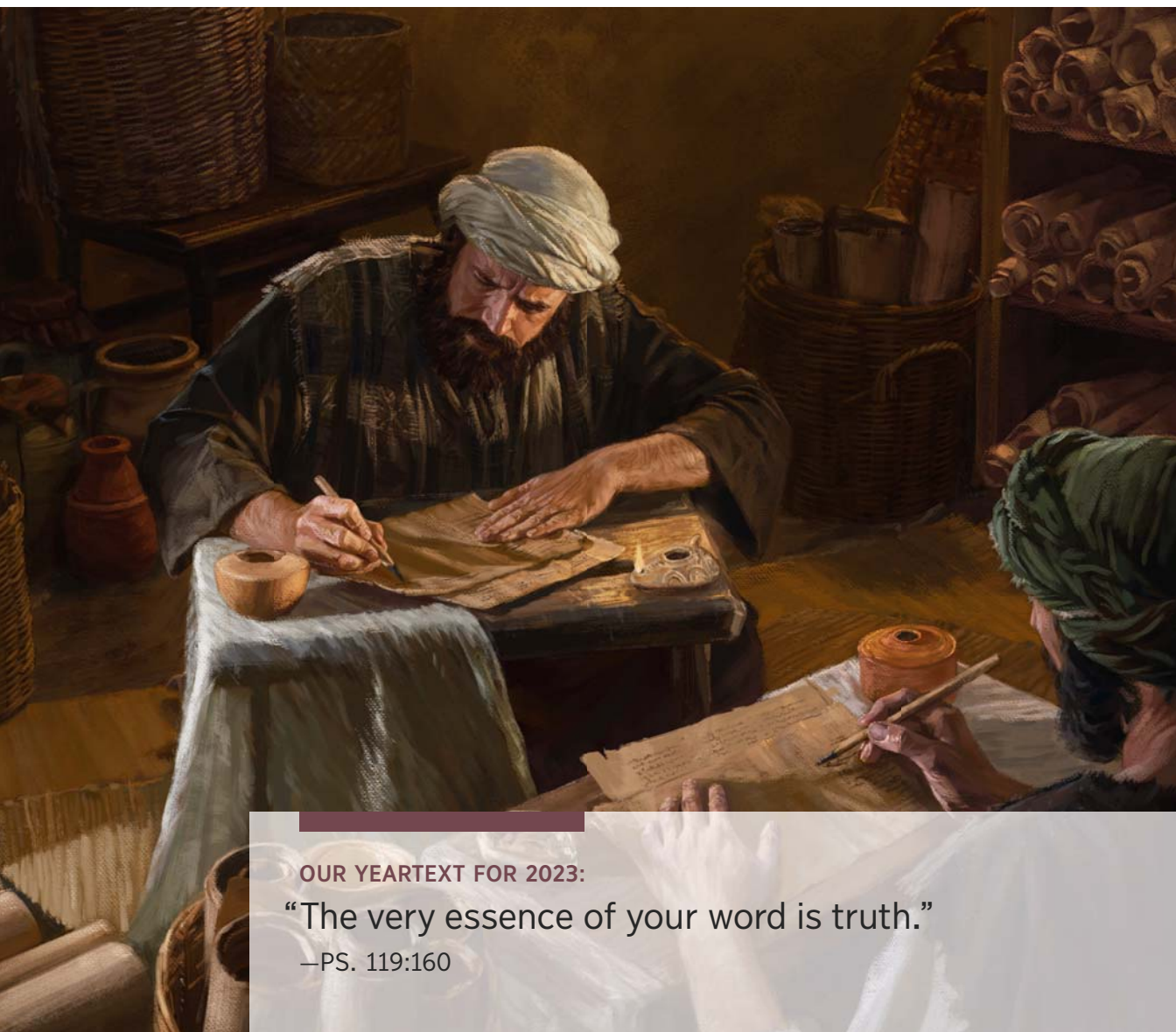


JANUARY 2023

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



OUR YEARETEXT FOR 2023:

“The very essence of your word is truth.”

—PS. 119:160



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
FEBRUARY 27–APRIL 2, 2023

## SONG 96

God's Own Book  
—A Treasure

## PREVIEW

A faith-strengthening year-text has been chosen for 2023: “The very essence of your word is truth.” (Ps. 119:160) No doubt you agree with that statement. But many people do not believe that the Bible is true and that it can provide us with reliable guidance. In this article, we will examine three lines of evidence that we can use to convince honesthearted ones that they can trust the Bible and its advice.

## Be Convinced That God's “Word Is Truth”

## OUR YEARETEXT FOR 2023:

*“The very essence of your word is truth.”* —PS. 119:160.

MANY today are suffering from a lack of confidence. They do not know whom they can trust. They wonder whether people they look up to—politicians, scientists, and businessmen—really have their best interests at heart. In addition, they do not have high regard for Christendom's clergy. So it is not surprising that they view with skepticism the book those religious leaders claim to represent—the Bible.

<sup>2</sup> As servants of Jehovah, we are convinced that he is “the God of truth” and that he always wants what is best for us. (Ps. 31:5; Isa. 48:17) We know that we can trust what we read in the Bible—that “the very essence of [God's] word is truth.”\* **(Read Psalm 119:160.)** We agree with what one Bible scholar wrote: “There is no hint of falseness or chance of failure in anything God has said. God's people can trust what he says because they trust the God who has said it.”

<sup>3</sup> How can we help others to have the same confidence that we have in God's Word? Let us reflect on three reasons why we can trust the Bible. We will consider the accuracy of the text, the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and the Bible's power to change lives.

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\* **EXPRESSION EXPLAINED:** The Hebrew word rendered “**essence**” in this verse means the sum, the totality, or the substance of something.

1. Why do many today lack confidence in the Bible?
2. In harmony with Psalm 119:160, of what must we be convinced?
3. What will we consider in this article?

## THE BIBLE'S MESSAGE HAS BEEN ACCURATELY PRESERVED

<sup>4</sup> Jehovah God used some 40 faithful men to compose the books of the Bible. However, none of the original manuscripts have survived to our day.\* All we have are copies of copies. This causes some people to wonder if what we read in the Bible today accurately reflects the text as it was originally written. Have you ever wondered how we can be sure that it does?

<sup>5</sup> In order to preserve his inspired message, Jehovah directed that it be copied. He instructed the kings of Israel to make their own copies of the written Law, and he appointed the Levites to teach that Law to the people. (Deut. 17:18; 31:24-26; Neh. 8:7) After the exile of the Jews to Babylon, a group of professional copyists began to make numerous copies of the Hebrew Scriptures. (Ezra 7:6, ftns.) These men were conscientious. Eventually, copyists began to count not only the words but even the letters so as to be sure that everything was accurately transcribed. Even so, because of human imperfection, some small errors crept into the Bible text. However, many copies of the same text were made, so those errors could later be identified. How?

<sup>6</sup> Modern scholars have a reliable way

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\* The term "manuscript" refers to an ancient handwritten document.

4. Why do some people doubt the Bible's accuracy?

5. What was involved in copying the Hebrew Scriptures? (See cover picture.)

6. How could errors in copies of the Bible be identified?

to identify errors made by those who copied the Bible text. To illustrate: Suppose 100 men are assigned to copy a page of text by hand. One of the men makes a slight error in his copy. One way we could detect that error is by comparing his copy with all the others. Similarly, by comparing a number of Bible manuscripts, scholars are able to identify errors or omissions that one copyist may have made.

<sup>7</sup> Those who copied Bible manuscripts took pains to do so accurately. Consider an example that proves this point. The oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Scriptures dates back to 1008 or 1009 C.E. It is called the Leningrad Codex. In recent times, however, a number of Bible manuscripts and fragments have been discovered that are about 1,000 years older than the Leningrad Codex. Someone might think that after those manuscripts were copied and re-copied over a period of 1,000 years, the text of the Leningrad Codex would bear little resemblance to the text of those older manuscripts. Yet, that is not the case. Scholars who compared the earlier manuscripts with the later ones found that despite some relatively slight variations in wording, the substance of the Bible's message was accurately preserved.

<sup>8</sup> Early Christians followed the tradition of the copyists of the Hebrew Scriptures. They diligently made copies of the 27 books of the Greek Scriptures, which they used at their meetings and in

7. How accurate were many Bible copyists?

8. How do copies of the Christian Greek Scriptures compare with copies of some ancient secular texts?





Left: C. Sappo/DeAgostini/Getty Images; right: Image © Homo Cosmicos/Shutterstock

**Bible prophecy has been and is being fulfilled**  
(See paragraphs 10-11)

their preaching activities. After comparing surviving manuscripts of the Greek Scriptures with other works of the same time period, one scholar concludes: “As a general rule there are more [copies of the Greek Scriptures], . . . and they tend to be more complete.” The book *Anatomy of the New Testament* states: “One can be confident that what we read in a responsible modern translation [of the Greek Scriptures] represents substantially what the ancient authors wrote.”

<sup>9</sup> The careful efforts of many copyists over the centuries have contributed to the accuracy of the Bible that we read and study today.\* Undoubtedly, it was Jehovah who made sure that his message to mankind would be accurately preserved. **(Read Isaiah 40:8.)** Of course, some may argue that just be-

\* For more information on the Bible’s preservation, go to [jw.org](http://jw.org) and type “History and the Bible” in the search box.

9. According to Isaiah 40:8, what is true regarding the Bible’s message?

cause the Bible’s message has been preserved does not prove that it was inspired by God. So let us now consider some evidence of the Bible’s inspiration.

### BIBLE PROPHECIES ARE RELIABLE

<sup>10</sup> The Bible contains many prophecies that were fulfilled, some of them hundreds of years after they were recorded. History confirms that these prophecies came true. This does not surprise us because we know that the Author of Bible prophecy is Jehovah. **(Read 2 Peter 1:21.)** Think of the prophecies regarding the fall of the ancient city of Babylon. In the eighth century B.C.E., the prophet Isaiah was inspired to foretell that the then powerful city of Babylon would be captured. He even gave the name of its conqueror, Cyrus, and foretold precisely how the city would be seized. (Isa. 44:27-45:2) Isaiah also

10. Give an example of a fulfilled prophecy that confirms the truthfulness of 2 Peter 1:21. (See pictures.)

prophesied that Babylon would eventually be destroyed and completely deserted. (Isa. 13:19, 20) That is exactly what happened. Babylon fell to the Medes and the Persians in 539 B.C.E., and the site of this once great city is now a pile of ruins.—See the video *The Bible Foretold the Fall of Babylon* in the electronic edition of the *Enjoy Life Forever!* book, lesson 03 point 5.

<sup>11</sup> The fulfillment of Bible prophecy is not just a thing of the past; we are seeing prophecies being fulfilled today. Consider, for example, the remarkable fulfillment of Daniel’s prophecy regarding the Anglo-American World Power. **(Read Daniel 2:41-43.)** That prophecy accurately predicted that this dual world power would be “partly strong” like iron and “partly fragile” like clay. This has proved to be true. Britain and America have shown ironlike strength, playing a key role in winning both World Wars and continuing to wield great military might. Yet, their power has also been weakened by their citizens, who tend to rise up to claim their rights through labor unions, civil rights campaigns, and independence movements. One expert in world politics recently observed: “There is no advanced industrial democracy in the world more politically divided, or politically dysfunctional, than the United States today.” And Britain, the other part of this world power, has been especially divided in recent years by opposing opinions regarding what ties it should maintain with countries in the

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11. Describe how Daniel 2:41-43 is being fulfilled today.

European Union. These divisions have made it almost impossible for the Anglo-American World Power to act decisively.

<sup>12</sup> The many Bible prophecies that have already been fulfilled strengthen our confidence in the reliability of God’s promises for the future. We feel as did the psalmist who prayed to Jehovah: “I long for your salvation, for your word is my hope.” (Ps. 119:81) Through the pages of the Bible, Jehovah has kindly given us “a future and a hope.” (Jer. 29:11) Our hope for the future depends, not on man’s efforts, but on Jehovah’s promises. May we continue to build our trust in God’s Word by being keen students of Bible prophecy.

#### BIBLE-BASED ADVICE IS HELPING MILLIONS

<sup>13</sup> For another proof that we can trust the Bible, consider the good results people experience when they follow its advice. **(Read Psalm 119:66, 138.)** For example, married couples who were once on the brink of divorce are now happily united. Their children enjoy being raised in the loving atmosphere of a Christian home, where they feel secure and loved. —Eph. 5:22-29.

<sup>14</sup> By applying the Bible’s wise advice, even dangerous criminals have turned their life around. Consider how its counsel affected a prisoner named Jack.\* He was a violent criminal, known

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\* Some names have been changed.

12. Of what does Bible prophecy convince us?

13. According to Psalm 119:66, 138, what is another proof that the Bible is trustworthy?

14. Relate an example that shows how applying Bible truth changes people for the better.



The Bible's advice has changed for the better the life of so many people from so many backgrounds

(See paragraph 15)

for being one of the most dangerous inmates on death row. But then Jack sat in on a Bible study. The kindness displayed by the brothers conducting the study deeply touched him, and he too started to study. As he applied Bible truth in his life, his conduct and even his personality began to change for the better. In time, Jack qualified to be an unbaptized publisher and got baptized. He zealously preached to other inmates about God's Kingdom and helped at least four of them to learn the truth. When the day of his execution arrived, Jack was a changed man. One of his attorneys said: "Jack is not the same person I knew 20 years ago. The teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses have changed his life." Although Jack's death sentence was carried out, his example certainly highlights that we can trust God's Word and that it has the

power to transform people for the better.—Isa. 11:6-9.

<sup>15</sup> Because they apply Bible truth, Jehovah's people are united. (John 13:35; 1 Cor. 1:10) Our peace and unity are especially noteworthy when compared with the political, ethnic, and social disunity in the world. Seeing the unity among Jehovah's people profoundly affected a young man named Jean. He grew up in an African country. When civil war broke out, he joined the army but later fled to a neighboring country. There he came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. Jean says: "I learned that followers of the true religion do not get involved in politics and are not divided. Rather, they love one another." He continues: "I had dedicated my life to defending a country. But when I learned

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15. How does applying Bible truth distinguish Jehovah's people today? (See picture.)

Bible truth, I was moved to dedicate my life to Jehovah.” Jean changed completely. Instead of fighting against people of a background different from his, he now shares unifying Bible truth with everyone he meets. The fact that the Bible’s advice works so well for people from so many backgrounds is powerful proof that we can trust God’s Word.

### CONTINUE TRUSTING GOD’S WORD OF TRUTH

<sup>16</sup> As this world goes from bad to worse, our confidence in the truth will be put to the test. People may try to sow doubts in our mind—doubts about the truthfulness of the Bible or about whether Jehovah has appointed a channel for guiding his worshippers today. But if we are convinced that Jehovah’s Word is always true, we will be able to resist such attacks on our faith. We will be “resolved to obey [Jehovah’s] regulations at all times, down to the last.” (Ps. 119:112) We will “not be ashamed” to tell

16. Why is it vital for us to strengthen our confidence in God’s Word?

others about the truth and to encourage them to live in harmony with it. (Ps. 119:46) And we will be able to endure the most difficult situations, including persecution, “with patience and joy.”—Col. 1:11; Ps. 119:143, 157.

<sup>17</sup> How thankful we are that Jehovah has revealed the truth to us! That truth stabilizes us, giving us a definite purpose and clear direction in an increasingly confused and chaotic world. It provides us with hope for a better future under the rulership of God’s Kingdom. May our yeartext for 2023 help us to stand firm in our conviction that all of God’s Word—the very essence of it—is truth!—Ps. 119:160.

17. Of what will our yeartext remind us?

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS Page 4:** By God’s decree, the glorious ancient city of Babylon was eventually reduced to ruins. **Page 6:** Reenactment—Instead of fighting people, a young man learns from the Bible how to live in peace and helps others to do the same.

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- How do we know that the Bible’s message has been accurately preserved?
- What strengthens your trust in God’s Word?
- Why is it important now more than ever to be convinced that God’s “word is truth”?



## SONG 88

Make Me Know Your Ways

## PREVIEW

The apostle Paul urged fellow believers not to allow themselves to be molded by this system of things. That is certainly good advice for us today. We need to make sure that this world's corrupting influence is not affecting us in some way. To that end, we must keep correcting our way of thinking whenever we realize that it is not in harmony with God's will. In this article, we will consider how this can be done.

## “Be Transformed by Making Your Mind Over”

*“Be transformed by making your mind over, so that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”—ROM. 12:2.*

HOW often do you clean your home? Perhaps before you first moved in, you scoured it thoroughly. But what if you neglected it afterward? As you know, dust and dirt can accumulate quickly. To keep your home presentable, you need to clean it regularly.

<sup>2</sup> A similar ongoing effort is required when it comes to our thinking and our personality. Of course, before getting baptized we worked hard to make necessary changes in our life in order to “cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit.” (2 Cor. 7:1) Now, though, we need to follow the apostle Paul's counsel to “*continue* to be made new.” (Eph. 4:23) Why is continual effort needed? Because the dust and dirt of this world can quickly accumulate in us. To avoid that outcome and to remain presentable to Jehovah, we must regularly examine our thinking, our personality, and our desires.

### KEEP “MAKING YOUR MIND OVER”

<sup>3</sup> What do we need to do to make our mind over, that is, to change our way of thinking? (**Read Romans 12:2.**) The Greek expression translated “making your mind over” can be rendered “renovation of your mind.” Therefore, we cannot simply decorate our life with a few good works. Rather, we must examine the person we are

1-2. What must we continue to do after baptism? Explain.

3. What does “making your mind over” mean? (Romans 12:2)





**Do your decisions regarding education and career choices show that you give priority to Kingdom interests?**

(See paragraphs 4-5)

deep inside and make any needed changes so that we can bring our life as close as possible to Jehovah's standards. We should do this, not once, but continually.

<sup>4</sup> When we reach perfection, we will always be able to please Jehovah in everything we do. In the meantime, we need to keep working hard toward that goal. Notice the connection Paul made between making our mind over and discerning God's will, as recorded at Romans 12:2. Instead of passively allowing ourselves to be molded by this system of things, we must first examine ourselves to determine how much we are letting God's thinking—not the world's—influence our goals and decisions.

4. How can we avoid having our thinking molded by this system of things?

<sup>5</sup> Consider an example. Jehovah wants us to “keep close in mind the presence of the day of Jehovah.” (2 Pet. 3:12) Ask yourself: ‘Does my way of life show that I understand how close we are to the end of this system of things? Do my decisions regarding education and employment show that serving Jehovah is the most important thing in my life? Do I have faith that Jehovah will provide for me and my family, or do I constantly worry about material things?’ Think how pleased Jehovah is when he sees us bringing our life into harmony with his will.—Matt. 6:25-27, 33; Phil. 4:12, 13.

<sup>6</sup> We need to examine our thinking regularly and follow through by making

5. How can we examine our thinking about the nearness of the day of Jehovah? (See picture.)

6. What do we need to continue to do?

any necessary adjustments. Paul told the Corinthians: “Keep testing whether you are in the faith; keep proving what you yourselves are.” (2 Cor. 13:5) Being “in the faith” includes more than attending Christian meetings and engaging in the ministry from time to time. It also involves our thinking, our inclinations, and our motives. So we need to keep making our mind over by reading God’s Word, learning to think as he thinks, and then doing whatever is necessary to bring ourselves in line with Jehovah’s will.—1 Cor. 2:14-16.

#### “PUT ON THE NEW PERSONALITY”

**7** **Read Ephesians 4:31, 32.** Besides making changes in our thinking, we need to “put on the new personality.” (Eph. 4:24) That involves action on our part. Among other things, we must work hard to overcome such personality traits as malicious bitterness, anger, and wrath. Why might that be challenging? Because some negative personality traits are deep-rooted. For example, the Bible says that some people are “*prone* to anger” and “*disposed* to rage.” (Prov. 29:22) Controlling ingrained traits will likely require continual effort even after baptism, as the following experience shows.

**8** A brother named Stephen had a problem with controlling his anger. “Even after I was baptized,” he says, “I had to keep working on my temper. For example, on one occasion while going

from house to house in the Christian ministry, I chased after a thief who had just stolen the radio from my car. As I got closer to him, he dropped the radio and ran away. When I related to the others with me how I got my radio back, an elder in the group asked me, ‘Stephen, what would you have done if you had caught up with him?’ That question made me think and motivated me to keep working at being peaceable.”\*

**9** As Stephen’s experience illustrates, a negative personality trait can come to the surface unexpectedly, even after we thought we had it under control. If that happens to you, do not be discouraged and do not conclude that you have failed as a Christian. Even the apostle Paul admitted: “When I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.” (Rom. 7:21-23) All imperfect Christians have to deal with negative traits that keep coming back like dust and dirt that accumulate in our home. We need to keep working at remaining clean. How can we do that?

**10** Pray to Jehovah about the trait that you are struggling with, confident that he will hear you and help you. (**Read 1 John 5:14, 15.**) While Jehovah will not miraculously eliminate the trait, he can strengthen you so that you do not give in to it. (1 Pet. 5:10) Meanwhile, work in harmony with your prayers by not feeding inclinations of the old personality. For example, be cautious about

7. According to Ephesians 4:31, 32, what else do we need to do, and why might this be challenging?

8-9. How does Stephen’s experience show the need to keep putting away the old personality?

\* See the article “My Life Was Going From Bad to Worse” in the July 1, 2015, issue of *The Watchtower*.

10. How can we fight undesirable traits? (1 John 5:14, 15)

watching movies, watching television programs, or reading stories that glorify personality traits that you are trying to eliminate. And do not let your mind dwell on improper desires.—Phil. 4:8; Col. 3:2.

<sup>11</sup> Although you have put away the old personality, it is important to cultivate the new one. How can you do that? Make it a goal to imitate Jehovah as you learn about his qualities. (Eph. 5:1, 2) For example, when you read a Bible account that highlights Jehovah’s forgiveness, ask yourself, ‘Do I forgive others?’ When you read about Jehovah’s compassion for those who have fallen on hard times, ask yourself, ‘Do I have similar concern for fellow believers who are in need, and do I show it by my actions?’ Keep making your mind over by putting on the new personality, and be patient with yourself as you do so.

<sup>12</sup> Stephen, mentioned earlier, found that he was gradually able to put on the new personality. He says: “Since baptism, I have faced a number of potentially explosive situations. I’ve learned either to walk away from people who are trying to provoke me or to defuse the situation in other ways. Many people, including my wife, have commended me on how I have handled these situations. I’ve even surprised myself! I do not take credit for these changes in my personality. Rather, I believe that they are testimony to the transforming power of the Bible.”

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11. What steps can we take to keep putting on the new personality?

12. How did Stephen experience the transforming power of the Bible?

## KEEP BATTLING IMPROPER DESIRES

<sup>13</sup> **Read Galatians 5:16.** To help us win the fight to do what is right, Jehovah generously provides his holy spirit. When we study God’s Word, we are placing ourselves under the influence of that spirit. We also receive holy spirit when we attend our meetings. At those Christian gatherings, we can spend time with brothers and sisters who, like us, are trying hard to do what is right, and that is encouraging. (Heb. 10:24, 25; 13:7) And when we approach Jehovah in earnest prayer and beg him for help with some weakness, he will give us his holy spirit to strengthen us to keep fighting. While these activities will probably not make wrong desires disappear, they will help us resist the urge to act on those desires. As Galatians 5:16 says, those who walk by spirit “will **carry out** no fleshly desire.”

<sup>14</sup> Once we have established a wholesome routine of spiritual activities, it is essential that we maintain that routine and **keep** cultivating proper desires. Why? Because one of our enemies never sleeps. That enemy is the temptation to do what is wrong. Even after baptism we might find ourselves attracted to the very things that we should avoid, including gambling, alcohol abuse, or pornography. (Eph. 5:3, 4) A young Christian brother admits: “One of the most difficult things I have struggled with is my attraction to the same sex. I thought

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13. What will help us to cultivate proper desires? (Galatians 5:16)

14. Why is it important to **keep** cultivating proper desires?



**If an improper desire tempts you, your situation is not hopeless; others have contended with the same struggle and have overcome it**  
 (See paragraphs 15-16)

that it was just a phase, but those feelings still plague me.” What can help you if an improper desire is especially strong?

<sup>15</sup> As you contend with an improper desire that is proving to be a crafty opponent, remember that you are not alone. The Bible says: “No temptation has come upon you except what is common to men.” (1 Cor. 10:13a) Another translation renders the passage this way: “No temptation has overtaken you that is unusual for human beings.” That statement was directed to male and female Christians living in Corinth. Some had formerly been adulterers, homosexuals, and drunkards. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) Do you think that after their baptism they never had any improper desires to con-

15. Why is it encouraging to know that improper desires are “common to men”? (See picture.)

tend with? That could not be the case. They were all anointed Christians, true, but they were still imperfect humans. No doubt they had to struggle with improper desires from time to time. That should be encouraging to us. Why? Because it shows that whatever improper desire you are battling, someone else has resisted it. Indeed, you can remain “firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by the entire association of your brothers.” —1 Pet. 5:9.

<sup>16</sup> Avoid the pitfall of thinking that no one else can understand the particular challenge that you are facing. Thinking that way could lead you to conclude that your situation is hopeless and that you are powerless to resist improper desires. The Bible says otherwise. It states: “God

16. What pitfall should we avoid, and why?



is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out so that you may be able to endure it.” (1 Cor. 10:13b) Therefore, even when an improper desire is strong, we **can** successfully endure it. With Jehovah’s help, we **can** keep from acting on it.

<sup>17</sup> Always remember this: As an imperfect human, you may not be able to keep improper desires from surfacing. But when they do, you can reject them decisively, as Joseph did when he quickly ran away from Potiphar’s wife. (Gen. 39:12) You do not need to act on improper desires!

#### AN ONGOING EFFORT

<sup>18</sup> Making our mind over involves an ongoing effort to bring our thinking and

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17. Although we may not be able to keep improper desires from surfacing, what can we control?

18-19. What questions can we ask ourselves as we strive to make our mind over?

actions in line with Jehovah’s will. To that end, examine yourself regularly and ask: ‘Do I act in a way that shows that I recognize the urgency of the times in which we live? Am I making progress in putting on the new personality? Am I allowing Jehovah’s spirit to direct my life so that I can resist the urge to act on fleshly desires?’

<sup>19</sup> As you examine yourself, look for progress, not perfection. If you see room for improvement, do not be discouraged. Instead, follow the admonition of Philippians 3:16: “To the extent we have made progress, let us go on walking orderly in this same course.” When you do, be assured that Jehovah will bless your efforts to keep making your mind over.

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 9:** A young brother is contemplating whether to pursue higher education or the full-time ministry.

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#### WHAT STEPS CAN WE TAKE TO . . .

- make our mind over?
- put on the new personality?
- battle improper desires?

**SONG 30**

My Father, My God  
and Friend

**PREVIEW**

When we are going through a difficult trial, we may not view ourselves as being “successful.” We might think that such a word would apply only when our trial is over. However, events that occurred in the life of Joseph teach us a vital lesson—Jehovah can help us to succeed even when we are in the midst of our trials. This article will explain how.

## Jehovah Is Helping You to Succeed

*“Jehovah was with Joseph . . . , making everything that he did successful.”—GEN. 39:2, 3.*

AS JEHOVAH’S people, we are not surprised when we have to face trials. We realize that, as the Bible says, “we must enter into the Kingdom of God through many tribulations.” (Acts 14:22) We also know that some of our problems will not be completely solved until we are living in God’s new world, where “death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” —Rev. 21:4.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah does not shield us from trials. However, he does help us to endure them. Note what the apostle Paul said to Christians living in Rome. He first listed a number of trials that he and his brothers were facing. Then he wrote: “We are coming off completely victorious through the one who loved us.” (Rom. 8:35-37) This means that Jehovah can make you successful even while the trial is running its course. Let us see how Jehovah helped Joseph to be successful and how He can help you.

### WHEN THINGS CHANGE SUDDENLY

<sup>3</sup> The patriarch Jacob made it obvious that he loved his son Joseph very much. (Gen. 37:3, 4) As a result, Jacob’s older sons became jealous of their brother. When they saw an opportunity, they sold Joseph to a

1-2. (a) Why are we not surprised that we have trials? (b) What will we consider in this article?

3. What sudden change took place in Joseph’s life?



Jehovah helped Joseph to succeed even when he was sold as a slave to Potiphar in Egypt (See paragraph 5)

group of Midianite merchants. Those merchants took Joseph hundreds of kilometers away to Egypt, where he was sold once more—this time to Potiphar, chief of Pharaoh’s guards. How quickly Joseph’s life changed, from being his father’s dearly beloved son to being a lowly slave of an Egyptian!—Gen. 39:1.

<sup>4</sup> The Bible says that “bad things happen to everyone.” (Eccl. 9:11, *Holy Bible—Easy-to-Read Version*) We sometimes encounter hardships that are “common to men”—that is, trials that all humans experience. (1 Cor. 10:13) Or we may suffer simply because we are disciples of Jesus. For example, we might be ridiculed, opposed, or even persecuted because of our faith. (2 Tim. 3:12) Whatever trial you face, Jehovah can make you successful. How did he do that for Joseph?

<sup>5</sup> **Read Genesis 39:2-6.** Potiphar no-

4. How might we face a challenge similar to the one Joseph faced?

5. What did Potiphar conclude about Joseph’s success? (Genesis 39:2-6)

ticed that Joseph was a very capable young man and a hard worker. He also knew why. Potiphar saw that “Jehovah was making everything that [Joseph] did successful.”\* Eventually, the Egyptian made Joseph his personal attendant. He also put Joseph in charge of his entire house. The result? Potiphar prospered.

<sup>6</sup> Try to view the situation from Joseph’s standpoint. What did he want more than anything? Was it to be noticed and rewarded by Potiphar? More likely, Joseph wanted to be freed so that he could return to his father. After all, despite all the privileges he had in Potiphar’s house, Joseph was still a slave who was subject to a pagan master. Jehovah did not cause Potiphar to set Joseph free. And Joseph’s situation was about to become much worse.

\* The Bible reports these initial changes in Joseph’s slavery in just a few verses, but they may have occurred over a span of several years.

6. How might Joseph have felt about his situation?

## IF THE SITUATION GETS WORSE

<sup>7</sup> As reported in Genesis chapter 39, Potiphar's wife was attracted to Joseph and repeatedly tried to seduce him. Each time, Joseph refused her advances. Finally, she became so angry with Joseph that she accused him of trying to rape her. (**Read Genesis 39:14, 15.**) When Potiphar heard of this, he threw Joseph into prison, where he remained for some years. (Gen. 39:19, 20) What was the prison like? The Hebrew word Joseph used for "prison" can mean "cistern," or "pit," suggesting that his surroundings were dark and that he felt hopeless. (Gen. 40:15; ftn.) Also, the Bible indicates that for a time Joseph's feet were bound in fetters and his neck was put in irons. (Ps. 105:17, 18) Joseph's situation was going from bad to worse. He went from being a trusted slave to being a lowly prisoner.

<sup>8</sup> Have you ever been in a distressing situation that went from bad to worse despite your earnest prayers? That can happen. Jehovah does not shield us from trials in a world that is ruled by Satan. (1 John 5:19) Still, you can be sure of this: Jehovah is fully aware of what you are going through, and he cares about you. (Matt. 10:29-31; 1 Pet. 5:6, 7) Furthermore, he has promised: "I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you." (Heb. 13:5) Jehovah can help you to endure even when your situation

seems hopeless. Let us see how that was the case with Joseph.

<sup>9</sup> **Read Genesis 39:21-23.** Even during this bleak period of imprisonment, Jehovah made Joseph successful. How? In time, Joseph gained the trust and respect of the chief officer, just as he had done with Potiphar. Before long, the chief officer put Joseph in charge of the other prisoners. In fact, the Bible says that "the chief officer of the prison was looking after absolutely nothing that was in Joseph's care." Joseph now had something to occupy his mind—productive work. What an unusual development! How could a prisoner who is accused of attempting to rape the wife of a court official be given such a trusted position? There is only one explanation. As Genesis 39:23 states, "Jehovah was with Joseph and Jehovah made whatever he did successful."

<sup>10</sup> Try again to view the situation from Joseph's standpoint. After being falsely accused and imprisoned, do you think that he felt successful in *everything*? What did Joseph want more than anything? Was it to gain favor in the eyes of the chief officer of the prison? More likely, Joseph wanted to be exonerated and set free. He even asked another prisoner who was about to be released to speak to Pharaoh in his behalf in order to get him out of that dreary prison. (Gen. 40:14) However, the man failed to speak to Pharaoh right away. As a result, Joseph

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7. In what way did Joseph's situation go from bad to worse? (Genesis 39:14, 15)

8. Even if a trial intensifies, of what can we be sure?

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9. What shows that Jehovah was with Joseph when he was in prison? (Genesis 39:21-23)

10. Explain why Joseph might not have felt that he was successful in everything.





Jehovah was with Joseph even when he was in prison and was put in charge of all the prisoners (See paragraph 9)

remained in that prison for two more years. (Gen. 40:23; 41:1, 14) Still, Jehovah continued to make his way successful. How?

<sup>11</sup> While Joseph was in prison, Jehovah caused the king of Egypt to have two troubling dreams. Pharaoh desperately wanted to know what they meant. When the king learned that Joseph had the ability to interpret dreams, he sent for him. With Jehovah's help, Joseph interpreted the dreams and impressed Pharaoh with the practical advice he gave him. Seeing that Jehovah was with the young man, Pharaoh appointed Joseph as the food administrator for all of Egypt. (Gen. 41:38, 41-44) Later, a severe famine arose that affected not only Egypt but also Canaan, the land in which Joseph's family were living. Joseph was now in a position to save his family and thus preserve the line of descent that would lead to the Messiah.

11. What special ability did Jehovah give Joseph, and what role did this play in accomplishing Jehovah's purpose?

<sup>12</sup> Think about the unusual events in Joseph's life. Who caused Potiphar to take special note of Joseph, a mere slave? Who caused the chief officer of the prison to favor Joseph, a lowly prisoner? Who gave Pharaoh troubling dreams and gave Joseph the ability to interpret them? Who was behind the decision to appoint Joseph as the food administrator of Egypt? (Gen. 45:5) Obviously, it was Jehovah who made everything Joseph did succeed. In the end, Jehovah turned the cruel scheme of Joseph's brothers into a means by which He could accomplish His will.

#### HOW JEHOVAH MAKES YOU SUCCESSFUL

<sup>13</sup> What conclusion can we draw from the account of Joseph? Does Jehovah intervene in every situation we encounter? Does he maneuver every event

12. In what ways did Jehovah make Joseph successful?

13. Does Jehovah intervene in every situation we face? Explain.

## “Jehovah Gave Us Exactly What We Needed”

Mason was diagnosed with cancer at age seven, and for the next six years, he courageously fought the disease. Mason had to be hospitalized a number of times during the course of his illness. Yet, those who were in his congregation noticed a pattern. Each time Mason was released from the hospital, he was back in the ministry almost immediately. Mason loved to engage in the ministry for as long as his strength would permit.

When Mason died, more than 700 people attended his memorial service, including many of his schoolmates and teachers. One teacher who visited him shortly before his death said that she wanted her children to have the kind of faith that Mason had. She also said that she had not been contacted by Jehovah’s Witnesses in the five years she had been living in the area. The next day she was contacted at her home by the Witnesses. The teacher agreed to attend a congregation meeting.

Tori, Mason’s mother, says: “Jehovah didn’t miraculously heal Mason, and sometimes that thought prevented me from seeing how Jehovah was making our way successful. But he was. Jehovah gave us exactly what we needed when we needed it.”

in our life, so that all bad things that happen are for a good reason? No, the Bible does not support that view. (Eccl. 8:9; 9:11) However, we do know this: When we face a trial, Jehovah is aware of it and he hears our cries for help. (Ps. 34:15; 55:22; Isa. 59:1) More than that, Jehovah can help us to endure hardships successfully. How?

<sup>14</sup> One way that Jehovah helps us is by providing comfort and encouragement, often just at the right time. (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) That was the case for Eziz, a brother in Turkmenistan who was sentenced to two years in prison because of his faith. “On the morning of my trial,” he relates, “a brother showed me Isaiah 30:15, where it says: ‘Your strength will be in keeping calm and showing trust.’ This verse always helped me to stay calm and rely on Jehovah for everything. Meditating on this verse helped me over the entire course of my imprisonment.” Can you think of a time in your life when Jehovah sustained you by providing comfort and encouragement just when you needed it most?

<sup>15</sup> Often, it is only after we look back on a hardship that we see how Jehovah helped us get through it. A sister named Tori found that to be true. Her son, Mason, battled cancer for six years until he passed away. Understandably, Tori was heartbroken. She says, “I don’t think there could have been a more painful ordeal for me as a mother.” She adds, “I’m sure other parents would agree that see-

14. How does Jehovah help us in times of hardship?

15-16. What do you learn from Tori’s experience?

ing your child suffer is worse than experiencing it yourself.”

<sup>16</sup> As devastating as that trial was, however, Tori later reflected on the ways in which Jehovah helped her through it. “In hindsight,” she says, “I can see Jehovah’s loving hand throughout my son’s illness. For example, even when Mason was too sick to see visitors, brothers and sisters would drive two hours to the hospital. There was always someone in the waiting room—ready and willing to provide support. Also, our material needs were cared for. Even in the worst of times, we never went without.” Jehovah gave Tori what she needed to endure, and he did the same for Mason.—See the box “Jehovah Gave Us Exactly What We Needed.”

### COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS

<sup>17</sup> **Read Psalm 40:5.** A mountain climber’s goal is to reach the summit.

17-18. What will help us to recognize and appreciate Jehovah’s support during times of trial? (Psalm 40:5)

However, there are numerous points along the route where he can stop and take in the view. In a similar way, regularly take time to stop and think about how Jehovah is making you successful even while you are enduring a hardship. At the end of each day, ask yourself: ‘In what way did I see Jehovah’s blessing today? Although the trial is still running its course, how is Jehovah helping me to endure?’ See if you can identify at least one blessing from Jehovah that has made you successful.

<sup>18</sup> True, you might be praying for your trial to end. That is understandable and appropriate. (Phil. 4:6) But we should also be aware of the blessings we have right now. After all, Jehovah promises to strengthen us and to help us to *endure*. So never lose appreciation for the fact that Jehovah is supporting you. Then you will see how Jehovah is helping you to succeed, as he did Joseph, even during times of trial.—Gen. 41:51, 52.

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### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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|--|--|--|
| ■ How did Jehovah help Joseph to succeed while he served as Potiphar’s personal attendant? | ■ How did Jehovah make Joseph successful while he was in prison? | ■ How can Jehovah help you to succeed? |
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**SONG 19**

The Lord's Evening Meal

**PREVIEW**

On Tuesday, April 4, 2023, millions around the world will observe the Memorial of Christ's death. Many will be present for the first time. Others who were once active Witnesses will join us for the first time in years. Some will have overcome significant obstacles in order to attend. Whatever your personal circumstances, you can be sure that Jehovah will be pleased that you made the effort to be present.

## Jehovah Blesses Our Efforts to Observe the Memorial

*"Keep doing this in remembrance of me."*—LUKE 22:19.

ALMOST 2,000 years ago, Jesus gave his life in our behalf, opening the way for us to gain everlasting life. On the night before he died, Jesus commanded his followers to remember his loving act by means of a simple ceremony involving bread and wine.—1 Cor. 11:23-26.

<sup>2</sup> We obey Jesus' command because we love him very much. (John 14:15) Each year during the Memorial season, we show our appreciation for what he has done by taking time to meditate prayerfully on the meaning of his death. We also gladly increase our share in the ministry, encouraging as many as possible to join us for this special occasion. And, of course, we are determined not to allow anything to prevent us from attending the Memorial.

<sup>3</sup> In this article, we will consider three ways in which Jehovah's people have made significant efforts to commemorate Jesus' death: (1) by reestablishing the pattern that Jesus set, (2) by inviting others to the Memorial, and (3) by observing the Memorial despite difficult circumstances.

1-2. Why do we attend the Memorial each year?

3. What will we examine in this article?



## REESTABLISHING THE PATTERN THAT JESUS SET

<sup>4</sup> Each year at the Memorial, we listen to a Bible-based talk that gives clear answers to a number of questions. We learn why mankind needs a ransom and how the death of one man can atone for the sins of many. We are reminded of what the bread and the wine represent and who should partake of them. **(Read Luke 22:19, 20.)** And we meditate on the blessings that are in store for those who cherish the earthly hope. (Isa. 35: 5, 6; 65:17, 21-23) We should not take these truths for granted. Billions of people do not understand them, and they do not appreciate just how valuable Jesus' sacrifice is. They also do not observe the Memorial of his death according to the pattern he established. Why is that?

<sup>5</sup> Soon after most of Jesus' apostles died, imitation Christians worked their way into the congregation. (Matt. 13:24-27, 37-39) They spoke "twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) One of the "twisted things" that imitation Christians eventually began teaching was that Jesus did not offer his body "once for all time to bear the sins of many," as the Bible says, but that his sacrifice must be repeated over and over again. (Heb. 9:27, 28) Today many sincere people believe this false teaching. They gather together in churches regularly—sometimes daily—to observe what has come

to be called "the Sacrifice of the Mass."\* Other religious organizations observe the death of Jesus less often, but most of their members have only a vague notion about what Jesus' sacrifice has accomplished. Some may wonder, 'Does Jesus' death really mean that my sins can be forgiven?' Why do they ask that question? In some cases, they have been influenced by those who doubt that Jesus' sacrifice makes possible the forgiveness of sins. How have Jesus' true followers dealt with this issue?

<sup>6</sup> In the late 19th century, a group of Bible students led by Charles Taze Russell began an intensive study of the Scriptures. They wanted to know the truth about the value of Jesus' sacrifice and how his death should be commemorated. By 1872, they had reached the Bible-based conclusion that Jesus did indeed provide a ransom for all mankind. They did not keep their findings to themselves. Rather, they spread the word by means of books, newspapers, and magazines. And early on, in imitation of the first-century Christians, they began meeting just once a year to observe the Memorial.

<sup>7</sup> Today we benefit from the research that those sincere Christian men undertook so long ago. How so? With

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\* The worshippers believe that during this observance, the bread and the wine are changed into the body and the blood of Christ. They think that Jesus' body and blood are, in effect, sacrificed each time someone takes part in this ritual.

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4. What truths are highlighted each year at the Memorial, and why should we not take these truths for granted? (Luke 22:19, 20)

5. After most of the apostles died, what happened to the pattern that Jesus set?

6. By 1872, what conclusion had a group of Bible students reached?

7. How are we benefiting from the research of those early Bible students?



want those who attend for the first time to learn the truth about what Jehovah and Jesus have done for all of us. **(Read John 3:16.)** We hope that what they see and hear at the Memorial will move them to learn more and to become servants of Jehovah. But others benefit as well.

<sup>10</sup> We also invite those who are no longer serving Jehovah. We do so to remind them that God still loves them. Many respond to our invitation, and we are overjoyed to see them. Attending the Memorial reminds them of how much they enjoyed serving Jehovah in the past. Consider Monica's example.\* She was reactivated as a publisher during the COVID-19 pandemic. After attending the Memorial in 2021, she said: "This Memorial has been very special for me. For the first time in 20 years, I've been able to witness to people and invite them to the Memorial. I really put my heart into it because I'm so grateful for what Jehovah and Jesus have done for me." (Ps. 103:1-4) Whether people respond positively to our invitation or not, we diligently invite others to the Memorial, knowing that Jehovah appreciates our efforts.

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah has richly blessed our efforts to invite people to the Memorial. In 2021, despite the restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, we had a record attendance of 21,367,603. That is almost two and a half times the number of Jehovah's Witnesses in the

world! Of course, Jehovah is not concerned about mere numbers. He is interested in individuals. (Luke 15:7; 1 Tim. 2:3, 4) We are convinced that Jehovah uses our invitation work to help us find honesthearted people.—**Read Haggai 2:7.**

#### OBSERVING THE MEMORIAL DESPITE CHALLENGING CIRCUMSTANCES

<sup>12</sup> Jesus foretold that during the last days, we would face all sorts of difficult circumstances—family opposition, persecution, wars, pestilences, and much more. (Matt. 10:36; Mark 13:9; Luke 21:10, 11) At times, these conditions make it difficult for us to commemorate Jesus' death. What have our brothers and sisters done to overcome such challenges, and how has Jehovah helped them?

<sup>13</sup> **Imprisonment.** Our brothers who are in prison for their faith do what they can to commemorate Jesus' death. Consider Artem's example. During the 2020 Memorial season, he was confined to a 17-square-meter (183-sq-ft) cell that contained up to five prisoners at a time. Despite being imprisoned, he was able to collect some items to use as Memorial emblems, and he planned to give the Memorial talk for his own benefit. But his cellmates smoked and cursed a lot. What did he do? He asked them if they could refrain from cursing and smoking

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\* Some names have been changed.

11. How has Jehovah blessed our efforts to invite people to the Memorial? (Haggai 2:7)

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12. What conditions can make it difficult for us to observe the Memorial? (See picture.)

13. How did Jehovah bless Artem's courage and determination to observe the Memorial while in prison?





**Jehovah blesses our efforts to observe the Memorial**  
(See paragraph 12)

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for just one hour. To Artem's surprise, his cellmates agreed not to smoke or swear during the Memorial. Artem says, "I offered to tell them about the Memorial." Although they said that they did not want to hear about the event, after seeing and hearing Artem observe the Memorial, they asked him all about it.

<sup>14</sup> **COVID-19 pandemic.** When this pandemic struck, Jehovah's people could not attend the Memorial in person. But

that did not prevent them from observing the Memorial.\* Congregations with access to the Internet held the Memorial by videoconference. But what of the millions who had no access to the Internet? In some countries, arrangements were made to broadcast the talk on television or on the radio. In addition, branches recorded the talk in over 500 languages so that even those in remote areas could observe the Memorial.

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14. What efforts were made to observe the Memorial despite the COVID-19 pandemic?

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\* See also on [jw.org](http://jw.org) the articles entitled "2021 Memorial Commemoration."



And faithful brothers arranged for the recordings to be delivered to those who needed them.

<sup>15</sup> **Family opposition.** For some, the biggest challenge to observing the Memorial is family opposition. Consider the example of a Bible student named Sue. In 2021, on the day before the Memorial, Sue told her Bible teacher that because of opposition at home, she would not be able to attend the Memorial. Her Bible teacher read Luke 22:44. Then she explained to her that when we experience difficulties, we should follow Jesus' example by turning to Jehovah in prayer and by putting our complete trust in Him. The next day, Sue prepared the emblems and watched the special Morning Worship program on jw.org. That evening, while alone in her room, she connected to the Memorial by phone. Afterward, Sue wrote to her Bible teacher: "You encouraged me so much yesterday."

15. What do you learn from the example of a Bible student named Sue?

I did everything I could to attend the Memorial, and Jehovah really did the rest. I cannot express how happy and thankful I am!" Do you think that Jehovah can help you if you face a similar situation?

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah greatly appreciates our efforts to commemorate Jesus' death. We can be sure that he will bless us when we show appreciation for what he has done for us. **(Read Romans 8:31, 32.)** Let us, then, be determined to attend the Memorial this year and to do what we can to increase our share in spiritual activities during the Memorial season.

16. Why are we confident that Jehovah will bless our efforts to attend the Memorial? (Romans 8: 31, 32)

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 22:** Since the 1960's, Memorial invitations have been improved and are now available in print and electronically.

**Page 24:** Reenactment—Brothers and sisters observe the Memorial during civil unrest.

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What truth about the ransom or the Memorial do you especially appreciate?
- Whom do we invite to the Memorial, and why?
- What challenges do some have to overcome to attend the Memorial?

**SONG 13**

Christ, Our Model

**PREVIEW**

During the Memorial season, we are encouraged to reflect on Jesus' life and death and on the love that he and his Father have shown for us. Doing so can move us to action. This article will discuss practical ways in which we can show our gratitude for the ransom and our love for Jehovah and Jesus. We will also see how we can be motivated to love our brothers and sisters, to display courage, and to find joy in our service.

## “The Love the Christ Has Compels Us”

*“The love the Christ has compels us . . . so that those who live should live no longer for themselves.”—2 COR. 5:14, 15.*

WHEN we lose a loved one in death, we miss that person so much! At first, we may feel nothing but pain when we think back to the days leading up to his death, especially if our loved one suffered before dying. With time, however, we begin to feel a measure of joy when we think of something he taught us or something he did or said to encourage us or to make us smile.

<sup>2</sup> In a similar way, it saddens us to read about Jesus' suffering and death. During the Memorial season, we especially take time to reflect on the significance of his ransom sacrifice. (1 Cor. 11:24, 25) However, we find great joy in reflecting on all the things Jesus said and did while he was on earth. We also find it stimulating to think about what he is doing now and what he will do for us in the future. Meditating on these things and on his love for us can move us to show our appreciation in practical ways, as we will see in this article.

### GRATITUDE MOVES US TO FOLLOW JESUS

<sup>3</sup> We feel grateful when we reflect on Jesus' life and death. Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus taught people about the blessings that God's Kingdom would bring. We deeply appreciate these Kingdom truths. We

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1-2. (a) What feelings may we experience when we reflect on Jesus' life and ministry? (b) What will we discuss in this article?

3. What reasons do we have to be grateful for the ransom?



**How does meditating on the example of Mary Magdalene motivate you to show gratitude?**

(See paragraphs 4-5)

are thankful for the ransom because it opens the way for us to enjoy a close friendship with Jehovah and Jesus. Those who exercise faith in Jesus also have the hope of living forever and of seeing their dead loved ones again. (John 5:28, 29; Rom. 6:23) We have not done anything to deserve these blessings; nor can we ever repay God and Christ for what they have done for us. (Rom. 5:8, 20, 21) But we can show them the depth of our gratitude. How?

<sup>4</sup> Consider the example of a Jewish woman named Mary Magdalene. She was in a wretched condition, tormented by seven demons. She must have felt that there was no way out. So imagine how thankful she was when Jesus freed her from the influence of those demons! Her gratitude moved her to be-

come his follower and to use her time, energy, and belongings to support him in the ministry. (Luke 8:1-3) Although Mary deeply appreciated what Jesus did for her personally, she may not have grasped that his greatest gift was yet to come. He would give his life in behalf of humankind, “so that everyone exercising faith in him” could enjoy everlasting life. (John 3:16) Still, Mary showed her appreciation for Jesus by being loyal. While Jesus was suffering on the torture stake, Mary stood nearby, providing emotional support to him and to others. (John 19:25) After Jesus died, Mary and two other women brought spices to the tomb for his burial. (Mark 16:1, 2) Mary’s loyalty was richly rewarded. She had the joy of meeting the resurrected Jesus and of speaking with him—a privilege that most disciples did not have. —John 20:11-18.

4. How did Mary Magdalene show gratitude for what Jesus had done for her? (See picture.)

<sup>5</sup> We too can show our gratitude for all that Jehovah and Jesus have done for us by using our time, energy, and financial resources to advance the Kingdom work. For example, we can make ourselves available to help with constructing and maintaining buildings for pure worship.

#### LOVE FOR JEHOVAH AND JESUS MOVES US TO LOVE OTHERS

<sup>6</sup> When we consider how much Jehovah and Jesus love us, we are moved to love them in return. (1 John 4:10, 19) We love them even more when we realize that Jesus died for us personally. The apostle Paul acknowledged this and expressed his appreciation when he wrote

5. How can we show our gratitude for all that Jehovah and Jesus have done for us?

6. Why can we say that the ransom is a personal gift?

to the Galatians, saying: “The Son of God . . . loved *me* and handed himself over for *me*.” (Gal. 2:20) On the basis of the ransom, Jehovah has drawn you to him so that you can be his friend. (John 6:44) Does it not warm your heart to know that Jehovah has seen something good in you and that he paid the highest price so that you can be counted as his friend? Does it not strengthen your love for Jehovah and Jesus? We do well to ask ourselves, ‘What will that love compel me to do?’

<sup>7</sup> Our love for God and Christ moves us to show love to others. (**Read 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; 6:1, 2.**) One way we demonstrate our love is by having a zealous share in the preaching work. We

7. As seen in the picture, how can all of us demonstrate our love for Jehovah and Jesus? (2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; 6:1, 2)

Our love for God and Christ motivates us to share the Kingdom message with all sorts of people  
(See paragraph 7)



speak to everyone we meet. We do not discriminate against anyone because of his race, tribe, financial position, or social background. In this way, we are working in harmony with Jehovah's purpose "that all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth."—1 Tim. 2:4.

<sup>8</sup> We also prove our love for God and Christ by showing love for our brothers and sisters. (1 John 4:21) We take a personal interest in them and support them during their trials. We comfort them when they have lost a loved one, visit them when they are sick, and do our best to encourage them when they are disheartened. (2 Cor. 1:3-7; 1 Thess. 5:11, 14) We keep praying for them, remembering that "a righteous man's supplication has a powerful effect."—Jas. 5:16.

<sup>9</sup> We also show love for our brothers and sisters by working hard to keep peace with them. We strive to imitate Jehovah's example of forgiveness. If Jehovah was willing to let his Son die for our sins, should we not readily forgive our brothers and sisters when they sin against us? We would not want to be like the wicked slave referred to in one of Jesus' parables. Even after his master had canceled his enormous debt, that slave failed to forgive a fellow slave's relatively small debt. (Matt. 18:23-35) If you have had a misunderstanding with someone in the congregation, could you take the first step to make peace before at-

tending the Memorial? (Matt. 5:23, 24) Doing so would reflect your deep love for Jehovah and Jesus.

<sup>10</sup> How can elders show that they love Jehovah and Jesus? An important way is by caring for the needs of Jesus' sheep. **(Read 1 Peter 5:1, 2.)** Jesus made that point clear to the apostle Peter. After denying Jesus three times, Peter was likely desperate to prove that he loved Jesus. Following his resurrection, Jesus asked Peter: "Simon son of John, do you love me?" We can be sure that Peter would have done anything to prove his love for his Master. Jesus told Peter: "Shepherd my little sheep." (John 21:15-17) And for the rest of his life, Peter tenderly cared for the Lord's sheep, proving that he had love for Jesus.

<sup>11</sup> Elders, during the Memorial season, how can you demonstrate that the importance of Jesus' words to Peter is not lost on you? You can show how much you love Jehovah and Jesus by regularly engaging in the shepherding work and by making a special effort to help inactive ones return to Jehovah. (Ezek. 34:11, 12) You can also take an interest in Bible students and new ones who attend the Memorial, doing all you can to make these potential disciples feel welcome.

### LOVE FOR CHRIST MOVES US TO BE COURAGEOUS

<sup>12</sup> On the night before he died, Jesus told his disciples: "In the world you

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8. How can we show love for our brothers and sisters?

9. What is another way we can show love for our brothers and sisters?

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10-11. How can elders show love for Jehovah and Jesus? (1 Peter 5:1, 2)

12. Why does reflecting on the words Jesus spoke on the night before his death give us courage? (John 16:32, 33)



will have tribulation, but take courage! I have conquered the world.” (**Read John 16:32, 33.**) What helped Jesus to face his enemies with courage and to remain faithful until death? He relied on Jehovah. Knowing that his followers would face similar tests, Jesus asked Jehovah to watch over them. (John 17:11) Why does this give us courage? Because Jehovah is stronger than any of our enemies. (1 John 4:4) Nothing escapes his notice. We are convinced that if we rely on Jehovah, we can overcome our fears and show courage.

<sup>13</sup> Consider the example of Joseph of Arimathea. He was well-regarded by Jewish society. He was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish supreme court. However, during Jesus’ earthly ministry, Joseph was anything but courageous. John said that he was “a disciple of Jesus but a secret one because of his fear of the Jews.” (John 19:38) Although Joseph was interested in the Kingdom message, he hid from others that he had faith in Jesus. No doubt he was afraid that he would lose his prestigious position in the community. Whatever the case, the Bible tells us that after Jesus died, Joseph finally “took courage and went in before Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.” (Mark 15:42, 43) Joseph’s support of Jesus was now no longer a secret.

<sup>14</sup> Can you relate to Joseph’s fear of man? At school or at work, do you sometimes feel embarrassed to identify your-

13. How did Joseph of Arimathea show courage?

14. What should you do if you struggle with fear of man?



During the Memorial season, take time to meditate on what Jehovah and Jesus have done for you personally  
(See paragraph 17)

self as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses? Are you putting off becoming a publisher or getting baptized because you worry about what others might think of you? Do not let such feelings stop you from doing what you know is right. Pray fervently to Jehovah. Ask him to give you the courage to do his will. As you see how Jehovah answers your prayers, you will become stronger and more courageous.—Isa. 41:10, 13.

### JOY MOVES US TO SERVE JEHOVAH WITHOUT LETUP

<sup>15</sup> The disciples were very sad when Jesus died. Imagine yourself in their situa-

15. After Jesus appeared to his disciples, what did their joy move them to do? (Luke 24:52, 53)

tion. Not only had they lost their beloved friend but they also felt as though they had lost their hope. (Luke 24:17-21) However, when Jesus appeared to them, he took the time to help them understand his role in fulfilling Bible prophecy. He also gave them an important work to do. (Luke 24:26, 27, 45-48) By the time Jesus ascended to heaven 40 days later, the sadness of the disciples had turned into great joy. Knowing that their Master was alive and ready to help them accomplish their new commission made them happy. Their joy moved them to praise Jehovah without letup.—**Read Luke 24:52, 53; Acts 5:42.**

<sup>16</sup> How can we imitate Jesus' disciples? We can find joy in worshipping Jehovah not just during the Memorial season but throughout the year. This requires that we put God's Kingdom first in our life. For example, many have adjusted their work schedule in order to share in the ministry, attend meetings, and participate in family worship regularly. Some have even gone without material possessions that others consider to be necessary so that they can be more useful

16. How can we imitate Jesus' disciples?

in the congregation or so that they can serve where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers. Although we need endurance to serve Jehovah continually, he promises to bless us richly if we put Kingdom interests first in our life.—Prov. 10:22; Matt. 6:32, 33.

<sup>17</sup> We look forward to observing the Memorial on Tuesday, April 4. However, do not wait until then to reflect on Jesus' life and death and on the love he and Jehovah have shown for us. Take advantage of every opportunity during the entire Memorial season to do so. For example, set aside some time to read about and meditate on the events outlined in the chart "The Final Week of Jesus' Life on Earth," found in Appendix B12 of the *New World Translation*. As you do, look for Bible passages that strengthen your gratitude, love, courage, and joy. Then identify specific ways in which you can show your heartfelt appreciation. You can be sure that Jesus will treasure all that you do to remember him during this Memorial season.—Rev. 2:19.

17. What are you determined to do this Memorial season? (See picture.)

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## HOW CAN "THE LOVE THE CHRIST HAS" MOVE US TO . . .

- show gratitude?
- display love and courage?
- be joyful?

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

The *Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) January 2023 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2022 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

## STUDY TIP

### Do you like reading the life stories of our brothers and sisters?

A couple who read one life story every morning say: "What joy and encouragement these stories have brought to us! They remind us that we too can be faithful under all circumstances." A sister who feels similarly wrote: "These life stories are comforting, moving, and heartwarming. The lives of our brothers and sisters are full of purpose and meaning. Their stories motivate me to do more in the ministry and help me to lead my children in the path of full-time service to Jehovah."

Life stories can motivate you to pursue meaningful goals, to overcome weaknesses, and to endure severe trials with joy and dignity. How can you find these stories?

- Browse the article series "Life Stories of Jehovah's Witnesses" on [jw.org](https://jw.org) or in *JW Library*®.
- Search for "Life Stories of Jehovah's Witnesses" in *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY*™ or *Watchtower Library*.

## COVER PICTURE:

Professional copyists of the Hebrew Scriptures put forth extraordinary efforts to make sure that their copies of God's Word were accurate (See study article 1, paragraph 5)

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