

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



## STUDY ARTICLES

**AUGUST 4-10**

**“You Must Love  
Jehovah Your God”**

PAGE 12 • SONGS: 3, 65

**AUGUST 11-17**

**“You Must Love  
Your Neighbor  
as Yourself”**

PAGE 17 • SONGS: 84, 72

**AUGUST 18-24**

**Do You View  
Human Weakness  
as Jehovah Does?**

PAGE 23 • SONGS: 77, 79

**AUGUST 25-31**

**Help Others Reach  
Their Full Potential**

PAGE 28 • SONGS: 42, 124





## BOTSWANA

**COVER:** Along the Okavango River in Botswana, the good news is reaching fishermen who speak the Mbukushu language

POPULATION

2,021,000

PUBLISHERS

2,096

CONGREGATIONS

47

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE IN 2013

5,735



## STUDY ARTICLES

- “You Must Love Jehovah Your God”
- “You Must Love Your Neighbor as Yourself”

These articles discuss the two greatest commandments of the Law, as identified by Jesus Christ. Learn what Jesus meant when he said that we should love Jehovah with our whole heart, soul, and mind. Find out what we can do to show that we love our neighbor as ourselves.

- Do You View Human Weakness as Jehovah Does?
- Help Others Reach Their Full Potential

How can we help those who grapple with feelings of weakness? That is one aspect treated in these articles. They also deal with how we can help young or newly baptized brothers reach their full potential.

## ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 “Smooth Out the Course of Your Feet” to Make Progress
- 7 Questions From Readers
- 8 Assist Divorced Fellow Believers—How?
- 22 Do You Remember?

## A conceptual illustration of a path leading to a city, with various items like books, a guitar, a trophy, and a diploma placed along the path, symbolizing the journey of learning and achievement. The path is a light brown, winding road that starts in the foreground and leads towards a distant city skyline on a hill. The path is flanked by lush green grass. Various items are placed along the path, including a stack of books, a guitar, a trophy, a diploma, a graduation cap, a stethoscope, and a pair of shoes. The sky is a clear, light blue. The overall scene suggests a journey of learning and achievement.

We might take that as an illustration of a path leading to spiritual goals. Jehovah wants all of his servants to move along that path without any unnecessary hindrances. His Word exhorts us: “Smooth out the course of your feet, and all your ways will be sure.” (Prov. 4:26) Whether you are young or not so young, you can see the wisdom of that divine advice.

You may have heard people say something like this about a teenager: ‘She has so much going for her’ or, ‘He is going places.’ Young people generally have good health, quick minds, and a keen desire to succeed. The Bible accurately says: “The glory of young men is their strength.” (Prov. 20: 29) A young person who uses his or her talents and energy to serve Jehovah can achieve spiritual goals and gain true happiness.



athletic ability may find that recruiters try to entice him or her into a sports career. Have you found yourself in such a situation, or do you know someone who faces such pressure? What will help a Christian to choose wisely?

Bible teachings can help one prepare for traveling on the best road in life. “Remember, then, your Grand Creator in the days of your youth,” states Ecclesiastes 12:1. How can you or a young acquaintance best ‘remember your Grand Creator’?

Give some thought to what happened to Eric\* in West Africa. He loved to play soccer. By the time Eric was 15, he had been selected to play on a national team. That meant that before long, he could expect to receive elite sports training in Europe, perhaps leading to a professional career. But how would the advice to ‘remember your Grand Creator’ come into play? And what lesson might this contain for you or for some young friend?

During his school years, Eric began to study the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses. He thus began to learn that his Creator would permanently solve mankind’s problems. Eric came to see the importance of using his time and energy to do God’s will. In view of that wise reality, Eric chose not to strive for a career in professional sports. Rather, he got baptized and applied himself spiritually. In time, he became a ministerial servant and later was invited to the Bible School for Single Brothers.

Had he pursued a career in sports, Eric might have gained fame and wealth. But he realized the truth of a Bible principle: “The wealth of the rich is his fortified city; it is like a protective wall in his imagination.” (Prov. 18:11) Yes, the security that a person might seem to gain through wealth is actually an illusion. Moreover, those who avidly pursue riches usually ‘stab themselves all over with many pains.’—1 Tim. 6:9, 10.

Happily, many young people have found joy and lasting security by taking up the full-time

service. Eric says: “I have joined a large ‘team’ of full-time servants of Jehovah. That is the best team I can belong to, and I thank Jehovah for showing me the only way to true happiness and success in life.”

What about you? Rather than pursue worldly goals, why not firmly establish “your ways” before Jehovah by sharing in the pioneer ministry? —See the box “Gaining Benefits Unattainable at the University.”

## REMOVING OBSTACLES FROM YOUR WAY

While making a visit to the United States branch office, a couple sensed the happiness of the Bethelites who serve Jehovah there. The sister later wrote: “We had become too comfortable in our routine.” The couple decided that they would free up time and energy for greater privileges of service.

At one point, the changes this couple wanted to make seemed a bit overwhelming. But one day, they reflected on the Scriptural text for that day. It was John 8:31, where we read Jesus’ words: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples.” With that in mind, they reasoned: “Whatever we do to simplify life is worth the sacrifice.” They sold their large house, rid themselves of other burdens, and moved to a congregation needing help. They are now pioneering, but they also help build Kingdom Halls and volunteer at district conventions. How do they feel? “We are amazed at the joy we have from living a simpler life, doing just what Jehovah’s organization encourages us to do.”

## STAY ON THE ROAD TO SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

Solomon wrote: “Your eyes should look straight ahead, yes, fix your gaze straight ahead of you.” (Prov. 4:25) Like a driver focused on the road ahead, we should avoid distractions that could keep us from setting spiritual goals and reaching them.

What spiritual goals might you set and reach? Being in the full-time service is certainly a good

\* Name has been changed.

one. Another may be that of serving with a nearby congregation in need of experienced preachers to help cover its large territory. Or a congregation may have many fine publishers, but it lacks enough elders and ministerial servants. Could you help out in one of those ways? Why not talk to the circuit overseer to see whether you might be able to assist? If you are interested in going farther afield, you can request information about distant congregations that need help.\*

\* See *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will*, pages 111-112.

Let us go back to the scene described at Isaiah 62:10. Some of the Jews may have worked hard to level and clear the road back to their homeland so that God's people could reach their destination. If you are exerting yourself to achieve goals in sacred service, do not give up. With God's help, you too may reach those goals. Continue to ask Jehovah for wisdom as you try to remove barriers before you. In due course, you will likely see how he can help you "smooth out the course of your feet."—Prov. 4:26.



## Gaining Benefits Unattainable at the University



WHEN Flavia was a young girl, her grandmother, who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses, spoke to her about the Bible. However, her father was a teacher, and he tried to instill in her a desire to learn about nature and get a higher education. Other people told her, "Your generation can save the planet from ruin." With her father's backing, she went to a prestigious university, where she started researching ways to produce clean fuel.

Flavia soon noticed that many students had no interest in 'saving the planet.' Also, some programs at the university relied on businesses for funding, so researchers might feel inclined to favor those businesses. This bothered Flavia. When Jehovah's Witnesses called at her door, her interest in what the Bible says about God and the future was renewed.

Flavia accepted Bible truth and was baptized. But because she was studying for an advanced degree, her time for preaching the good news was limited. One day she listened as the circuit over-

seer discussed James 4:17: "If someone knows how to do what is right and yet does not do it, it is a sin for him." That moved Flavia to think about her own situation. She relates: "While wanting Jehovah's blessing, I also wanted satisfaction from my career in science. I had to choose."

Flavia made the personal decision to end her studies at the university. Did that leave her with regrets? She says:

"In Jehovah's service, I have gained benefits unattainable at the university. Jehovah has been good to me. He has taught me to be kind, to show love, to help others spiritually. I have a wonderful marriage and a future far better than the one offered by science. Only Jehovah can save the planet. I will not turn my back on him." Flavia and her husband serve at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York.



## *Is cremation proper for Christians?*

■ The Scriptures do not present any basic objection to the practice of cremation.

There are Biblical accounts relating that the bodies or bones of dead people were burned. (Josh. 7:25; 2 Chron. 34:4, 5) This may have indicated that those people did not seem to merit a decent burial. But what amounted to cremation did not always carry such a meaning.

We can see this from the account of the death of King Saul and his three sons. The four of them died battling the Philistines. One of the sons was Jonathan, the good friend and loyal supporter of David. When valiant Israelites living in Jabesh-gilead learned what had happened, they recovered the four bodies, burned them, and then buried the bones. David later praised those Israelites for their actions.—1 Sam. 31:2, 8-13; 2 Sam. 2:4-6.

The Scriptural hope for the dead is the resurrection—God’s restoration of the *person* to life. Whether a dead person is cremated or not, Jehovah is not limited in his ability to restore the person to life with a new body. The three faithful Hebrews who faced death in a fiery furnace as ordered by King Nebuchadnezzar did not need to fear that if they were thus destroyed, God could not resurrect them. (Dan. 3:16-18) That was also true of faithful servants of Jehovah who faced death and subsequent cremation in Nazi concentration camps. Various loyal servants of God have perished in explosions or in other ways that left no trace of their remains. Still, their resurrection is assured.—Rev. 20:13.

Jehovah does not have to reassemble a person’s former body in order to resurrect him. That is shown by God’s resurrecting anointed Christians to heavenly life. Like Jesus, who was “made alive in the spirit,” anointed Christians are resurrected as the same person but with a spiritual body. No part of their former physical body ac-

companies them to heaven.—1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:42-53; 1 John 3:2.

Our hope in the resurrection rests, not on what might be done with the physical corpse, but on faith in God’s ability and desire to fulfill his promises. (Acts 24:15) Granted, we may not fully comprehend how God has performed the miracle of resurrection on past occasions or how he will do so in the future. Still, we put our trust in Jehovah. He has provided “a guarantee” by resurrecting Jesus.—Acts 17:31; Luke 24:2, 3.

Christians do well to take into consideration social norms, local sentiments, and legal requirements regarding the disposition of dead bodies. (2 Cor. 6:3, 4) Then, whether the body of a deceased person is to be cremated or not is a personal or family decision.





## THE RUSH OF CONFLICTING EMOTIONS

What is involved in this common outcome? One experienced marriage counselor in Eastern Europe observed: “Divorce makes official what has already happened—the breakup of a relationship and the consequent separation, something that is emotionally very painful.” She added: “A storm of powerful, extreme emotions—anger, regret, disappointment, despair, and shame” often follows. Sometimes this gives rise to thoughts of suicide. “When the divorce is made final by the court, the next phase begins. Dominated by feelings of emptiness and alienation, the divorced person may wonder: ‘Now that I am divorced, who exactly am I? What is my purpose in life?’”

Recollecting how she felt some years ago, Ewa says: “I felt deeply ashamed when, after the divorce was made final, my neighbors and colleagues would label me ‘a divorcée.’ I was full of anger. Left with two young children, I had to become both mother and father to them.”\* Adam, who served as a respected elder for 12 years, comments: “I have lost so much of my self-respect that at times I’m filled with anger, and I’m tempted to distance myself from everybody.”

## THE STRUGGLE TO REGAIN BALANCE

Plagued by anxiety over their future, some have struggled to regain their balance—even years after the divorce. They may conclude that others are not interested in them. Furthermore, says one columnist in the field, they now have to “change their habits and learn to cope with problems on their own.”

Stanisław recalls: “When we divorced, my ex-wife prevented me from seeing my two little girls. That led me to feel that no one cared for me anymore and even that Jehovah must have abandoned me. I lost my desire to live. In time, I realized how wrong my thinking had been.” A feeling of uncertainty about her future also troubled Wanda, who was divorced: “I felt sure that after a while, people—including fellow believers—would

\* Some names have been changed.

# Assist Divorced Fellow Believers How?

You likely know someone who is divorced—perhaps a number of such ones. That is because divorce is quite common. For example, research in Poland revealed that 30-year-olds who have been married for from three to six years are most likely to get divorced; and divorce is not limited to that age group.

In fact, “statistics show that [in Europe] half of those who get married will divorce,” reports the Institute for Family Policy in Spain. In other developed countries, the picture is similar.



not show any interest in me and my children. However, I can now see how much the brothers rallied around us and helped me as I endeavored to raise my children to become worshippers of Jehovah.”

You can discern from such comments that after divorce some are engulfed by negative emotions. They may develop a poor image of themselves, thinking that they are of little worth and not deserving of attention. Along with that, they may become critical of those around them. As a result, they may begin to think of the congregation as being cold and unsympathetic. Yet, such experiences as those of Stanisław and Wanda show that divorced ones can come to realize that their brothers and sisters really do care about them. In fact, fellow Christians have provided exceptional care, even when their help has not initially been noticed.

#### **WHEN FEELINGS OF LONELINESS AND REJECTION CREEP IN**

Bear in mind that despite our best efforts, divorced fellow believers may from time to time be beset by loneliness. Divorced sisters particularly may get the impression that few are interested in them. Alicja admits: “Eight years have passed

since my divorce. Yet, I still sometimes feel inferior. At such moments, I am inclined to isolate myself and give way to weeping and feelings of self-pity.”

While the emotions described here are not uncommon for someone dealing with a divorce, the Bible counsels against isolating oneself. Acting contrary to this counsel could lead to the rejecting of “all practical wisdom.” (Prov. 18:1) The one feeling lonely should understand, though, that it is an evidence of practical wisdom to avoid repeatedly seeking counsel or comfort from someone of the opposite sex. Thus, there would be no inducement to develop inappropriate romantic feelings.

Our divorced fellow believers may be buffeted by the winds of challenging emotions, including anxiety over the future and feelings of loneliness or even rejection. Recognizing that such feelings are common and at the same time hard to overcome, we should imitate Jehovah by giving such brothers and sisters our loyal support. (Ps. 55:22; 1 Pet. 5:6, 7) We can be sure that any help we offer to them will be much appreciated. Indeed, they will find within the congregation assistance from true friends!—Prov. 17:17; 18:24.

## **A Balanced View of Divorce**

Jehovah’s servants view marriage very seriously. That is because we base our thinking on what the Scriptures say. For instance, at Malachi 2:16, we read God’s clear statement: “I hate divorce.” Sexual immorality on the part of one’s mate is the only Scriptural grounds for divorce. Hence, it would be

a serious mistake to entertain thoughts of filing for an unscriptural divorce from one person, perhaps while already planning to marry another.—Gen. 2:22-24; Deut. 5:21; Matt. 19:4-6, 9.

But when a divorce does occur, such as after a Christian’s mate has proved unfaithful, brothers and sisters in

the congregation are supportive. They imitate Jehovah by doing all they can to assist righteous ones who for a while are “crushed in spirit.”—Ps. 34:15, 18; Isa. 41:10.

## HOW CAN YOU ASSIST?

Can you be a source of much-needed support? What can you do to help someone who has feelings like those mentioned earlier in this article? Consider what the Bible says, and note how loyal Christians have offered practical assistance.

### Be a discerning listener.

(Prov. 16:20, 23)

You can understand that after a divorce, a person might not want to talk about the details leading up to the divorce. And the fact is that venting one's frustration may be counterproductive and may not really alleviate anxiety. (Prov. 12:25; Rom. 12:15) Michał, who extended support to Adam, mentioned earlier, agrees that you can be a compassionate, discerning listener without hearing every detail: "I have tried to help Adam see that in a weak moment when he is overwhelmed by negative emotions, he might inadvertently tell me something he would later wish he had not." So Michał made it clear that he was not seeking to know every detail. Yet, he listened as a true friend. We may be able to accomplish much good even before or after a Christian meeting by saying something as simple as: "How are you coping? I imagine you are going through a rough time. You have my support."

### Show interest.

(Phil. 2:4)

Mirosław recalls: "My wife and I have scheduled time to help a divorced sister. For example, we repaired the lock on her door. We also gave her a ride to the doctor's office." Those may seem to be simple things; yet they were practical, and they did help. The sister whom this couple assisted regained her balance gradually. What is more, she later began to pioneer, and her 11-year-old daughter got baptized.

### Reassure the divorced person that Jehovah understands the situation.

If someone suffers from low self-esteem, you can reassure him that God cherishes each of his servants. We certainly are "worth more than many sparrows"; we are unique and precious in his eyes. (Matt. 10:29-31) "Jehovah is the examiner of hearts" and is thus able to understand those who are divorced. He will not abandon any of his faithful servants. (Prov. 17:3; Ps. 145:18; Heb. 13:5) So as you show that you care, reassure the person that God appreciates his love for the truth and his efforts to support true worship.—Phil. 2:29.



## Encourage the divorced person to stay close to the congregation.

When besieged by conflicting emotions, some find it hard to get to the meetings. But these very gatherings serve to strengthen and encourage—they are “for building up.” (1 Cor. 14:26; Ps. 122:1) In this regard, initiative on the part of the elders is invaluable. Wanda, mentioned earlier, recalls, “We still remember their loving care.”

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## Encourage the divorced one to strengthen his or her relationship with God through prayer, personal study, and meditation. (Jas. 4:8)

Though Jehovah is almighty and dwells in heaven, he gives attention “to the one humble and broken in spirit who trembles at [His] word.” Reassure the divorced one of that, and stress how each of us is helped by drawing ever closer to God through prayer and personal study.—Isa. 66:2.



## Offer to work together in the field ministry or to prepare together for a meeting.

This will help the divorced Christian to feel more confident as he or she moves on in life. Marta, who has supported a zealous sister who felt crushed after her divorce, says: “We regularly share in the ministry together. It brings us joy when we see that we have reached the goals we set for ourselves. We sometimes study together in preparation for a meeting, and then we might make something delicious to eat.”





## “You Must Love Jehovah Your God”

*“You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.”—MATT. 22:37.*

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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What does it mean to love God?

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Why should we love Jehovah?

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How can we show our love for Jehovah God?

JEHOVAH'S Son, Jesus Christ, declared: “I love the Father.” (John 14:31) Jesus also said: “The Father has affection for the Son.” (John 5:20) That should not surprise us. After all, for ages during Jesus' prehuman existence, he was God's “master worker.” (Prov. 8:30) As Jehovah and Jesus worked together, the Son learned much about his Father's qualities and had innumerable reasons to love him. In fact, close association evidently caused their mutual love to grow.

<sup>2</sup> Love involves a feeling of deep affection for someone. The psalmist David sang: “I have affection for you, O Jehovah, my strength.” (Ps. 18:1) That is how we should feel about God, for he has affection for us. If we obey Jehovah, he will show his love for us. **(Read Deuteronomy 7:12, 13.)** But can we really love God, since we cannot see him? What does it mean to love Jehovah? Why should we love him? And how can we show our love for God?

1. Why did mutual love between God and his Son grow?
2. (a) What does love involve? (b) We will discuss what questions?

## WHY WE CAN LOVE GOD

<sup>3</sup> “God is a Spirit”; hence, we cannot see him. (John 4:24) Yet, love for Jehovah is possible, and we are commanded in the Scriptures to express that love. For example, Moses told the Israelites: “You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your strength.”—Deut. 6:5.

<sup>4</sup> Why can we have deep love for God? Because he created us with a spiritual need and endowed us with the ability to express love. When our spiritual need is properly satisfied, our love for Jehovah grows and we have a sound basis for happiness. “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need,” said Jesus, “since the Kingdom of the heavens belongs to them.” (Matt. 5:3) Concerning what some call humans’ innate desire to worship, it has been said: “We should stand in awe, amazement and reverence to see the universality of man’s search for, and belief in, a supreme being.”—*Man Does Not Stand Alone*, by A. C. Morrison.

<sup>5</sup> Is it futile to search for God? No, for he wants us to find him. The apostle Paul made that clear when he gave a witness to a group assembled on the Areopagus. That took place within sight of the Parthenon—a temple dedicated to Athena, the patron goddess of ancient Athens. Imagine that you are there as Paul speaks about “the God who made the world and all the things in it” and then explains that He “does not dwell in handmade temples.” The apostle adds that God “made out of one man every nation of men to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of where

men would dwell, so that they would seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us.” (Acts 17:24-27) Yes, people can find God. Over seven and a half million Witnesses of Jehovah ‘really have found him’—and they truly love him.

## WHAT IT MEANS TO LOVE GOD

<sup>6</sup> Our love for Jehovah should spring from the heart. Jesus made that clear when a Pharisee asked: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “‘You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.’ This is the greatest and first commandment.”—Matt. 22:34-38.

<sup>7</sup> What did Jesus mean when he said that we must love God with our “whole heart”? He meant that we must love Jehovah with our entire figurative heart, affecting our desires, emotions, and feelings. We must also love him with our “whole soul,” or our life and being. Moreover, we must love God with our “whole mind,” or our full intellect. In essence, we ought to love Jehovah fully, without reservation.

<sup>8</sup> If we love God with our whole heart, soul, and mind, we will be diligent students of his Word, will wholeheartedly serve his purposes, and will zealously declare the good news of the Kingdom. (Matt. 24:14; Rom. 12:1, 2) True love for Jehovah will draw us ever closer to him. (Jas. 4:8) Of course, we cannot possibly list all the reasons why we should love

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6. Jesus identified what as “the greatest and first commandment”?

7. What does it mean to love God with (a) our “whole heart”? (b) our “whole soul”? (c) our “whole mind”?

8. Loving God fully will move us to do what?

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- 3, 4. Why is it possible for us to love Jehovah?  
5. How do we know that it is not futile to search for God?

God. However, let us consider a few of them.

### WHY WE SHOULD LOVE JEHOVAH

**<sup>9</sup> Jehovah is our Creator and our Provider.** “By him we have life and move and exist,” said Paul. (Acts 17:28) Jehovah has given us our splendid earthly home. (Ps. 115:16) He also provides food and other things we need in order to sustain our life. Therefore, Paul could tell the idolatrous residents of Lystra that “the living God . . . did not leave himself without witness in that he did good, giving you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying you with food and filling your hearts with gladness.” (Acts 14:15-17) Is that not reason to love our Grand Creator and loving Provider?—Eccl. 12:1.

**<sup>10</sup> God has made possible the removal of the sin and death we inherited from Adam.** (Rom. 5:12) Indeed, “God recommends his own love to us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” (Rom. 5:8) Undoubtedly, our heart overflows with love for Jehovah because he has made it possible for us to receive forgiveness of our sins if we are repentant and exercise faith in Jesus’ ransom sacrifice.—John 3:16.

**<sup>11</sup> Jehovah ‘gives hope that fills us with joy and peace.’** (Rom. 15:13) God-given hope enables us to endure tests of faith. Anointed ones who prove ‘faithful even to death will be given the crown of heavenly life.’ (Rev. 2:10) Integrity-keepers with an earthly hope will enjoy eternal blessings in the promised global Paradise. (Luke 23:43) What is our natu-

ral response to such prospects? Are we not filled with joy and peace, as well as love for the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present”?—Jas. 1:17.

**<sup>12</sup> God has given us the heartwarming resurrection hope.** (Acts 24:15) We are, of course, deeply saddened by the death of a loved one, but because of the prospect of the resurrection, ‘we do not sorrow as those do who have no hope.’ (1 Thess. 4:13) Out of love, Jehovah God yearns to resurrect the dead, especially faithful ones, like upright Job. (Job 14:15) Imagine the joyous reunions when resurrected ones are welcomed back to life here on earth. How our hearts swell with love for our heavenly Father, who has given us the marvelous resurrection hope!

**<sup>13</sup> Jehovah really cares for us. (Read Psalm 34:6, 18, 19; 1 Peter 5:6, 7.)** Because we know that our loving God is always ready to help those who are faithful to him, we feel secure as part of ‘the flock of his pasture.’ (Ps. 79:13) Moreover, God’s love for us will be evident in what he will accomplish in our behalf through the Messianic Kingdom. After his chosen King, Jesus Christ, rids the earth of violence, oppression, and wickedness, obedient mankind will be blessed with lasting peace and prosperity. (Ps. 72:7, 12-14, 16) Do you not agree that such prospects give us reason to love our caring God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind?—Luke 10:27.

**<sup>14</sup> Jehovah has favored us with the priceless privilege of serving as his Witnesses.** (Isa. 43:10-12) We love God for granting us this opportunity to support his sovereignty and to bring true hope to

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**9.** Why do you love Jehovah as our Creator and our Provider?

**10.** How should we react to God’s provision for the removal of sin and death?

**11, 12.** In what ways has Jehovah given us hope?

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**13.** What evidence is there that God really cares for us?

**14.** God has favored us with what priceless privilege?





Jehovah has provided shepherds who show sincere interest in the flock  
(See paragraph 19)

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people in this troubled world. Moreover, we can speak with faith and conviction because we are declaring good news based on the Word of the true God, whose hope-inspiring promises never fail. (**Read Joshua 21:45; 23:14.**) Of course, the list of blessings and our reasons for loving Jehovah could go on and on. But how can we demonstrate our love for him?

#### HOW WE CAN SHOW OUR LOVE FOR GOD

**<sup>15</sup> Diligently study and apply God's Word.** Doing so shows that we love Jehovah and truly want his word to be a 'light for our path.' (Ps. 119:105) If we are experiencing distress, we can draw comfort from such loving assurances as these: "A heart broken and crushed, O God, you will not reject." "Your loyal love, O Jehovah, kept supporting me. When anxieties overwhelmed me, you comforted and soothed me." (Ps. 51:17; 94:18, 19) Jehovah shows mercy to those who suf-

fer, and Jesus similarly feels pity for people. (Isa. 49:13; Matt. 15:32) Bible study can make us so keenly aware of Jehovah's loving concern for us that we are inclined to respond with deep love for him.

**<sup>16</sup> Pray to God regularly.** Our prayers draw us ever closer to the "Hearer of prayer." (Ps. 65:2) When we discern that God is answering our prayers, our love for him deepens. For instance, we may have seen that he does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear. (1 Cor. 10:13) If we have anxiety and turn to Jehovah in earnest supplication, we may well experience the incomparable "peace of God." (Phil. 4:6, 7) At times, we may say a silent prayer—as Nehemiah did—and come to realize that it is being answered. (Neh. 2:1-6) As we "persevere in prayer" and become aware that Jehovah is responding to our petitions, our love for him grows and so does our confidence that he will help us to cope with further tests of faith.—Rom. 12:12.

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**15.** How can study and application of God's Word help us?

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**16.** How can regular prayer cause our love for God to grow?

**<sup>17</sup> Make it your custom to attend Christian meetings, assemblies, and conventions.** (Heb. 10:24, 25) The Israelites gathered to listen and learn about Jehovah in order to have reverence for him and carry out his Law. (Deut. 31:12) It is not a burden to comply with God's will if we truly love him. **(Read 1 John 5:3.)** Therefore, let us never allow anything to make us treat meeting attendance lightly. We surely want nothing to result in the loss of our first love for Jehovah.—Rev. 2:4.

**<sup>18</sup> Zealously share “the truth of the good news” with others.** (Gal. 2:5) Our love for God moves us to speak about the Messianic Kingdom of his dear Son, who will “ride in the cause of truth” at Armageddon. (Ps. 45:4; Rev. 16:14, 16) What a joy it is to have a part in making disciples by helping people to learn about God's love and his promised new world!—Matt. 28:19, 20.

**<sup>19</sup> Show appreciation for God's arrangement for shepherding his flock.** (Acts 20:28) Christian elders are a provision from Jehovah, who always acts in our best interests. The elders are “like a hiding place from the wind, a place of concealment from the rainstorm, like streams of water in a waterless land, like the shadow of a massive crag in a parched land.” (Isa. 32:1, 2) How we appreciate a shelter from a strong wind or from a chilling rainstorm! When the hot sun is beating down on us, we are grateful for the shade provided by a crag. These figures of speech help us to see that the elders provide needed spiritual

help and refreshment. By obeying those taking the lead among us, we show how much we appreciate these “gifts in men” and give evidence of our love for God and for Christ, the Head of the congregation.—Eph. 4:8; 5:23; Heb. 13:17.

### KEEP GROWING IN YOUR LOVE FOR GOD

**<sup>20</sup> If you have a loving relationship with Jehovah, you will be a ‘doer of the word, not a hearer only.’ (Read James 1:22-25.)** A “doer” has faith that produces such works as zealous preaching activity and participation in Christian meetings. Because you really love God, you will obey Jehovah's “perfect law,” which covers everything he requires of you.—Ps. 19:7-11.

**<sup>21</sup> Love for Jehovah God will cause you to turn to him often in heartfelt prayer.** Evidently alluding to the daily burning of incense under the Law covenant, the psalmist David sang: “May my prayer be as incense prepared before you [Jehovah], my uplifted hands like the evening grain offering.” (Ps. 141:2; Ex. 30:7, 8) May your humble petitions, your earnest supplications, and your heartfelt words of praise and thanksgiving to God be like the sweet-smelling incense that symbolizes acceptable prayers.—Rev. 5:8.

**<sup>22</sup> Jesus said that we must love God and also our neighbor.** (Matt. 22:37-39) As we shall see in our further discussion of this quality, our love for Jehovah and his principles will help us to interact well with fellow humans and display love for our neighbor.

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**17.** If we love God, how will we view meeting attendance?

**18.** Love for God moves us to do what in connection with the good news?

**19.** Why should we appreciate Jehovah's arrangement for shepherding his flock?

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**20.** If you love God, how will you respond to James 1:22-25?

**21.** To what may your heartfelt prayers be likened?

**22.** What kind of love will we discuss next?



# “You Must Love Your Neighbor as Yourself”

*“The second [commandment] is this:  
‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’”*

—MATT. 22:39.

TO TEST Jesus, a Pharisee once asked him: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” As noted in the preceding article, Jesus replied that “the greatest and first commandment” is: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.” Jesus added: “The second, like it, is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’”—Matt. 22:34-39.

<sup>2</sup> Jesus said that we must love our neighbor as we love ourselves. Thus, we do well to ask: Who really is our neighbor? How can we show neighbor love?

## WHO REALLY IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

<sup>3</sup> We may think of a neighbor as a person living nearby who is a close and helpful friend. (Prov. 27:10) But consider what Jesus said when a certain self-righteous man asked

1, 2. (a) What did Jesus say was the second greatest commandment of the Law? (b) What questions will we now consider?

3, 4. (a) With what illustration did Jesus answer the question: “Who really is my neighbor?” (b) How did the Samaritan help the man who had been robbed, beaten, and left half-dead? (See opening image.)

## HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

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Who really is our neighbor?

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Why do you believe that we can and should display love for our neighbor?

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What are some aspects of love that are covered at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8?



him: “Who really is my neighbor?” In response, Jesus gave the illustration of the neighborly Samaritan. (**Read Luke 10:29-37.**) We might expect that an Israelite priest and a Levite would act like good neighbors when they saw a man who had been robbed, beaten, and left half-dead. However, they passed him by without doing anything for him. The man was helped by a Samaritan—an individual who belonged to a people who respected the Mosaic Law but for whom the Jews had contempt.—John 4:9.

<sup>4</sup> In an effort to help with the healing process, the neighborly Samaritan poured oil and wine on the injured man’s wounds. The two denarii left with the innkeeper for the man’s care amounted to about two days’ wages. (Matt. 20:2) So it is easy to see who proved to be the real neighbor of the wounded man. Jesus’ illustration surely teaches us to show compassion and love for our neighbor.

<sup>5</sup> It is often difficult to find compassionate people like the neighborly Samaritan. Especially is this so in these critical “last days” when multitudes have no natural affection, are fierce, and lack a love of goodness. (2 Tim. 3:1-3) For instance, critical situations may develop during a natural disaster. Consider what happened when Hurricane Sandy struck New York City late in October 2012. In one hard-hit section of the city, looters preyed on residents who were already suffering because of a lack of electricity, heat, and other necessities. In the same area, Jehovah’s Witnesses organized a program that enabled them to help one another as well as others. Christians do such things be-

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5. How did Jehovah’s servants show neighbor love during a recent natural disaster?

cause they love their neighbor. What are some other ways to display neighbor love?

### HOW WE CAN SHOW NEIGHBOR LOVE

<sup>6</sup> **Offer people spiritual help.** We do this by endeavoring to direct their attention to heartening “comfort from the Scriptures.” (Rom. 15:4) Unquestionably, we are being neighborly when we share Bible truth with others in our preaching activity. (Matt. 24:14) How privileged we are to proclaim the Kingdom message from “the God who gives hope”—Rom. 15:13.

<sup>7</sup> **Follow the Golden Rule.** This rule is expressed in these words spoken by Jesus during his Sermon on the Mount: “All things . . . that you want men to do to you, you also must do to them. This, in fact, is what the Law and the Prophets mean.” (Matt. 7:12) When we treat others as Jesus counseled, we act in harmony with the spirit behind “the Law” (Genesis through Deuteronomy) and “the Prophets” (the prophetic books of the Hebrew Scriptures). From such writings it is clear that God blesses those who show love for others. Through Isaiah, for instance, Jehovah said: “Uphold justice, and do what is righteous . . . Happy is the man who does this.” (Isa. 56:1, 2) We are indeed blessed because we act in a loving and righteous manner toward our neighbor.

<sup>8</sup> **Love your enemies.** “You heard that it was said: ‘You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy,’” said Jesus.

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6. How is our preaching work related to being neighborly?

7. What is the Golden Rule, and how are we blessed for following it?

8. Why should we love our enemies, and what may happen if we do so?

“However, I say to you: Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those who persecute you, so that you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens.” (Matt. 5:43-45) The apostle Paul made a similar point when he wrote: “If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink.” (Rom. 12:20; Prov. 25:21) According to the Mosaic Law, a person was to help an enemy to free his animal that had fallen under its load. (Ex. 23:5) By working together in such a way, former enemies might become good friends. Because Christians show love, many of our enemies have softened their heart toward us. If we show love for our enemies—even rabid persecutors—how happy we will be if some of them embrace true Christianity!

**9 “Pursue peace with all people.”** (Heb. 12:14) Of course, this includes our brothers, for Jesus said: “If . . . you are bringing your gift to the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, and go away. First make your peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift.” (Matt. 5:23, 24) God will bless us when we show love for our brother and take prompt action to make peace with him.

**10 Do not be a faultfinder.** “Stop judging that you may not be judged,” said Jesus, “for with the judgment you are judging, you will be judged, and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you. Why, then, do you look at the straw in your brother’s eye but do not notice the rafter in

9. Jesus said what about making peace with our brother?

10. Why should we not be faultfinders?



Japan



Canada

Jehovah’s servants are quick to show neighbor love  
(See paragraph 5)

your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Allow me to remove the straw from your eye,’ when look! a rafter is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the rafter from your own eye, and then you will see clearly how to remove the straw from your brother’s eye.” (Matt. 7:1-5) What a powerful way to tell us not to criticize the small faults of others when we ourselves may have very large faults!

## A SPECIAL WAY TO SHOW NEIGHBOR LOVE

<sup>11</sup> We want to show love for our neighbor in a unique way. Like Jesus, we preach the good news of the Kingdom. (Luke 8:1) Jesus commissioned his followers to “make disciples of people of all the nations.” (Matt. 28:19, 20) By doing our part to fulfill that commission, we try to help our neighbor to leave the broad and spacious road that leads to destruction and get on the cramped road leading off into life. (Matt. 7:13, 14) There is no question that Jehovah blesses such efforts.

<sup>12</sup> Like Jesus, we help people to become conscious of their spiritual need. (Matt. 5:3) In the case of those who respond favorably, we play a role in filling that need by sharing with them “God’s good news.” (Rom. 1:1) Those who embrace the Kingdom message become reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. (2 Cor. 5:18, 19) By preaching the good news, then, we truly are showing neighbor love in a vitally important way.

<sup>13</sup> Through effective return visits and home Bible studies, we have the satisfaction of helping people to conform to God’s righteous standards. This may result in quite a change in a Bible student’s lifestyle. (1 Cor. 6:9-11) It is heart-warming, indeed, to see how God helps those “rightly disposed for everlasting life” to make needed changes and come into a close relationship with him. (Acts 13:48) In the case of many, despair is thus replaced by joy, and undue anxiety by confidence in our heavenly Father. How good it is to observe the spiritual

**11, 12.** In what unique way do we show love for our neighbor?

**13.** How do you feel about sharing in our activity as Kingdom proclaimers?

progress made by new ones! Do you not agree that it is a blessing to demonstrate love for our neighbor in this special way as Kingdom proclaimers?

## AN INSPIRED DESCRIPTION OF LOVE

<sup>14</sup> In dealing with our neighbor, putting into practice what Paul wrote concerning love can prevent many problems, can result in happiness, and can bring us God’s blessing. (**Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.**) Let us briefly review what Paul said about love and see how we can apply his words to our relationship with our neighbor.

<sup>15</sup> “Love is patient and kind.” Just as God has shown patience and kindness in dealing with imperfect humans, we need to be patient and kind when others make mistakes and are thoughtless, or even rude. “Love is not jealous,” so true love will not allow us to covet another person’s possessions or privileges in the congregation. Moreover, if we have love, we will not brag or get puffed up with pride. After all, “haughty eyes and an arrogant heart—the lamp that guides the wicked is sin.”—Prov. 21:4.

<sup>16</sup> Love will cause us to behave in a decent way toward our neighbor. We will not lie to him, steal from him, or do anything else that would violate Jehovah’s laws and principles. Love will also prevent us from looking out only for our own interests instead of showing concern for those of others.—Phil. 2:4.

<sup>17</sup> Genuine love is not easily provoked and “does not keep account of

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**14.** In your own words, mention some aspects of love covered at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

**15.** (a) Why should we be patient and kind? (b) For what reasons should we avoid jealousy and bragging?

**16, 17.** How can we act in harmony with 1 Corinthians 13:5, 6?



the injury,” as though we were making entries in a ledger when others do something unloving. (1 Thess. 5:15) Were we to hold a grudge, we would not be pleasing God and would, in effect, be tending a smoldering fire that could flare up, harming us and others. (Lev. 19:18) Love makes us rejoice with the truth, but it will not allow us to “rejoice over unrighteousness,” even if a person who hates us is mistreated or suffers some injustice.—**Read Proverbs 24:17, 18.**

<sup>18</sup> Consider Paul’s further definition of love. He said that love “bears all things.” If someone offends us but asks for forgiveness, love moves us to forgive him. Love “believes all things” in God’s Word and makes us grateful for the spiritual food we receive. Love “hopes all things” recorded in the Bible and prompts us to give others reasons for our hope. (1 Pet. 3:15) We also pray and hope for the best outcome in trying circumstances. Love “endures all things,” whether these are sins committed against us, persecution, or other trials. Moreover, “love never fails.” It will be displayed by obedient humans throughout all eternity.

### **KEEP ON LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF**

<sup>19</sup> By applying the Bible’s counsel, we can continue to show love for our neighbor. Such love embraces all people, not just those of our own ethnic background. We also need to remember that Jesus said: “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matt. 22:39)

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**18.** What do we learn about love from 1 Corinthians 13:7, 8?

**19, 20.** What Scriptural counsel should move us to keep on displaying love for our neighbor?

Both God and Christ expect us to love our neighbor. If we are not sure what to do in a certain situation involving our neighbor, let us pray for God to guide us through holy spirit. Doing so will result in Jehovah’s blessing and will help us to act in a loving way.—Rom. 8:26, 27.

<sup>20</sup> The command to love our neighbor as ourself is called “the royal law.” (Jas. 2:8) After referring to some commandments of the Mosaic Law, Paul stated: “Whatever other commandment there is, is summed up in this saying: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does not work evil to one’s neighbor; therefore, love is the law’s fulfillment.” (Rom. 13:8-10) So we need to keep on showing neighbor love.

<sup>21</sup> As we meditate on why we should show love for our neighbor, it is good to reflect on Jesus’ statement that his Father “makes his sun rise on both the wicked and the good and makes it rain on both the righteous and the unrighteous.” (Matt. 5:43-45) We need to display love toward our neighbor, whether he is righteous or unrighteous. As noted earlier, an important way to show such love is to share the Kingdom message with him. What blessings are in store for our neighbor if he responds to the good news with genuine appreciation!

<sup>22</sup> We have many reasons for loving Jehovah without reservation. There are also numerous ways for us to show love for our neighbor. By displaying love for God and for our neighbor, we are showing respect for what Jesus said about these vital matters. Above all, we are pleasing our loving heavenly Father, Jehovah.

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**21, 22.** Why should we love God and our neighbor?

Have you carefully read the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?  
Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

**At what time was the Passover lamb to be slaughtered on Nisan 14?**

Some Bible translations say that it was to be slaughtered “between the two evenings,” meaning at twilight or at dusk—after sunset but before full darkness. (Ex. 12:6)—12/15, pages 18-19.

**Youths can use what Bible principles to make wise choices?**

Three are (1) Seek first God’s Kingdom and his righteousness. (Matt. 6:19-34) (2) Find happiness in serving others. (Acts 20:35) (3) Enjoy serving God in your youth. (Eccl. 12:1)—1/15, pages 19-20.

**What four horsemen have been on the move since 1914?**

Jesus, as a rider on a white horse, has acted to rid the heavens of Satan and his demons. The rider on a fiery-colored horse depicts the wars that have afflicted mankind. The rider on a black horse represents famine. The rider of the pale horse brings death by plague, striking down millions. (Rev. 6:2-8)—2/1, pages 6-7.

**When does “the marriage of the Lamb” take place? (Rev. 19:7)**

“The marriage of the Lamb” takes place after the King, Jesus Christ, completes his conquest, that is, after Babylon the Great has been destroyed and

the war of Armageddon has been fought.—2/15, page 10.

**Why were the Jews in Jesus’ day “in expectation” of the Messiah? (Luke 3:15)**

We cannot confirm that first-century Jews understood Daniel’s prophecy about the Messiah as we do. (Dan. 9:24-27) Still, they might have heard of the angelic announcement to some shepherds or what the prophetess Anna said upon seeing the babe Jesus at the temple. Also, astrologers came looking for “the one born king of the Jews.” (Matt. 2:1, 2) Later, John the Baptizer indicated that the Christ would soon appear.—2/15, pages 26-27.

**How can we avoid letting our Yes be No? (2 Cor. 1:18)**

Admittedly, something beyond our control may occasionally make it impossible for us to keep our word. But if we make a promise or a commitment, we should do all we can to keep it.—3/15, page 32.

**How can we resist the temptation to look at pornography?**

Three helpful steps are (1) Quickly averting our view if we are exposed to erotic imagery. (2) Guarding our thoughts by focusing on positive things and praying to God. (3) Guarding our step by avoiding films or Web sites that contain pornography.—4/1, pages 10-12.

**What unintended consequences may there be if a Christian leaves his or her family behind to earn money in another land?**

When parents choose not to live together as a family, the children may suffer emotionally and morally. They may come to resent the parent(s). And adults living away from their mates may face sexual temptations.—4/15, pages 19-20.

**Why were the legs of criminals being executed on a stake broken?**

The Romans executed some criminals on a stake. The Jews asked that the legs of the criminals alongside Jesus be broken. That would make it harder for the victims to breathe, hastening death. Thus, they would not need to remain all night on the stake. (Deut. 21:22, 23)—5/1, page 11.

**We should keep what four questions in mind when approaching people in our ministry?**

Who are they? Where am I approaching them? When am I approaching them? How should I approach them?—5/15, pages 12-15.

**How deadly has smoking been?**

During the last century, it has killed 100,000,000 people. Currently, it takes about 6,000,000 lives a year.—6/1, page 3.



# Do You View Human Weakness as Jehovah Does?

*“The members of the body that seem to be weaker are necessary.”—1 COR. 12:22.*

WE ALL feel weak at times. A bout of flu or allergies may weaken us to the point that we find it difficult to cope with our daily activities. Now imagine that you have felt feeble, not just for one or two weeks, but for months on end. In such a situation, would you not appreciate it if others displayed an empathetic attitude toward you?

<sup>2</sup> The apostle Paul knew what it was like to be affected, even weakened, by pressures from outside the congregation and from within it. More than once, he thought that he had reached his limit. (2 Cor. 1:8; 7:5) Reflecting on his life and the many hardships that he had experienced as a faithful Christian, Paul admitted: “Who is weak, and I am not weak?” (2 Cor. 11:29) And regarding the various members of the Christian congregation, likened to parts of the human body, Paul stated that those who “seem to be weaker are necessary.” (1 Cor. 12:22) What did he mean? Why do we need to view those who seem to be weaker as Jehovah views them? And how will our doing so benefit us?

1, 2. Why could Paul sympathize with the weak?

## WHAT IS YOUR ANSWER?

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How does Jehovah view those who seem to be weaker in the congregation?

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What will help us to adopt Jehovah’s view of human weakness?

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How does assisting those who feel weak bring blessings to many?



## JEHOVAH'S VIEW OF HUMAN WEAKNESS

<sup>3</sup> We are living in a competitive world where strength and youth are frequently exalted. Many do whatever it takes to get their way, often trampling on the feelings of those who are weaker. We do not condone such behavior, yet we may unconsciously develop a negative view of those who regularly need assistance, even in the congregation. But we can develop a more balanced view, one like God's.

<sup>4</sup> We can gain insight into the way Jehovah views human weakness from an illustration recorded in Paul's first letter to the Corinthians. In chapter 12, Paul reminds us that even the least attractive or the weakest part of the human body has a function. (**Read 1 Corinthians 12:12, 18, 21-23.**) Aspects of this concept of the human body have been challenged by some evolutionists. Nevertheless, findings in the study of anatomy show that body parts once considered useless actually do perform essential functions.\* For example, some have questioned the usefulness of the little toe; however, it is now recognized to have an impact on the balance of the whole body.

<sup>5</sup> Paul's illustration highlights that all members of the Christian congregation are useful. Unlike Satan, who strips hu-

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\* In his book *The Descent of Man*, Charles Darwin described a number of body organs as "useless." One of his advocates asserted that there were dozens of "vestigial organs" in the human body, including the appendix and the thymus.

3. What might influence our view of those who need assistance in the congregation?

4, 5. (a) How does the illustration found at 1 Corinthians 12:21-23 help us to grasp Jehovah's view of human weakness? (b) How can we benefit from helping the weak?

mans of their dignity, Jehovah views all of his servants, including those who seem to be weaker, as "necessary." (Job 4:18, 19) That thought should help each of us to feel good about our role in the local congregation and about being part of the congregation of God's people earth wide. Think of a time, for example, when you held out your arm to an elderly person who was in need of help. You may have had to adjust your pace. Did not providing assistance serve a useful purpose as well as make you feel good? Yes, when we respond to the needs of others, we experience the joy of caring for them, and we grow in patience, love, and maturity. (Eph. 4:15, 16) Our loving Father knows that a congregation that values all members, regardless of their limitations, reflects balance and love.

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, in writing to the Corinthians, Paul used the words "weak" and "weakness" in reference to the way unbelievers perceived first-century Christians and also to the way he felt about himself. (1 Cor. 1:26, 27; 2:3) When Paul spoke of those who were "strong," he did not intend to make some Christians feel superior. (Rom. 15:1) Rather, he was saying that Christians with more experience should be patient with those who were not yet firmly rooted in the truth.

### DO WE NEED TO ADJUST OUR VIEW?

<sup>7</sup> When we assist "the lowly one," not only do we imitate Jehovah but we also gain his approval. (Ps. 41:1; Eph. 5:1) Admittedly, though, a negative view of those in need may at times hold us back from assisting them. Or because we are

6. How did Paul at times use the words "weak" and "strong"?

7. What might hold us back from assisting those in need?

not sure of what we should say, we may feel embarrassed and withdraw from some who are having a hard time. Cynthia,\* a sister whose husband abandoned her, comments: “If brothers avoid you or do not act the way you would expect close friends to act, it can hurt. When you are going through trials, you need people around you.” David of old knew the feeling of being avoided.—Ps. 31:12.

<sup>8</sup> We will likely be more empathetic if we remember that some of our dear brothers and sisters have been weakened by adverse circumstances—suffering from poor health, living in a divided household, or coping with depression. We might find ourselves in a similar situation one day. Before entering the Promised Land, the Israelites, who had been poor and weak in the land of Egypt, were reminded that they should not “harden [their] heart” toward their afflicted brothers. Jehovah expected them to consider the poor as being worthy of help.—Deut. 15:7, 11; Lev. 25:35-38.

<sup>9</sup> Rather than being judgmental or suspicious, we should provide spiritual comfort to those facing undesirable circumstances. (Job 33:6, 7; Matt. 7:1) To illustrate: When a motorcyclist injured in a traffic mishap arrives at the emergency ward, do those on the medical team try to determine whether he caused the accident? No, they immediately provide the needed medical assistance. Similarly, if a fellow believer has been weakened by personal problems,

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\* Name has been changed.

**8.** What will help us to become more empathetic?

**9.** What should be our priority when helping those who face hardships? Illustrate.

our priority should be to provide spiritual assistance.—**Read 1 Thessalonians 5:14.**

<sup>10</sup> If we pause to reflect on our brothers’ circumstances, we may see their seeming frailty in a different light. Think of sisters who have been enduring family opposition for years. Some may be of humble appearance and look fragile, yet do they not demonstrate outstanding faith and inner strength? When you see a single mother regularly coming to meetings with her child or children, are you not impressed by her faith and determination? And what of teenagers who stick to the truth despite the bad influences in school? In all modesty, we recognize that such ones, who may seem to be weaker, may be as “rich in faith” as those among us who have more favorable circumstances.—Jas. 2:5.

#### ADJUST YOUR VIEW TO JEHOVAH’S VIEW

<sup>11</sup> We are helped to adjust our view of human weakness to Jehovah’s view by considering how he handled matters in connection with some of his servants. **(Read Psalm 130:3.)** For example, had you been there with Moses when Aaron made a statue of a golden calf, how would you have felt about Aaron’s weak excuses? (Ex. 32:21-24) Or how would you have considered Aaron’s attitude when, influenced by his sister, Miriam, he criticized Moses for marrying a foreign woman? (Num. 12:1, 2) How would you have reacted when Aaron and Moses failed to honor Jehovah at the time He miraculously provided water at Meribah?—Num. 20:10-13.

**10.** How might some who may appear to be weaker really be “rich in faith”?

**11, 12.** (a) What will help us to adjust our view of human weakness? (b) What do we learn from the way that Jehovah dealt with Aaron?



Jehovah took into account  
Elijah's limitations and sent  
an angel to encourage him  
(See paragraphs 14, 15)

<sup>12</sup> In each of these situations, Jehovah could have punished Aaron on the spot. But He discerned that Aaron was not a bad person or gravely at fault. It seems that Aaron allowed circumstances or the influence of others to turn him away from the right course. Yet, when he was confronted with his own mistakes, he readily admitted them and supported Jehovah's judgments. (Ex. 32:26; Num. 12:11; 20:23-27) Jehovah chose to focus on Aaron's faith and repentant attitude. Centuries later, Aaron and his descendants were still remembered as fearers of Jehovah.—Ps. 115:10-12; 135:19, 20.

<sup>13</sup> In order to adjust our thinking to Jehovah's, we should analyze our view of those who seem to be weak. (1 Sam. 16:7) For example, how do we react when a teenager does not exercise dis-

cretion in his choice of entertainment or when he displays a careless attitude? Instead of being overly critical, why not reflect on what we might do to help him grow to maturity? We can take the initiative to assist someone in need of help, and in doing so, we actually grow in understanding and love.

<sup>14</sup> We are also helped to broaden our view of others by comparing our thinking with Jehovah's reaction to some of his servants who felt low in spirits. Elijah was one of them. Although he had fearlessly challenged 450 prophets of Baal, Elijah ran away from Queen Jezebel when he learned that she was plotting to kill him. After walking some 95 miles (150 km) to Beer-sheba, he went deep into the wilderness. Exhaust-

**13.** We can make what analysis of our perception of human weakness?

**14, 15.** (a) How did Jehovah feel about Elijah's temporary lack of courage? (b) What lesson can we learn from Elijah's experience?



ed by this trek under the blazing sun, the prophet sat down under a tree and “asked that he might die.”—1 Ki. 18:19; 19:1-4.

<sup>15</sup> How did Jehovah feel when he looked down from heaven and saw his faithful prophet in despair? Did he reject his servant because he temporarily became depressed and lacked courage? Not at all! Jehovah took into account Elijah’s limitations and dispatched an angel. Twice the angel encouraged Elijah to eat. Thus, the next journey would not “be too much for [him].” (**Read 1 Kings 19:5-8.**) Yes, even before giving any directions, Jehovah listened to his prophet and took practical measures to sustain him.

<sup>16</sup> How can we imitate our caring God? We should not be quick to offer advice. (Prov. 18:13) It would be better first to take the time to express our empathy to those who may think that they are “less honorable” because of their personal circumstances. (1 Cor. 12:23) Then we would be in a position to act appropriately, according to the true need.

<sup>17</sup> For example, think of Cynthia, quoted earlier, whose husband abandoned her and her two daughters. They found themselves alone. How did some fellow Witnesses respond? She explains: “After we informed them by phone what had happened, they were at our house within 45 minutes. They were in tears. They did not leave us alone for the first two or three days. Because we were not eating properly and were very emotional, for a time they took us under their roof.” That likely brings to your mind what James wrote: “If a brother or a sister is lacking clothing and enough

food for the day, yet one of you says to them, ‘Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,’ but you do not give them what they need for their body, of what benefit is it? So, too, faith by itself, without works, is dead.” (Jas. 2:15-17) Thanks to the timely support that local brothers and sisters provided, Cynthia and her daughters found the strength to serve as auxiliary pioneers just six months after their traumatic experience.—2 Cor. 12:10.

### BENEFITS FOR MANY

<sup>18</sup> You may know from personal experience that it can take time to recover from a debilitating physical illness. Similarly, a Christian who has been weakened by personal difficulties or very trying circumstances may need time to regain spiritual strength. True, our fellow believer will need to strengthen his own faith through personal study, prayer, and other Christian activities. But will we show patience until he regains his balance? And during that recovery, will we show enduring love? Will we strive to help those who are temporarily weak to feel valued and to sense our Christian affection?—2 Cor. 8:8.

<sup>19</sup> Never forget that as we provide support to our brothers, we experience the joy that only giving can bring. We also cultivate our capacity for showing empathy and patience. But there is more. The congregation as a whole grows in warmth and love. Above all, we imitate Jehovah, who considers every individual to be precious. Yes, we all have good reasons for responding to the encouragement to “assist those who are weak.”—Acts 20:35.

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**16, 17.** How can we imitate Jehovah’s care for Elijah?

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**18, 19.** (a) How can we help those who are temporarily weak? (b) Who are benefited when we assist those who feel weak?



# Help Others Reach Their Full Potential

*"I will give you advice with my eye upon you."*

—PS. 32:8.

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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What are some Bible examples of Jehovah's seeing potential in his servants?

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Why should we try to look for the good in others?

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How can young or newly baptized brothers be helped to reach their full potential?

WHEN parents watch their children play, they are often amazed by the inborn abilities the young ones have. Can you confirm that from your personal experience? One child may appear to have natural agility or athletic ability, while a sibling seems more at ease with board games or some art or craft. But regardless of their children's gifts, parents find pleasure in discovering their potential.

<sup>2</sup> Jehovah too takes a keen interest in his earthly children. He sees his modern-day servants as "the precious things of all the nations." (Hag. 2:7) They are precious particularly because of their faith and devotion. You may, though, have noticed that among fellow Witnesses today, there are many different talents. Some brothers are gifted at public speaking, whereas others excel at organizing matters. Many sisters have a knack for learning foreign languages and use them in the ministry, while others are outstanding examples of giving support to those who need encouragement or of caring for the sick. (Rom. 16:1, 12) Do we not appreciate being in the congregation with all such Christians?

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1, 2. How does Jehovah view his servants on earth?

<sup>3</sup> However, some fellow believers, including young or newly baptized brothers, may not yet have found their place in the congregation. How can we help them to reach their full potential? Why should we strive to look for the good in them, thus viewing them as Jehovah does?

### JEHOVAH SEES THE GOOD IN HIS SERVANTS

<sup>4</sup> A number of Bible accounts make it clear that Jehovah sees not only the good in his servants but also their potential. For example, when Gideon was chosen to set God's people free from Midianite oppression, he must have been stunned by the angel's greeting: "Jehovah is with you, you mighty warrior." It seems clear that at the time, Gideon felt anything but "mighty." He acknowledged his doubts and his own sense of insignificance. But as the ensuing conversation revealed, Jehovah certainly had a much more positive view of his servant than Gideon had of himself.—**Read Judges 6:11-16.**

<sup>5</sup> Jehovah trusted Gideon to deliver Israel because He had observed his skills. For one thing, Jehovah's angel had noticed how Gideon threshed wheat with all his might. Something else had caught the angel's attention. In Bible times, farmers usually beat out grain in an open area to take advantage of the wind, which would blow away the chaff. Surprisingly, Gideon was secretly threshing wheat in a winepress in order to conceal his meager harvest from the Midianites. What a clever strategy! No wonder that in Jehovah's eyes, Gideon was more

than a cautious farmer—he was a shrewd man. Yes, Jehovah saw his potential and worked with him.

<sup>6</sup> Similarly, we see in the case of the prophet Amos that Jehovah noticed the potential of one of his servants, even though he might have appeared to many to be rather insignificant or unassuming. Amos described himself as a raiser of sheep and a nipper of sycamore figs—a variety regarded as food for the poor. When Jehovah appointed Amos to condemn the idolatrous ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, some Israelites might have thought that he was a poor choice.—**Read Amos 7:14, 15.**

<sup>7</sup> Amos came from a remote village, but his knowledge of the customs and rulers of his time gave evidence that he was not ignorant. He was likely well-informed about conditions in Israel, and he may have been knowledgeable about neighboring nations as a result of his dealings with traveling merchants. (Amos 1:6, 9, 11, 13; 2:8; 6:4-6) Some Bible scholars today credit Amos with good writing skills. Not only did the prophet choose simple and powerful words but he made good use of parallelism and wordplay. Indeed, Amos' bold response to the corrupt priest Amaziah confirmed that Jehovah had chosen the right person and could use his abilities that might not at first seem obvious.—**Amos 7:12, 13, 16, 17.**

<sup>8</sup> Yes, Jehovah notices the potential in each of his servants. He assured King David that he would always guide

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3. What questions will we consider in this article?

4, 5. How does the account at Judges 6:11-16 show that Jehovah sees the potential in his servants?

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6, 7. (a) How did Jehovah's view of the prophet Amos differ from that of some Israelites? (b) What indicates that Amos was not an uneducated person?

8. (a) What assurance did Jehovah give David? (b) Why are the words at Psalm 32:8 reassuring to those who may lack self-confidence or skills?



him, with 'his eye upon him.' (**Read Psalm 32:8.**) Do you see why that should be encouraging to us? Even though we may lack self-confidence, Jehovah can help us to go beyond our perceived limits and reach goals that we would not have imagined. Just as an instructor watches an inexperienced rock climber attentively in order to help him find the best handholds, Jehovah is willing to guide us as we make spiritual advancement. Jehovah might also use fellow believers to help us reach our full potential. How so?

### LOOK FOR THE GOOD IN OTHERS

<sup>9</sup> Paul urged all Christians to "look out" for the interests of fellow believers. (**Read Philippians 2:3, 4.**) The essence of Paul's counsel is that we should observe the gifts that others have and acknowledge them. How do we feel when someone shows interest in the progress that we have made? Usually, it stimulates us to make additional progress, bringing out the best in us. Likewise, when we acknowledge the value of our fellow believers, we help them to thrive and grow spiritually.

<sup>10</sup> Who in particular may need our attention? Of course, all of us need special attention from time to time. Still, young or newly baptized brothers really need to sense that they are involved in the congregation's activities. This will help them to understand that they do have a place among us. On the other hand, failure to give fitting recognition to such brothers may stifle their desire to reach out for more responsibilities, something that God's Word encourages them to do.—1 Tim. 3:1.

9. How can we apply Paul's exhortation to "look out" for the interests of others?

10. Who in particular may need our attention?

<sup>11</sup> Ludovic, an elder who benefited from such interest when he was younger, says: "When I show genuine interest in a brother, he makes advancement more quickly." Regarding Julien, a young man who was rather shy, Ludovic says: "Because Julien at times attempted to assert himself in a somewhat clumsy way, his behavior was not natural. But I could see that he was very kind and really wanted to help others in the congregation. Hence, rather than call his motives into question, I focused on his positive traits, trying to encourage him." In time, Julien qualified to be a ministerial servant, and now he is a regular pioneer.

### HELP THEM REACH THEIR FULL POTENTIAL

<sup>12</sup> Understandably, if we are to help others reach their full potential, we need to be discerning. As illustrated by Julien's experience, we may have to look beyond a person's weak spots to discern his fine qualities and skills that could be developed further. This is similar to the way Jesus viewed the apostle Peter. Although Peter at times appeared to be unsteady, Jesus predicted that he would become as stable as a rock.—John 1:42.

<sup>13</sup> Barnabas showed similar discernment in the case of John, who had the Roman surname Mark. (Acts 12:25) During Paul's first missionary journey with Barnabas, Mark served as an "attendant," perhaps caring for their physi-

11. (a) How did an elder help a young man to overcome shyness? (b) What lesson do you see in Julien's experience?

12. What valuable quality is necessary to help someone reach his full potential? Give an example.

13, 14. (a) How did Barnabas show discernment in the case of young Mark? (b) How did a young brother benefit from help such as Mark received? (See opening image.)

Frédéric (left) encouraged Rico to stay determined to serve Jehovah  
(See paragraph 16)

cal needs. However, when they reached Pamphylia, Mark suddenly left his companions in the lurch. They had to travel without him north through an area notorious for bandits. (Acts 13:5, 13) Apparently, though, Barnabas saw past Mark's inconsistent behavior and later seized the opportunity to complete his training. (Acts 15:37-39) This helped the young man to become a mature servant of Jehovah. Interestingly, Mark was in Rome with Paul, who was then imprisoned, and joined in sending greetings to the Christians in the Colossian congregation, and the apostle spoke favorably of him. (Col. 4:10) Imagine the feeling of satisfaction that Barnabas must have had when Paul even requested Mark's assistance.—2 Tim. 4:11.

<sup>14</sup> Alexandre, a newly appointed elder, recalls how he benefited from a brother's insightful way: "When I was younger, saying a prayer in public was a real struggle for me. An elder showed me how to prepare myself and be more relaxed. Instead of not calling on me anymore, he gave me opportunities to pray regularly at meetings for field service. In time, I became more confident."

<sup>15</sup> When we notice a good quality in another Christian, do we express how much we value that fine trait? In Romans chapter 16, Paul gave recognition to more than 20 fellow believers for qualities that made them dear to his heart. (Rom. 16:3-7, 13) For example, Paul acknowledged that Andronicus and Junias had been serving Christ longer than he

**15.** How did Paul express appreciation for his brothers?



had, emphasizing their Christian endurance. Paul also spoke warmly of the mother of Rufus, perhaps alluding to her earlier loving care for him.

<sup>16</sup> There may be fine results when we give genuine commendation. Consider the case of Rico, a young boy in France, who was discouraged because his father, who did not share his beliefs, was opposed to Rico's getting baptized. Rico thought that he would have to wait until he was of legal age to serve Jehovah fully. He was also sad that he faced ridicule at school. Frédéric, a congregation elder who was asked to study with the boy, relates: "I commended Rico because such opposition indicated that he had been courageous enough to express his faith." These words of commendation strengthened Rico in his determination to remain exemplary and helped him to draw closer to his father. Rico got baptized when he was 12 years of age.

<sup>17</sup> Each time we express appreciation for well-handled assignments or

**16.** What may be the result of commendation given to a young one?

**17.** (a) How can we help our brothers to make advancement? (b) A missionary took what personal interest in young brothers, and with what result?



Jérôme (right) helped Ryan to qualify as a missionary  
(See paragraph 17)

praiseworthy efforts, we give our fellow believers an incentive to serve Jehovah more fully. Sylvie,\* who has been serving at Bethel in France for years, commented that sisters can have a share in commending brothers. She noted that women may appreciate different details or efforts that they observe. Thus their “words of encouragement can complement what experienced brothers say.” She added: “To me, giving commendation is a duty.” (Prov. 3:27) Jérôme, a missionary in French Guiana, has helped many young men to qualify for missionary service. He says: “I have noticed that when I compliment young brothers on specific points in their ministry or for giving well-thought-out comments, they grow in confidence. As a result, they develop their abilities further.”

<sup>18</sup> We can also stimulate fellow believers to make spiritual advancement

\* Name has been changed.

**18.** Why is working along with younger brothers beneficial?

by working along with them. An elder might ask a young brother who is good at using computers to print some information from [jw.org](http://jw.org) that could be encouraging for the elderly ones who do not have computers. Or if you are involved in doing work around the Kingdom Hall, why not invite a young brother to work along with you? Such initiatives will give you the opportunity to observe young ones and offer commendation and see the results.—Prov. 15:23.

### BUILD FOR THE FUTURE

<sup>19</sup> When Jehovah appointed Joshua to lead the Israelites, He also commanded Moses to “encourage” and “strengthen” Joshua. (**Read Deuteronomy 3:28.**) More and more people are joining with us in the worldwide congregation. All experienced Christians—not just elders—can help young brothers and new ones to achieve their full potential. Thus more and more will take up the full-time ministry, and more and more will be “qualified to teach others.”—2 Tim. 2:2.

<sup>20</sup> Whether we belong to a well-established congregation or to a small group that is progressing toward becoming a congregation, let us build for the future. A key is to imitate Jehovah, who always looks for the good in his servants.

**19, 20.** Why should we help others to make progress?

