate true worship from the land. She murdered some of Jehovah’s prophets and even tried to kill Elijah, who at God’s direction escaped by fleeing across the Jordan. (1 Kings 17:1-3; 18:13) Can you imagine how difficult it would have been to uphold pure worship in the northern kingdom back then? Worse still, what if you worked in the royal palace itself? That was the situation in which God-fearing Obadiah,* Ahab’s household steward, found himself.—1 Kings 18:3.

¹⁸ Undoubtedly, Obadiah was both cautious and discreet in his worship of Jehovah. Still, he did not compromise. In fact, 1 Kings 18:3 tells us: “Obadiah himself had proved to be one *greatly fearing Jehovah*.” Yes, Obadiah’s fear of God was exceptional! This wholesome fear, in turn, gave him outstanding courage, as was demonstrated immediately after Jezebel murdered Jehovah’s prophets.

¹⁹ We read: “It came about that when Jezebel cut off Jehovah’s prophets, Obadiah proceeded to take a hundred prophets and keep them hid by fifties in a cave, and he supplied

them bread and water.” (1 Kings 18:4) As you can imagine, secretly feeding a hundred men was a very dangerous undertaking. Not only did Obadiah have to avoid getting caught by Ahab and Jezebel but he also had to avoid detection by the 850 false prophets who frequented the palace. Besides that, the many other false worshippers in the land, from peasants to princes, would no doubt have seized any opportunity to expose Obadiah so as to curry favor with the king and queen. Nevertheless, right under the noses of all these idolaters, Obadiah courageously attended to the needs of Jehovah’s prophets. How powerful the fear of God can be!

²⁰ Because Obadiah demonstrated courage through godly fear, Jehovah evidently shielded him from his enemies. Says Proverbs 29:25: “Trembling at men is what lays a snare, but he that is trusting in Jehovah will be protected.” Obadiah was not superhuman; he was afraid of getting caught and killed, just as we would be. (1 Kings 18:7-9, 12) Still, godly fear gave him the courage to rise above any fear of man he might have had. Obadiah is a fine example for all of us, especially for those who worship Jehovah at the risk of their freedom or even their life. (Matthew 24:9) Yes, may all of us strive to serve Jehovah “with godly fear and awe.”—Hebrews 12:28.

²¹ Faith and godly fear are not the only qualities that build courage; love can be an even greater force. “God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind,” wrote Paul. (2 Timothy 1:7) In the following article, we will see how love can help us to serve Jehovah courageously during these critical last days.—2 Timothy 3:1.

20. How did Obadiah’s godly fear help him, and how does his example help you?
21. What will be considered in the following article?

Can You Answer?

- What contributed to the courage of Joshua and Caleb?
- What does true faith include?
- Why was Enoch fearless in proclaiming God’s judgment message?
- How does godly fear contribute to courage?

COURAGE STRENGTHENED BY LOVE

"God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind."—2 TIMOTHY 1:7.

A NEWLY married couple were scuba diving near a town on the east coast of Australia. They were about to surface when a great white shark rushed at the woman. In a heroic act, the man pushed his wife aside and let the shark take him. "He gave his own life for me," said the widow at the funeral service.

² Yes, love can impel humans to show outstanding courage. Jesus Christ himself stated: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his soul in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) Less than 24 hours after Jesus said these words, he gave his own life, not for just one person, but for mankind. (Matthew 20:28) Moreover, Jesus did not offer up his life in a spur-of-the-moment act of bravery. He knew in advance that he would be ridiculed and abused, unjustly sentenced, and put to death on a torture stake. He even prepared his disciples for this outcome, saying: "Here we are, advancing up to Jerusalem, and the Son of man will be delivered to the chief priests and the scribes, and they will condemn him to death and will deliver him to men of the nations, and they will make fun of him and will spit upon him

1, 2. (a) What can love impel a person to do? (b) Why was Jesus' courage exceptional?

and scourge him and kill him."

—Mark 10:33, 34.

³ What contributed to Jesus' extraordinary courage? Faith and godly fear played a major role. (Hebrews 5:7; 12:2) Above all, however, Jesus' courage stemmed from his love, both for God and for his fellow humans. (1 John 3:16) If we cultivate such love in addition to faith and godly fear, we too will be able to display Christlike courage. (Ephesians 5:2) How can we develop such love? We need to recognize its Source.

"Love Is From God"

⁴ Jehovah is both the personification of love and the Source of it. "Beloved ones," wrote the apostle John, "let us continue loving one another, because love is from God, and everyone who loves has been born from God and gains the knowledge of God. He that does not love has not come to know God, because God is love." (1 John 4:7, 8) Godlike love, therefore, can develop in a person only when he draws close to Jehovah through accurate knowledge and acts on that knowledge in heartfelt obedience.—Philippians 1:9; James 4:8; 1 John 5:3.

3. What contributed to Jesus' great courage?
4. Why can it be said that Jehovah is the Source of love?



⁵ In his final prayer with his 11 faithful apostles, Jesus showed the connection between knowing God and growing in love, saying: “I have made your name known to them and will make it known, in order that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them.” (John 17:26) Jesus helped his disciples to develop the kind of love that existed between him and his Father, revealing both by word and by example what God’s name represents—God’s wonderful qualities. Hence, Jesus could say: “He that has seen me has seen the Father also.”—John 14:9, 10; 17:8.

⁶ Christlike love is a product of God’s holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22) When the early Christians received the promised holy spirit at Pentecost 33 C.E., they not only recalled the many things Jesus had taught them but also grasped more fully the meaning of the Scriptures. This deeper insight evidently built up their love for God. (John 14:26; 15:26) The result? Even at the risk of their own life, they boldly and zealously preached the good news.—Acts 5:28, 29.

Courage and Love in Action

⁷ The apostle Paul wrote: “God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7) Paul was speaking from personal experience. Consider what he and Barnabas went through on their missionary tour together. They preached in a number of cities, including Antioch, Iconium, and Lystra. In each city, some people became believers, but others turned out to be hostile opposers. (Acts 13:2, 14, 45, 50; 14:1, 5) In Lystra an enraged mob even stoned Paul, leaving him for dead! “However, when the disciples surrounded him, he rose up and entered into the city.

5, 6. What helped Jesus’ early followers to develop Christlike love?

7. What did Paul and Barnabas have to endure on their missionary tour together?

And on the next day he left with Barnabas for Derbe.”—Acts 14:6, 19, 20.

⁸ Did this attempt on Paul’s life frighten him and Barnabas into giving up? On the contrary! After “making quite a few disciples” in Derbe, the two men “returned to Lystra and to Iconium and to Antioch.” Why? In order to encourage the new ones to remain strong in the faith. “We must enter into the kingdom of God through many tribulations,” said Paul and Barnabas. Clearly, their courage came from their deep love for Christ’s “little sheep.” (Acts 14:21-23; John 21:15-17) After appointing elders in each of the fledgling congregations, the two brothers offered prayer and “committed them to Jehovah in whom they had become believers.”

⁹ Paul was such a caring and courageous person that many early Christians grew to love him deeply. Recall what took place at a meeting that Paul held with the elders from Ephesus, where he had spent three years and experienced much opposition. (Acts 20:17-31) After encouraging them to shepherd the flock of God entrusted to them, Paul kneeled down with them and prayed. Then, “quite a bit of weeping broke out among them all, and they fell upon Paul’s neck and tenderly kissed him, because they were especially pained at the word he had spoken that they were going to behold his face no more.” What love these brothers had for Paul! Indeed, when the time came to part, Paul and his traveling companions had to ‘tear themselves away,’ so reluctant were the local elders to let them go.—Acts 20:36-21:1.

¹⁰ Today, traveling overseers, congregation elders, and many others are deeply loved be-

8. How did the courage shown by Paul and Barnabas reflect their deep love for people?

9. In what way did the elders from Ephesus respond to Paul’s love for them?

10. How have Jehovah’s modern-day Witnesses displayed courageous love for one another?

cause of the courage they show in behalf of Jehovah's sheep. For example, in countries racked by civil war or where the preaching work is banned, traveling overseers and their wives have risked their life and freedom in order to visit congregations. Likewise, many Witnesses have suffered at the hands of hostile rulers and their minions because of not betraying their fellow Witnesses nor revealing from where they obtained spiritual food. Thousands of others have been persecuted, tortured, and even killed because they would not stop preaching the good news or cease associating with fellow believers at Christian meetings. (Acts 5:28, 29; Hebrews 10:24, 25) May we imitate the faith and love of such courageous brothers and sisters!—1 Thessalonians 1:6.

Do Not Let Your Love Cool Off

¹¹ When Satan was cast down to the earth, he was intent on venting his anger on Jehovah's servants because they "observe the commandments of God and [bear] witness to Jesus." (Revelation 12:9, 17) One of the Devil's tactics is persecution. Often, however, this strategy backfires because it draws God's people even closer together in the bonds of Christian love and moves many of them to greater zeal. Another tactic of Satan is to appeal to sinful

11. In what ways does Satan wage spiritual warfare against Jehovah's servants, calling for what on their part?

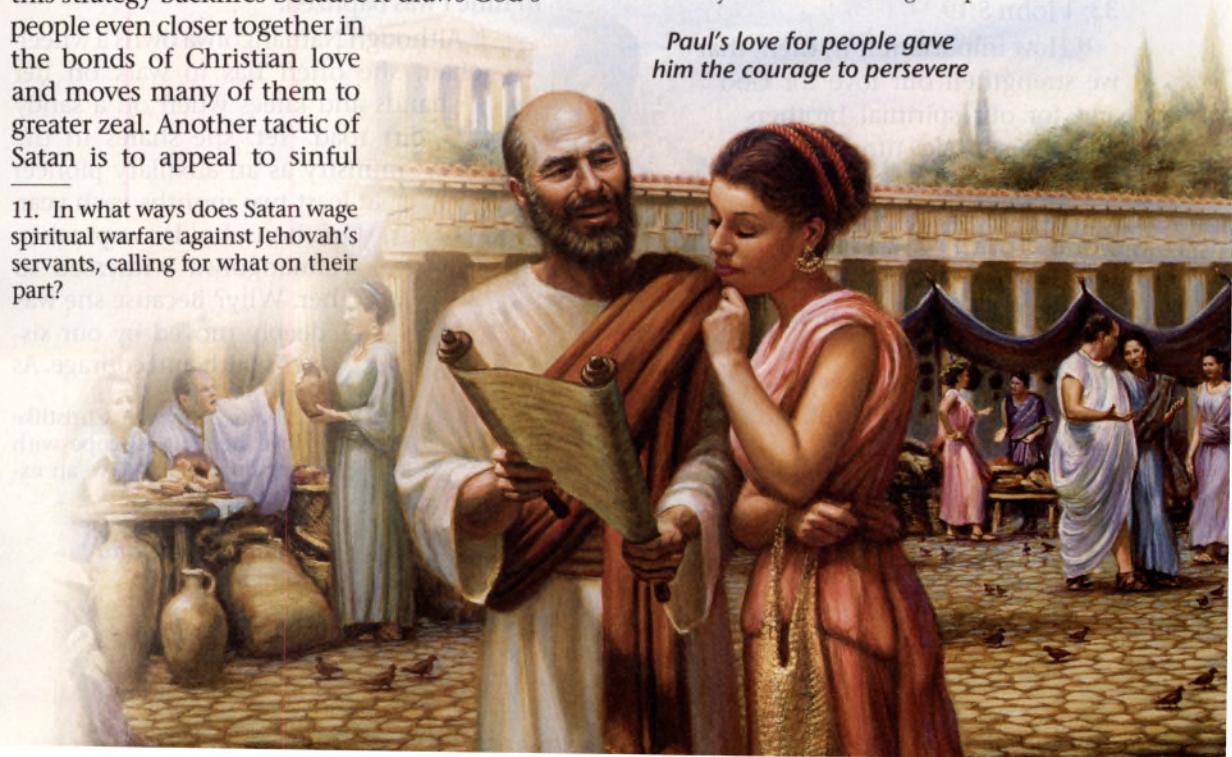
human inclinations. Resisting this ploy calls for courage in a different way because the fight is an internal one, against improper desires within our own 'treacherous and desperate' heart.—Jeremiah 17:9; James 1:14, 15.

¹² In Satan's arsenal is another powerful weapon—"the spirit of the world," that is, its dominant inclination or motivation, which is in direct opposition to God's holy spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:12) The spirit of the world promotes greed and materialism—"the desire of the eyes." (1 John 2:16; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Even though material things and money are not harmful in themselves, if our love for them supplants our love for God, then Satan has gained a victory. The power, or "authority," of the world's spirit lies in its appeal to the sinful flesh, its subtlety, its relentlessness and, like air, its pervasiveness. Do not let the spirit of the world infect your heart!—Ephesians 2:2, 3; Proverbs 4:23.

¹³ To resist and repudiate the evil spirit of the world, however, takes moral courage. For

12. How does Satan use "the spirit of the world" in his attempt to weaken our love for God?
13. How may our moral courage be put to the test?

Paul's love for people gave him the courage to persevere





*It takes courage to uphold
God's standards*

tions. (Psalm 51:17) Moreover, his spirit is far more powerful than that of the world.
—1 John 4:4.

Facing Personal Trials With Courage

¹⁵ Other challenges that Jehovah's servants have to contend with include the effects of imperfection and old age, often resulting in disease, disability, depression, and many other problems. (Romans 8:22) Christlike love can help us cope with these trials. Consider the example of Namangolwa, who was raised in a Christian family in Zambia. When she was two years old, Namangolwa became disabled. "I was self-conscious," she says, "thinking that people would be appalled by my appearance. But my spiritual brothers helped me to view things differently. As a result, I overcame my self-consciousness, and in time I was baptized."

¹⁶ Although Namangolwa owns a wheelchair, she often has to walk on her hands and knees when on a sandy dirt road. Yet, she shares in the ministry as an auxiliary pioneer at least two months each year.

One householder wept when Namangolwa witnessed to her. Why? Because she was deeply moved by our sister's faith and courage. As

15, 16. How can Christlike love help us to cope with personal trials? Give an example.

Namangolwa Sututu



example, it takes courage to get up and walk out of a theater or to turn off the computer or the TV when indecent images appear. It calls for courage to stand up against negative peer pressure and to cut off bad associations. Likewise, it requires courage to uphold God's laws and principles in the face of ridicule, whether from schoolmates, workmates, neighbors, or relatives.—1 Corinthians 15:33; 1 John 5:19.

¹⁴ How important it is, then, that we strengthen our love for God and for our spiritual brothers and sisters! Take time to examine your goals and way of life to see whether the world's spirit has infected you in any way. If it has—even slightly—then pray to Jehovah for the courage to root it out and keep it out. Jehovah will not ignore such sincere peti-

14. What should we do if we are infected by the spirit of the world?

evidence of Jehovah's rich blessing, five of Namangolwa's Bible students have been baptized, and one serves as a congregation elder. "My legs often ache terribly," she says, "but I do not let that stop me." This sister is just one of many Witnesses worldwide who are frail in body but mighty in spirit because of their love for God and neighbor. How desirable all such ones are in Jehovah's eyes!—Haggai 2:7.

¹⁷ Chronic illness can also be discouraging, even depressing. "In the book study group I attend," says a congregation elder, "one sister suffers from diabetes and kidney failure, one has cancer, two have severe arthritis, and one has both lupus and fibromyalgia. Sometimes they feel down. Yet, they miss meetings only when they are very ill or in the hospital. All are regular in the field service. They remind me of Paul, who said: 'When I am weak, then I am powerful.' I admire their love and their courage. Perhaps their situation gives them a clearer focus on life and on what really matters."—2 Corinthians 12:10.

¹⁸ If you battle with infirmity, sickness, or some other problem, "pray incessantly" for help so that you do not become a victim of discouragement. (1 Thessalonians 5:14, 17) Of course, you are likely to have emotional ups and downs, but try to focus on positive,

17, 18. What helps many to endure sickness and other trials? Give some local examples.

Can You Answer?

- How did love contribute to Jesus' outstanding courage?
- How did love for the brothers give Paul and Barnabas exceptional courage?
- By what means does Satan try to erode Christian love?
- Love for Jehovah can give us the courage to endure what trials?

spiritual things, especially our precious Kingdom hope. "For me, the field ministry is therapy," said one sister. Sharing the good news with others helps her to maintain a positive outlook.

Love Helps Wrongdoers Return to Jehovah

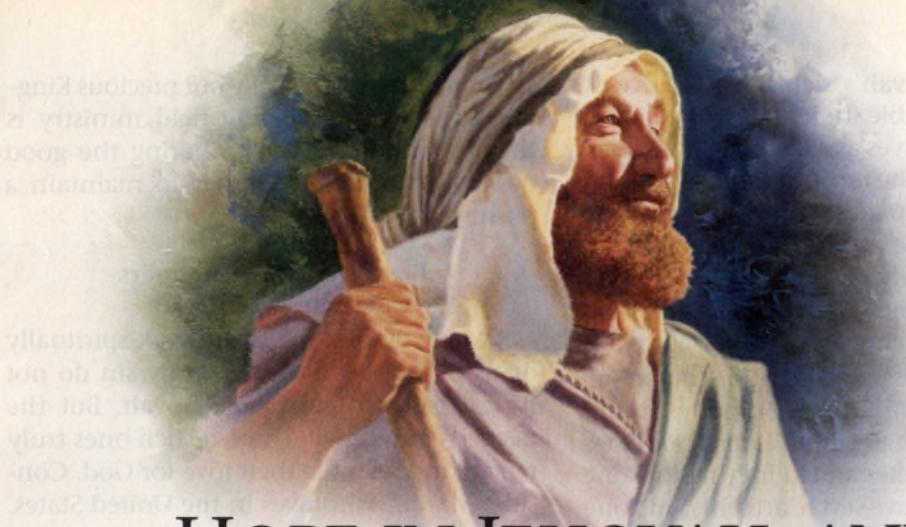
¹⁹ Many who have grown weak spiritually or who have been overtaken by sin do not find it easy to return to Jehovah. But the needed courage will come if such ones truly repent and rekindle their love for God. Consider Mario,* who lives in the United States. Mario left the Christian congregation, became an alcoholic and a drug addict and, after 20 years, landed in prison. "I began to think deeply about my future and to read the Bible again," says Mario. "In time, I came to appreciate Jehovah's qualities, especially his mercy, for which I often prayed. After I was released from prison, I avoided my old associates, went to Christian meetings, and was eventually reinstated. In my body, I am reaping what I sowed, but now I at least have a wonderful hope. I cannot thank Jehovah enough for his compassion and forgiveness."

—Psalm 103:9-13; 130:3, 4; Galatians 6:7, 8.

²⁰ To be sure, those in situations similar to Mario's have to work hard to return to Jehovah. But their rekindled love—a result of Bible study, prayer, and meditation—will give them the needed courage and resolve. Mario was also strengthened by the Kingdom hope. Yes, along with love, faith, and godly fear, hope can be a powerful force for good in our life. In the following article, we will take a closer look at this precious spiritual gift.

* The name has been changed.

19, 20. (a) What may help those who have fallen into sin to muster up the courage to return to Jehovah? (b) What will be considered in the following article?



HOPE IN JEHOVAH, AND BE COURAGEOUS

"Hope in Jehovah; be courageous and let your heart be strong. Yes, hope in Jehovah."—PSALM 27:14.

GENUINE hope is like a bright light. It helps us to see beyond present trials and to face the future with courage and joy. Only Jehovah can give us a sure hope, which he does by means of his inspired Word. (2 Timothy 3:16) In fact, the words "hope," "hoped," and "hoping" appear over 160 times in the Bible and refer both to the eager and sure expectation of something good and to the object of that expectation.* Such hope is superior to a mere wish, which may have no foundation or prospect of fulfillment.

2 When faced with trials and hardships, Jesus looked beyond the present and hoped in Jehovah. "For the joy that was set before him

he endured a torture stake, despising shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God." (Hebrews 12:2) Because he was keenly focused on the prospect of vindicating Jehovah's sovereignty and sanctifying His name, Jesus never deviated from his course of obedience to God, no matter what it cost him.

3 King David points to the connection between hope and courage, saying: "Hope in Jehovah; be courageous and let your heart be strong. Yes, hope in Jehovah." (Psalm 27:14) If we want our heart to be strong, we must never let our hope become vague but always keep it clearly in mind and close at heart. Doing so will help us to imitate Jesus in manifesting courage and zeal as we share in the work he commissioned his disciples to do. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) Indeed, hope is

* Although in the Christian Greek Scriptures the word "hope" frequently applies to the heavenly reward of anointed Christians, in this article, hope in the general sense is discussed.

1. How important is hope, and how is the term used in the Scriptures?
2. What role did hope play in Jesus' life?

3. What role does hope play in the life of servants of God?

placed alongside faith and love as a vital, enduring quality that characterizes the life of servants of God.—1 Corinthians 13:13.

Do You “Abound in Hope”?

⁴ God’s people have a wonderful future before them. Anointed Christians eagerly await serving with Christ in heaven, while the “other sheep” hope to “be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the [earthly] children of God.” (John 10:16; Romans 8:19-21; Philippians 3:20) That “glorious freedom” includes deliverance from sin and its horrible consequences. Indeed, Jehovah—the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present”—would extend nothing less to his loyal ones.—James 1:17; Isaiah 25:8.

⁵ How large a part should Christian hope play in our life? At Romans 15:13, we read: “May the God who gives hope fill you with all joy and peace by your believing, that you may *abound in hope* with power of holy spirit.” Yes, hope can be likened, not to a candle in the darkness, but to the brilliant rays of the morning sun, filling one’s life with peace, happiness, purpose, and courage. Note that we “abound in hope” when we believe God’s written Word and receive his holy spirit. Says Romans 15:4: “All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.” So ask yourself: ‘Do I keep my hope bright by being a good student of the Bible, reading it daily? Do I pray often for God’s spirit?’—Luke 11:13.

⁶ Jesus, our Exemplar, thrived on God’s Word. By considering him closely, we avoid ‘getting tired and giving out in our souls.’

4. To what do anointed Christians and their “other sheep” companions earnestly look forward?
5. How do we come to “abound in hope”?
6. To keep our hope bright, what must we guard against?

(Hebrews 12:3) It stands to reason that if our God-given hope grows dim in our mind and heart or if our focus shifts elsewhere—perhaps to material things or to secular goals—spiritual weariness may soon overtake us, eventually leading to loss of moral strength and courage. In that frame of mind, we may even experience “shipwreck concerning [our] faith.” (1 Timothy 1:19) On the other hand, true hope strengthens our faith.

Hope—Essential to Faith

⁷ “Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld,” says the Bible. (Hebrews 11:1) Therefore, hope is not just incidental to faith; it is an essential element of faith. Consider Abraham. From a human standpoint, he and his wife, Sarah, were past childbearing age when Jehovah promised them an heir. (Genesis 17:15-17) How did Abraham respond? “Although beyond hope, yet *based on hope* he had faith, that he might become the father of many nations.” (Romans 4:18) Yes, Abraham’s God-given hope gave his faith that he would have offspring a firm foundation. His faith, in turn, brightened and strengthened his hope. Why, Abraham and Sarah even had the courage to leave their home and their relatives and live the rest of their lives in tents in a foreign land!

⁸ Abraham kept his hope sure by obeying Jehovah implicitly, even when doing so was difficult. (Genesis 22:2, 12) Similarly, by our being obedient and enduring in Jehovah’s service, we can be confident of our reward. “Endurance,” wrote Paul, results in “an approved condition,” which, in turn, produces hope, “and the hope does not lead to disappointment.” (Romans 5:4, 5) That is why Paul also wrote: “We desire each one of you

7. In what way is hope essential to faith?
8. How does faithful endurance fortify hope?

to show the same industriousness so as to have the *full assurance of the hope* down to the end." (Hebrews 6:11) Such a positive outlook, which is based on an intimate relationship with Jehovah, can help us to face any hardship with courage, even joy.

"Rejoice in the Hope"

⁹ Our God-given hope is infinitely superior to anything that the world can offer. Says Psalm 37:34: "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth. When the wicked ones are cut off, you will see it." Yes, we have every reason to "rejoice in the hope." (Romans 12:12) In order to do so, however, we must keep our hope fresh in mind. Do you regularly reflect on your God-given hope? Can you see yourself in Paradise, glowing with good health, free from anxieties, surrounded by people you love, and sharing in truly fulfilling work? Do you meditate on the Paradise scenes depicted in our publications? Such regular reflection might be likened to cleaning a window that affords a magnificent view. If we neglect to clean the glass, soon dirt and grime will rob us of the scene's clarity and appeal. Other things may then capture our attention. May we never allow that to happen!

9. Doing what regularly can help us to "rejoice in the hope"?

Whether young or old, can you see yourself in Paradise?

¹⁰ Of course, our main reason for serving Jehovah is our love for him. (Mark 12:30) Still, we should look eagerly to the reward. In fact, Jehovah expects us to do so! Hebrews 11:6 says: "Without faith it is impossible to please him well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." Why does Jehovah want us to view him as the Rewarder? Because when we do, we show that we know our heavenly Father well. He is generous, and he loves his children. Think how unhappy and easily discouraged we would be if we did not have "a future and a hope."—Jeremiah 29:11.

¹¹ An outstanding example of one who remained focused on his God-given hope was Moses. As "the son of the daughter of Pharaoh," Moses had power, prestige, and the wealth of Egypt at his disposal. Would he pursue these things, or would he serve Jehovah? Moses courageously chose the latter. Why? Because he "looked intently toward the payment of the reward." (Hebrews 11:24-26) Yes, Moses was certainly not nonchalant

10. Why does our looking to the reward reflect well on our relationship with Jehovah?

11. How did his God-given hope help Moses to make wise decisions?



about the hope that Jehovah had set before him.

¹² The apostle Paul compared hope to a helmet. Our figurative helmet protects our mental powers, enabling us to make wise decisions, set sound priorities, and maintain integrity. (1 Thessalonians 5:8) Do you have your figurative helmet on at all times? If so, then like Moses and Paul, you will rest your hope, "not on uncertain riches, but on God, who furnishes us all things richly for our enjoyment." True, going against popular trends by turning your back on selfish pursuits takes courage, but it is well worth the effort! After all, why settle for anything less than "the real life," which awaits those who hope in and love Jehovah?—1 Timothy 6:17, 19.

"I Will By No Means Leave You"

¹³ People who rest their hope on the present system of things must think about tomorrow with a deep sense of foreboding as the world suffers ever increasing "pangs of distress." (Matthew 24:8) But those who hope in Jehovah have no such fears. They will continue to "reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity." (Proverbs 1:33) Because their hope is not in the present system, they joyfully heed Paul's counsel: "Let your manner of life be free of the love of money, while you are content with the present things. For he has said: 'I will by no means leave you nor by any means forsake you.'"—Hebrews 13:5.

¹⁴ "By no means," "nor by any means"—these emphatic expressions leave no doubt that God will care for us. Jesus also assured us of God's loving concern, saying: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things [the ma-

terial necessities of life] will be added to you. So, never be anxious about the next day, for the next day will have its own anxieties." (Matthew 6:33, 34) Jehovah knows that it is a challenge for us to be zealous for his Kingdom and at the same time to bear the full weight of the responsibility to provide for our physical needs. So let us put full confidence in his ability and desire to care for our needs.—Matthew 6:25-32; 11:28-30.

¹⁵ We show our reliance on Jehovah when we keep a 'simple eye.' (Matthew 6:22, 23) A simple eye is sincere, pure in motive, and free from greed and selfish ambition. Having a simple eye does not mean living in abject poverty or being negligent in caring for our Christian responsibilities. Rather, it means showing "soundness of mind" as we keep Jehovah's service in first place.—2 Timothy 1:7.

¹⁶ Maintaining a simple eye calls for faith and courage. For example, if an employer insists that you regularly work at a time scheduled for Christian meetings, will you courageously stick to your spiritual priorities? If a person has doubts that Jehovah will fulfill His promise to care for His servants, then Satan simply needs to keep up the pressure and such a person might stop attending meetings altogether. Yes, a lack of faith on our part can give Satan a hold on us so that he, not Jehovah, sets our priorities. What a tragedy that would be!—2 Corinthians 13:5.

"Hope in Jehovah"

¹⁷ The Scriptures repeatedly show that those who hope and trust in Jehovah never lose out. (Proverbs 3:5, 6; Jeremiah 17:7) True, at times they may have to be content with less, but they consider this a small sacrifice compared with the blessings in store

12. Why is Christian hope like a helmet?
13. What assurance does Jehovah provide his loyal servants?
14. Why do Christians not need to be unduly anxious about their material needs?

15. How do Christians keep a 'simple eye'?
16. Why are faith and courage needed to keep a simple eye?
17. How are those who trust in Jehovah blessed even now?

for them. They thus demonstrate that they “hope in Jehovah” and are confident that he will eventually grant his loyal ones all the righteous desires of their heart. (Psalm 37:4, 34) Hence, they are truly happy even now. “The expectation of the righteous ones is a rejoicing, but the very hope of the wicked ones will perish.”—Proverbs 10:28.

¹⁸ When a little boy walks hand in hand with his father, he feels safe and secure. The same is true of us as we walk with our heavenly Father. “Do not be afraid,” said Jehovah to Israel, “for I am with you. . . . I will really help you. . . . For I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, the One saying to you, ‘Do not be afraid. I myself will help you.’”—Isaiah 41:10, 13.

¹⁹ What a warm picture that conveys—Jehovah grasping one’s hand! “I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly,” David wrote. “Because he is at my right

18, 19. (a) What loving assurance does Jehovah give us? (b) How do we keep Jehovah at our “right hand”?



hand, I shall not be made to totter.” (Psalm 16:8) How do we keep Jehovah at our “right hand”? We do so in at least two ways. One, we let his Word guide us in every aspect of life; and two, we look to the glorious prize Jehovah has set before us. The psalmist Asaph sang: “I am constantly with you; you have taken hold of my right hand. With your counsel you will lead me, and afterward you will take me even to glory.” (Psalm 73:23, 24) With such assurance, we can truly face the future with confidence.

“Your Deliverance Is Getting Near”

²⁰ With each passing day, it becomes more urgent that we keep Jehovah at our right hand. Soon, starting with the destruction of false religion, Satan’s world will experience a tribulation such as it has never experienced before. (Matthew 24:21) Fear will envelop faithless mankind. Yet, during that chaotic time, Jehovah’s courageous servants will rejoice in their hope! “As these things start to occur,” said Jesus, “raise yourselves erect and lift your heads up, because your deliverance is getting near.”—Luke 21:28.

²¹ Let us therefore rejoice in our God-given hope and not be deceived or tempted by Satan’s clever distractions. At the same time, let us work hard to cultivate faith, love, and godly fear. Doing so, we will have the courage to obey Jehovah under all circumstances and to oppose the Devil. (James 4:7, 8) Yes, “be courageous, and may your heart be strong, all you who are waiting for Jehovah.”—Psalm 31:24.

20, 21. What future awaits those who hope in Jehovah?

Can You Answer?

- In what way did Jesus’ hope contribute to his courage?
- How do faith and hope relate to each other?
- How can hope along with faith give a Christian the courage to set sound priorities in life?
- Why can those who “hope in Jehovah” look to the future with confidence?

Questions From Readers

Why does the *New World Translation* say at Deuteronomy 31:2 that Moses would "no more be allowed to go out and come in" as Israel's leader, when other translations indicate that he was no longer *able* to do so?

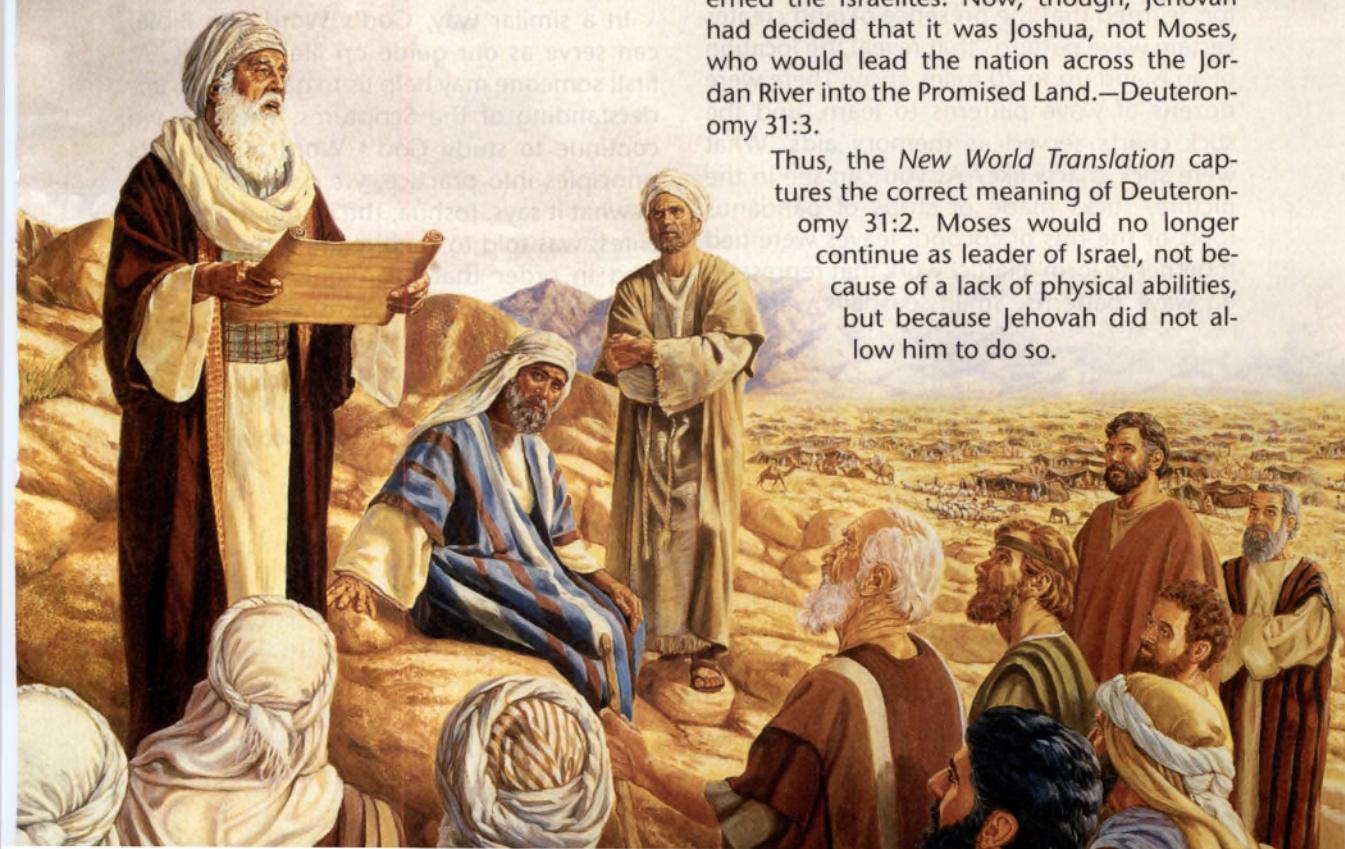
Although the Hebrew word in question can be translated either way, the rendering in some English translations of the Bible suggests that toward the end of his life, Moses was infirm, physically unable to carry out the responsibilities of leadership. For example, *The New English Bible* quotes Moses as saying: "I am now a hundred and twenty years old, and I can no longer move about as I please." Similarly, *The New American Bible* says: "I am . . . no longer able to move about freely."

Deuteronomy 34:7 shows, however, that even though Moses was advanced in years, he was not infirm. It says: "Moses was a hun-

dred and twenty years old at his death. His eye had not grown dim, and his vital strength had not fled." Thus, Moses was physically able to lead the nation, but it was not Jehovah's will for him to continue to do so. This is evident from what Moses went on to say: "Jehovah has said to me, 'You will not cross this Jordan.'" Apparently, Jehovah was reiterating what he had decreed at the waters of Meribah.—Numbers 20:9-12.

Moses had lived a long and remarkable life, which can be divided into three periods. For 40 years he lived in Egypt, where he was "instructed in all the wisdom of the Egyptians" and was "powerful in his words and deeds." (Acts 7:20-22) For another 40 years, he resided in Midian. There he cultivated the spiritual qualities needed to lead Jehovah's people. Finally, for 40 years Moses guided and governed the Israelites. Now, though, Jehovah had decided that it was Joshua, not Moses, who would lead the nation across the Jordan River into the Promised Land.—Deuteronomy 31:3.

Thus, the *New World Translation* captures the correct meaning of Deuteronomy 31:2. Moses would no longer continue as leader of Israel, not because of a lack of physical abilities, but because Jehovah did not allow him to do so.



Finding the Way in a Vast Ocean



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THE Marshall Islands consist of over 1,200 islands and islets, most rising no more than a few feet above sea level. They drop out of sight from just a short distance out to sea. Yet, ancient Marshallese seafarers in their outrigger canoes were able to navigate from tiny island to tiny island, finding their way in some three quarters of a million square miles of the Pacific Ocean. How did they do it? They were guided by the use of simple, yet remarkably effective, "maps" called stick charts.

Through experience, Marshallese navigators learned that the presence of land creates certain wave patterns that reveal the location of an island up to 20 miles away. There were dozens of wave patterns to learn, and the stick charts served as memory aids. What were stick charts like? As you can see in the picture, sticks made of strips of pandanus roots or the ribs of coconut leaves were tied together to form a latticework that represented wave patterns. Small seashells were fas-

tened to mark the relative positions of islands.

For many years, navigation by stick chart was kept a secret, revealed only to certain chosen ones. How would a young navigator learn to use a stick chart? Only through training and practice. An experienced navigator privately tutored the young sailor, perhaps taking him on trips to nearby islands. As the apprentice learned to recognize wave patterns, he gained confidence in his stick chart. Eventually, he could set out on the ocean by himself.

In a similar way, God's Word, the Bible, can serve as our guide on life's journey. At first, someone may help us to gain a basic understanding of the Scriptures. Then, as we continue to study God's Word and put its principles into practice, we gain confidence in what it says. Joshua, the leader of the Israelites, was told to keep reading the Word of God in order that he might "take care to do according to all that is written in it." "Then," God told Joshua, "you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely." (Joshua 1:8) Yes, the Bible can map out for us a sure and successful course in life.

