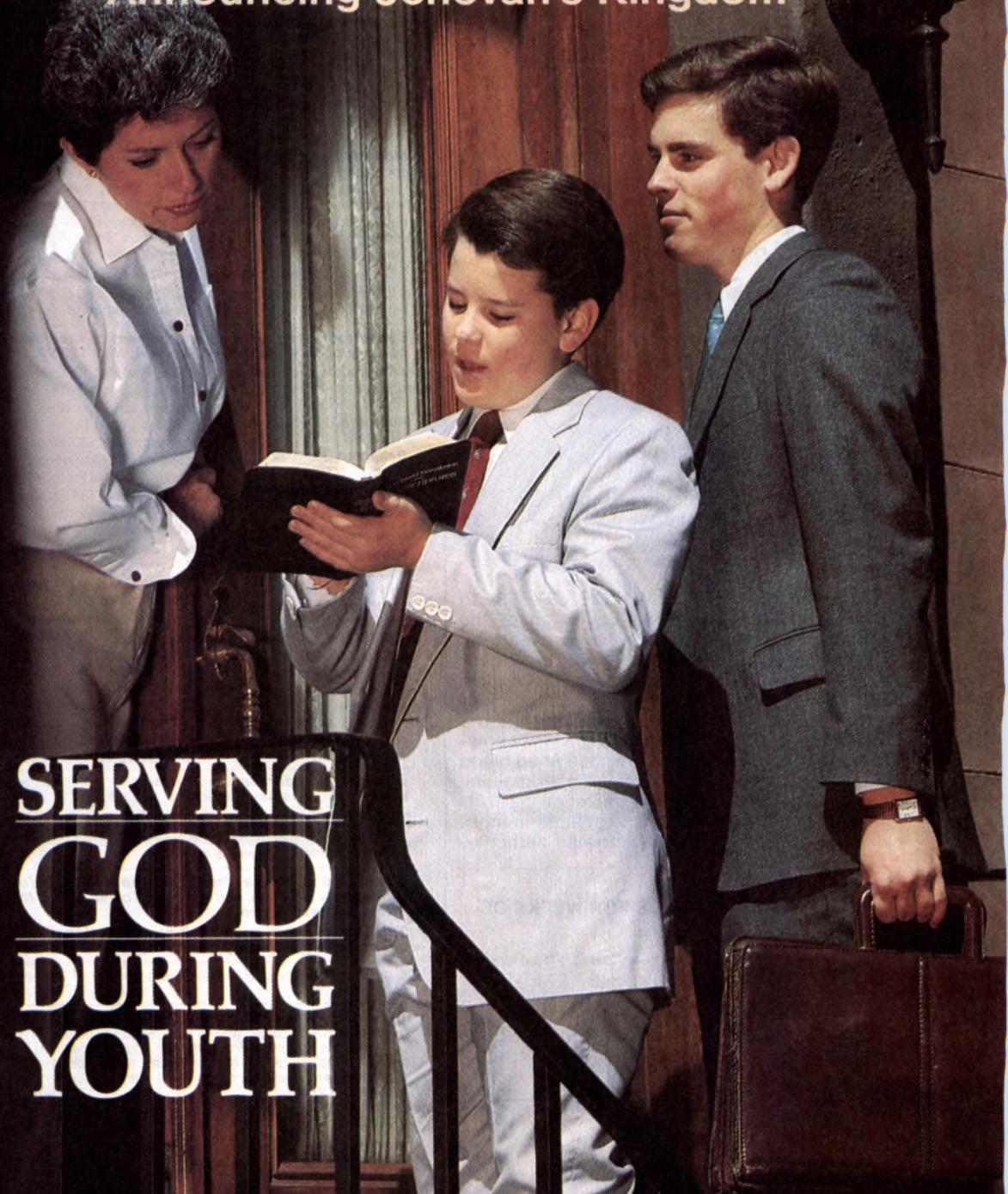


August 1, 1990

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**SERVING
GOD
DURING
YOUTH**

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

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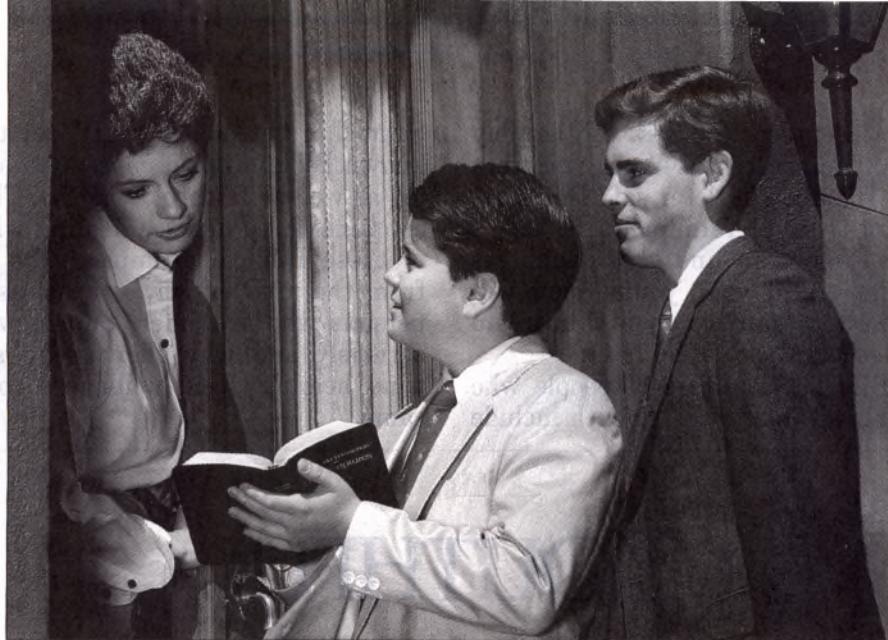
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YOUNG PEOPLE WHO SERVE GOD

DO YOU find it unusual that fine young people would give of their time, without any pay, to come to your door to talk about God? Does it seem surprising, in an age of growing unbelief, that children join with their parents in talking to others about marvelous Bible promises of a happy future?*

In most of the 60,000-and-more congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses throughout the earth, you will find many young people. They do not go to a weekly Sunday school or catechism class. Rather, these young people benefit from and even participate in congregation meetings. Little

ones may offer simple comments. Pre-teens participate in the Theocratic Ministry School. Many teenagers spend school vacations helping neighbors to learn about God and his marvelous promises for the future.

There is really nothing new about such youthful activity. The Bible tells of faithful young men and women, as well as youths and small children, who set outstanding examples in serving God.

The Bible book of Psalms foretold a "company of young men," as refreshing and numerous as "dewdrops," in godly service. It also told of "young men" and "virgins" praising the name of God. (Psalm 110:3; 148:12, 13) Likely, some young people were among those present when God's holy spirit was poured out on

* A 1985 Gallup survey found that only 12 percent of Americans born since 1946 said they had a "great deal of faith" at age 16.

believers at Pentecost 33 C.E. On that day about 3,000 embraced the Word and were baptized. The apostle Peter said this startling event was a fulfillment of Joel's prophecy: "Your sons and your daughters will prophesy and your young men will see visions and your old men will dream dreams."—Acts 2:4-8, 16, 17, 41.

Other Biblical examples of people who served Jehovah God in their youth include

Samuel, righteous King David, the well-known Bible prophets Jeremiah and Daniel, as well as faithful Timothy. This issue contains three articles dealing with some of these Biblical examples. You will see from the articles why youths, as well as persons who are older, take serving God seriously and why they spend so much time helping their neighbors to do the same.

YOUTHFUL SERVANTS IN BIBLE TIMES

THE Bible tells of many fine young people who took their service to God seriously and who were richly blessed for doing so. Whether we are young or old and gray, these fine Biblical examples can provide great encouragement.

Joseph was only 17 years old when he was sold into slavery down in Egypt. There, far from his family and out of sight of those who knew him, Joseph proved his integrity. When Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Joseph, he said: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" Even in front of mighty Pharaoh, the most powerful king of his day, Joseph seized the opportunity to give credit to God for the interpretation of Pharaoh's dreams. He was richly blessed. God used him to save both the Egyptians and his family from death by famine and to bring his father, Jacob, and his house-

hold down into Egypt.—Genesis 37:2; 39:7-9; 41:15, 16, 32.

Moses and Others Faithful in Youth

Pharaoh's daughter took Moses as her own child, but Moses' mother and father were able to teach him about the true God. The Bible says that when grown up, Moses "refused to be called the son of the daughter of Pharaoh, choosing to be ill-treated with the people of God rather than to have the temporary enjoyment of sin." God used Moses to bring his people out of Egypt, to receive the Law at Sinai, and to write a major part of the Bible. Whatever your age, are you developing a determination to serve God as Moses did?—Hebrews 11:23-29; Exodus 2:1-10.

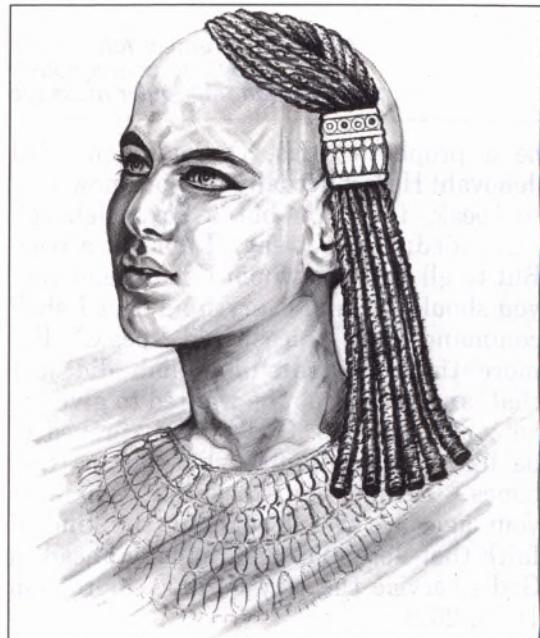
The Scriptures tell us of "little ones" who listened along with the rest of the nation when God's Law was read to Israel. (Deuteronomy 31:10-13) "All intelligent

Young Moses was not seduced by the wealth of Egypt

enough to listen" stood "from daybreak till midday" to hear the Law in the days of Nehemiah. (Nehemiah 8:1-8) Even if the little ones did not understand everything, they could appreciate that they were to love, worship, and obey Jehovah God. Whatever your age, have you listened at conventions and assemblies where God's Word was discussed? Have you learned the importance of obeying him, as those young Israelites did?

David, Josiah, and Jeremiah

God chose David, the youngest of eight brothers, for special service and said of him: "I have found David the son of Jesse, a man agreeable to my heart, who will do all the things I desire." God chose him to be "a shepherd" of his people, and David performed that service, while proving his love for Jehovah over many years. He wrote more than 70 of the Psalms and became an ancestor of Jesus Christ. Whether young or old, do you appreciate God's ways, and do you do the things he desires, as David did?



—Acts 13:22; Psalm 78:70, 71; 1 Samuel 16:10, 11; Luke 3:23, 31.

Josiah became king when he was only eight years old. When about 15, "while he was still a boy, he started to search for the God of David his forefather." Before he was 20, Josiah began a campaign against false worship. Later, he had the temple repaired, and he restored pure worship in the land. We read: "All his days they did not turn aside from following Jehovah the God of their forefathers." All of us cannot be a king like Josiah, but we can serve God and stand firm against false worship, no matter what our age.—2 Chronicles 34:3, 8, 33.

The almighty God told Jeremiah: "Before I was forming you in the belly I knew you, and before you proceeded to come forth from the womb I sanctified you. Prophet to the nations I made you." Jeremiah protested that he was too young to

Youthful David was agreeable to Jehovah's heart

Although Jeremiah felt he was “but a boy,” he courageously preached an unpopular message

be a prophet: “Alas, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah! Here I actually do not know how to speak, for I am but a boy.” Jehovah responded: “Do not say, ‘I am but a boy.’ But to all those to whom I shall send you, you should go; and everything that I shall command you, you should speak.” For more than 40 years Jeremiah did just that, and even when he wanted to give up, he could not stop. God’s word “proved to be like a burning fire shut up in [his] bones.” He just *had* to speak! Whatever your age, are you developing the kind of faith that Jeremiah had, moving ahead in God’s service the way he did?—Jeremiah 1:4-8; 20:9.

Daniel, Jesus, and Timothy

Have you not heard of Daniel? He may have been well under 20 when he was taken along with other “children” as captives to the court of mighty Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon. Despite Daniel’s youth, he was determined to obey God.

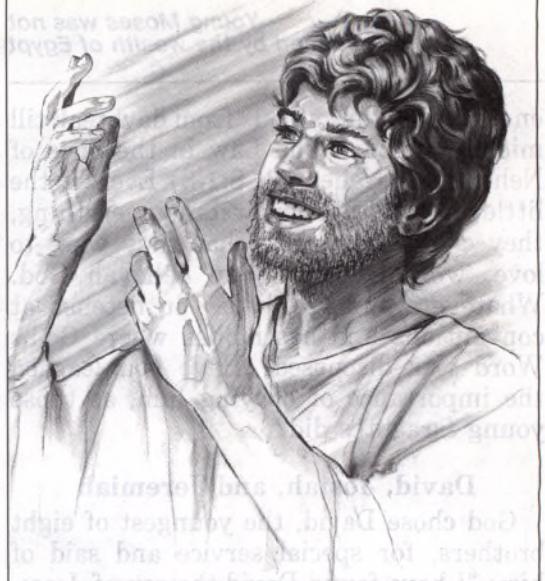


Daniel and his companions refused to pollute themselves with foods that might have violated God’s Law or been defiled by pagan rituals. For more than 80 years, Daniel never wavered, maintaining his integrity to the point of refusing to stop praying to God, even though this would result in his being thrown to the lions. Do you consider your service to God and your prayers to be that serious? You should.

—Daniel 1:3, 4, 8; 6:10, 16, 22.

At the age of 12, Jesus was found sitting in the midst of the religious teachers at the temple in Jerusalem, “listening to them and questioning them. But all those listening to [young Jesus] were in constant amazement at his *understanding* and his answers.” Would a Scriptural discussion by older men at the temple have interested you as it did Jesus? Would others have been amazed by your understanding and your answers? Today, many young Witnesses who study, listen care-

At 12 years of age, Jesus amazed his elders with his understanding of God’s Word





In Israel even the little ones listened when God's Law was read. Do you?

fully, and participate in Christian meetings have a Scriptural knowledge that surprises older ones.—Luke 2:42, 46, 47.

Are you like Timothy, who as a child was taught “the holy writings”? When he was a young man, Timothy “was well reported on by the brothers” in at least two congregations. The apostle Paul chose Timothy to travel with him, not to be a mere porter, but to help Paul in teaching others. Would you be chosen for such privileges? Is your activity “well reported on,” not just in your own congregation but also in others?—2 Timothy 3:15; Acts 16:1-4.

What Kind of Future Do You Want?

Is it possible for young people today to be as faithful as were Joseph, Moses, Da-

vid, and others? Yes, it is. True, many youths are interested only in having a good time. But others are using their youth wisely, getting to know God and his will for them. These fulfill the Bible prophecy: “Your people will offer themselves willingly on the day of your military force. . . . You have your company of young men just like dewdrops.”—Psalm 110:3.

Such fine young people show wisdom beyond their years, since God can help them to make a success of their present life as well as give them a glorious future in the coming new world. (1 Timothy 4:8) How, though, can a modern youth develop a faith like those youngsters mentioned in the Bible? If you would like to know, we invite you to read the article “Happy Youths in Jehovah’s Service,” starting on page 10 of this magazine.

Departing Admonition

THE memorial meal is over, but Jesus and his apostles are still in the upstairs room. Although Jesus will soon be gone, he has many things yet to say. "Do not let your hearts be troubled," he comforts them. "Exercise faith in God." But more is required. "Exercise faith also in me," he adds.

"In the house of my Father there are many abodes," Jesus continues. "I am going my way to prepare a place for you . . . that where I am you also may be. And where I am going you know the way." The apostles do not comprehend that Jesus is talking about going away to heaven, so Thomas asks: "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How do we know the way?"

"I am the way and the truth and the life," Jesus answers. Yes, only by accepting him and imitating his life course can anyone enter the heavenly house of the Father because, as Jesus says: "No one comes to the Father except through me."

"Lord, show us the Father," Philip requests, "and it is enough for us." Philip apparently wants Jesus to provide a visible manifestation of God, such as was granted in ancient times in visions to Moses, Elijah, and Isaiah. But, really, the apostles have something much better than visions of that type, as Jesus observes: "Have I been with you men so long a time, and yet, Philip, you have not come to know me? He that has seen me has seen the Father also."

Jesus so perfectly reflects the personality of his Father that living with and observing him is, in effect, like actually seeing the Father. Yet, the Father

is superior to the Son, as Jesus acknowledges: "The things I say to you men I do not speak of my own originality." Jesus properly gives all credit for his teachings to his heavenly Father.

How encouraging it must be for the apostles to hear Jesus now tell them: "He that exercises faith in me, that one also will do the works that I do; and he will do works greater than these!" Jesus does not mean that his followers will exercise greater miraculous powers than he did. No, but he means that they will carry on the ministry for a much longer time, over a much greater area, and to far more people.

Jesus will not abandon his disciples after his departure. "Whatever it is that you ask in my name," he promises, "I will do this." Further, he says: "I will request the Father and he will give you another helper to be with you forever, the spirit of the truth." Later, after he ascends to heaven, Jesus pours out on his disciples the holy spirit, this other helper.

Jesus' departure is near, as he says: "A little longer and the world will behold me no more." Jesus will be a spirit creature that no human can see. But again Jesus promises his faithful apostles: "You will behold me, because I live and you will live." Yes, not only will Jesus appear to them in human form after his resurrection but in due time he will resurrect them to life with him in heaven as spirit creatures.

Jesus now states the simple rule: "He that has my commandments and observes them, that one is he who loves me. In turn he that loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will plainly show myself to him."

At this the apostle Judas, the one who is also called Thaddaeus, interrupts: "Lord, what has happened that you intend to show yourself plainly to us and not to the world?"

"If anyone loves me," Jesus replies, "he will observe my word, and my Father will love him . . . He that does not love me does not observe my words." Unlike his obedient followers, the world ignores Christ's teachings. So he does not reveal himself to them.

During his earthly ministry, Jesus has taught his apostles many things. How will they remember them all, especially since, even up to this moment, they fail to grasp so much? Happily, Jesus promises: "The helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you."

Again comforting them, Jesus says: "I leave you peace, I give you my peace. . . Do not let your hearts be troubled

nor let them shrink for fear." True, Jesus is departing, but he explains: "If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going my way to the Father, because the Father is greater than I am."

Jesus' remaining time with them is short. "I shall not speak much with you anymore," he says, "for the ruler of the world is coming. And he has no hold on me." Satan the Devil, the one who was able to enter Judas and get a hold on him, is the ruler of the world. But there is no sinful weakness in Jesus that Satan can play on to turn him away from serving God. **John 14:1-31; 13:27; Luke 22:3, 4; Exodus 24:10; 1 Kings 19:9-13; Isaiah 6:1-5.**

- Where is Jesus going, and what answer does Thomas receive regarding the way there?
- By his request, what apparently does Philip want Jesus to provide?
- Why has one who has seen Jesus also seen the Father?
- How do Jesus' followers do greater works than he did?
- In what sense does Satan have no hold on Jesus?





HAPPY YOUTHS IN JEHOVAH'S SERVICE

"Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."

—PROVERBS 20:11, New International Version.

YOUNG Samuel may have been only three to five years old when he began "ministering" at Jehovah's tabernacle in Shiloh. One of his duties was to open "the doors of Jehovah's house." The Bible says that "Samuel was growing bigger and more likable both from Jehovah's standpoint and from that of men." When grown, he brought Israel back to true worship. He served God "all the days of his life." Even when he was "old and gray" he was still urging the people to "fear Jehovah, and . . . serve him in truth." Would it not be wonderful if people were able to say these fine things about you just as the Bible says them about Samuel? —1 Samuel 1:24; 2:18, 26; 3:15; 7:2-4, 15; 12:2, 24.

1. What are some of the outstanding things the Bible says about Samuel?

² If you are one of Jehovah's Witnesses or you attend their Christian meetings, look around in the Kingdom Hall where this lesson is studied. You see people of all ages. Probably there are people who are already "old and gray." There are also parents, young people, small children, and even babes in arms. Are the smallest ones already learning? Yes. Just ask those who were themselves brought to such meetings when they were small. They will tell you honestly that from their early years, they were learning to respect God, to love his people, and to appreciate the places where he is worshiped. As time passes, little ones learn wonderful truths. Many youths, after growing in knowledge and appreciation, become part of the 'young men and

2. What do little ones learn at the meetings of Jehovah's people today?

virgins, old men and boys' whom the psalmist urged to "praise the name of Jehovah, for his name alone is unreachable high."—Psalm 148:12, 13.

³ If you are a young person whose parents regularly bring you to such meetings, you are especially blessed. Many other young people are troubled by the world's problems. Some may be afraid that men will destroy the earth. You know that God will not let that happen, that he will not allow men to continue to ruin this beautiful planet. Rather than let that happen, God will, according to the Bible, "bring to ruin those ruining the earth." You know that the Bible promises that a bright future in God's righteous new world is near.—Revelation 11:18; Psalm 37:29; 2 Peter 3:13.

Your Own Faith

⁴ At first, the way of Christian truth may have been your parents' pursuit. Perhaps you came to Christian meetings because they brought you, and you may have shared in godly service because they did. Yet, as time passes, serving and obeying Jehovah can become your own joy. Young Samuel's mother started him on the right way, but he personally had to follow it. We read: "Even a child is known by his actions, by whether his conduct is pure and right."—Proverbs 20:11, NIV.

⁵ The Scriptures tell us what God wants of us. They clearly show us how to please

3. How is it that young people who know the Bible look at life differently from those who do not?

4. What responsibility does knowing God's ways place on youths, and how was young Samuel a fine example of this?

5. (a) Of what great value is the Bible? (b) What did Paul tell Timothy about the importance of God's written Word?



him, providing a great deal of information that can do us much good. The apostle Paul told his young helper Timothy: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work."—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

⁶ The Bible also tells us to "listen to discipline and become wise." It says to "treasure up" God's commandments, to "call out for understanding," and to "keep seeking" discernment as you would seek valuable hidden treasures. If you follow this advice, then "you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will find the very knowledge of God." We also find this counsel: "Now, O sons, listen to me; yes, happy are the ones that keep my very ways. Listen to discipline and become wise, and do not show any neglect. Happy is the man that is listening to me . . . For the one finding me will certainly find life, and gets goodwill from Jehovah." Do you value the Bible that much and put that kind of effort into learning the things that it says? —Proverbs 2:1-5; 8:32-35.

6. What does the book of Proverbs say about the importance of knowledge and godly wisdom?

Gain Knowledge

⁷ Some young people know all the sports statistics, or they can tell you everything about their favorite music group. They find these things easy to learn and to remember because they are interested in them. But the most important question is, What do they know about God? Just think of what he has done. God made the universe. He foretold what men would do and what would happen long before events occurred. Not only does the Bible tell us about God but it teaches us how we can please him. It shows us how we can have a happy life now and how we can gain everlasting life in his righteous new world. Is that not far more important than knowing who won a ball game or learning the names of musicians whom people will soon forget?

—Isaiah 42:5, 9; 46:9, 10; Amos 3:7.

⁸ When young King Josiah was 15 years old, he “started to search for the God of David his forefather.” When Jesus was 12, he was found “sitting in the midst of the teachers” in Jehovah’s temple, “listening to them and questioning them.”* Whatever age you are, have you, like Josiah and Jesus, developed a real interest in learning about the things God has done and will yet do?—2 Chronicles 34:3; Luke 2:46.

⁹ However, you may say: ‘Study is hard work.’ Many people, young and old, have never read enough for reading to become easy. The more you read, the easier reading will become. The more you study, the easier learning becomes. You attach new

* See the article “Youthful Servants in Biblical Times” on page 4.

7. What are the most important things that we should learn?

8. What good example was set by both Josiah and Jesus?

9. (a) What problem do many young people have? (b) What can make reading and studying easier, and have you personally found this to be true?

ideas to things you already know, making it easier to understand them and remember them.

¹⁰ What can help you to learn more about God? Perhaps you could be more regular in attending Christian meetings. Could you prepare in advance and really participate? For example, would you get a deeper level of knowledge from this lesson by looking up the Scripture texts that are cited but not quoted? Have you written a word or two in the margin to remind you of what each of these texts adds to the paragraph or to the lesson? Do you have the habit of including at least one of these texts in a comment that demonstrates your appreciation for the Scriptural discussion? A congregation elder who has attended meetings regularly for many years says: “I find it hard to keep my mind on any lesson that I haven’t really prepared, but it is an absolute delight to follow one that I have studied thoroughly.”

¹¹ When you listen to Bible talks, do you take brief notes to help you to analyze how the talk is being developed and to keep your mind on what is being said? Do you compare what you hear with what you already know so that you can understand it more easily and remember it better? Jesus prayed: “This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3) Is not knowledge that leads to life the best knowledge you could possibly get? Note what the Bible says about this: “For Jehovah himself gives wisdom; out of his mouth there are knowledge and discernment. When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleas-

10. (a) How can you get more from Christian meetings? (b) What is your own experience in this regard?

11. How can you get more from Bible-based talks, and why is this so important?

ant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you.”—Proverbs 2:6, 10, 11.

Grow in Appreciation

¹² Do we really appreciate what God has done for us? He created a beautiful earth and prepared it for life. He created our first parents, thus making it possible for us to be born. He arranged for us to have the support of families and of a loving congregation. (Genesis 1:27, 28; John 13:35; Hebrews 10:25) He sent his own first-born Son to earth to teach us more about Himself and to provide the ransom that makes everlasting life possible. Do you really appreciate such marvelous gifts? Do they move you to accept his invitation to learn about him and to serve him?—Matthew 20:28; John 1:18; Romans 5:21.

¹³ The Creator of the universe is interested in people. He called Abraham “my friend,” and he said to Moses: “I do know you by name.” (Isaiah 41:8; Exodus 33:12) The book of Revelation indicates that God has a symbolic book, or “scroll of life,” containing the names of his faithful servants “from the founding of the world.” Will your name be included there?—Revelation 3:5; 17:8; 2 Timothy 2:19.

¹⁴ God’s principles work. Doing things his way eliminates many problems—immorality, drug addiction, alcoholism, unwanted pregnancies, venereal disease, violence, murder, and a long list of other ills. Following his ways will also help you to find real friends and to live a happier life. Is that not worth doing? (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) Even a young person who is already determined to do things God’s way can

12. What are some of the outstanding things that God has done for us?

13. Why do you feel that God is interested in individuals?

14. How can following God’s principles improve your life?

gain more strength to do what is right. The Bible says: “With someone loyal [Jehovah] will act in loyalty.” It also assures us that he will neither “leave his loyal ones” nor “forsake his people.”—Psalm 18:25; 37:28; 94:14; Isaiah 40:29-31.

Move Ahead in Serving God

¹⁵ Are your goals centered in a dying old world or in the righteous new one? Do you listen to God, or do you listen to worldly-wise persons who contradict him? Does recreation, higher education, or a time-consuming secular career come ahead of God and his service? Wise King Solomon wrote the entire Bible book of Ecclesiastes to show what should come first in our lives. He concluded: “Remember, now, your Grand Creator in the days of your young manhood, before the calamitous days proceed to come, or the years have arrived when you will say: ‘I have no delight in them.’ The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man.”—Ecclesiastes 12:1, 13.

¹⁶ All the older Christian brothers that you know—the elders, the pioneers, and your circuit and district overseers—were once children. What led to the blessings that they enjoy today? They loved God and wanted to serve him. Many of them in youth took advantage of the extra time they had to gain knowledge and experience. They studied and participated in meetings. They shared in teaching, and they reached out for additional privileges—pioneering, Bethel service, or other rewarding activity. They were not ‘super youths’; they had normal interests and concerns such as you have. Yet, they applied themselves in line with the

15. What godly advice did Solomon give youths?

16. How can young people reach out for additional privileges?

counsel: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men."—Colossians 3:23; compare Luke 10:27; 2 Timothy 2:15.

¹⁷ What about you? Do you really appreciate godly things? Do you choose friends among those who put spiritual matters first? Do you encourage others to share with you in Christian activity? Do you go in Christian service with older, more experienced ones to learn from them, to taste their joy, and to be encouraged by their fine works? One Witness remembers the day, nearly 20 years ago, when for the first time an older person warmly invited her along in the field ministry. This, she says, was a turning point in her life: "For the first time I was going because *I* wanted to, not just because my parents were taking me."

¹⁸ If you are making progress in doing things God's way, you may soon begin to think about baptism. It is important to remember that baptism is not some rite of passage into young adulthood. It does not show that you are growing up, nor is it something you should do because your friends have taken this step. Before asking

17. What can help young people to progress in God's service?
18. What are things to think about before presenting oneself for baptism?

How Would You Answer?

- Why is knowledge of God's Word so important?
- How can you get more out of Christian meetings?
- What blessings from God should motivate us to obey him?
- How can you move ahead in God's service?
- When should one get baptized?

to be baptized, you should have a basic knowledge of the truth and be living in harmony with God's Word. You should have reasonable experience in sharing that knowledge with others and realize that this is a vital part of true worship. (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20) You should also know that after taking this important Christian step you will be expected to live in harmony with the Bible's righteous moral principles.* In your heart, you should have dedicated your life to your loving heavenly Father.—Compare Psalm 40:8, 9.

¹⁹ Baptism is a step that you take when you have firmly decided that no matter what happens in the rest of your life, you *will* serve God. It is a public sign that you have made a complete, unreserved, and unconditional dedication to Jehovah through Jesus Christ to do God's will. One Christian elder remembers the day, almost a half century ago, when he realized: "I have to do something about it!" Michelle, a young Witness baptized in Newcastle, England, a few years ago, says: "At the age of 13, I realized I should dedicate my life and be baptized; there is nothing I would rather do than serve God."

²⁰ Tens of thousands of young people have been baptized recently. They had studied God's Word and learned his ways, and then, by water baptism, they gladly joined many older ones in publicly symbolizing their dedication to God. They know that baptism is not an end but only a beginning to the truly dedicated way of life that they are determined to follow in Jehovah's service forever.

* This does not mean that saying 'I'm not baptized yet' is an excuse for wrongdoing. As soon as we know what God requires, we obviously have the responsibility to obey him.—James 4:17.

19. When should a person be baptized?
20. (a) What fine example has already been set by tens of thousands of young people? (b) How should this step be viewed?



DO YOU APPRECIATE WHAT GOD HAS DONE?

"If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually."—LUKE 9:23.

WE OWE our lives to God. If he had not created humankind, we would never have been born. But God created more than life. He made us so that we could enjoy many things: the flavor of food, the warmth of sunlight, the sound of music, the freshness of a spring day, the tenderness of love. Even more, God gave us

a mind and the desire to learn about him. He inspired the Bible, which gives us sound guidance, shows us how to live happier lives, and provides the hope of living forever in his righteous new world. God also provides his holy spirit, the support of a local congregation, and loving older men and women who can help us to remain strong in his service.

—Genesis 1:1, 26-28; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 10:24, 25; James 5:14, 15.

1. What are some of the wonderful gifts that God has provided?

² In addition to all of that, God sent his own firstborn Son to tell us more about what the Father expects of us and to provide a “release by ransom” for everyone who will accept it. (Ephesians 1:7; Romans 5:18) That son, Jesus Christ, said: “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” (John 3:16, *King James Version*) The salvation made possible by that ransom is of such superlative value that there is absolutely no way that anyone could do works to earn it, certainly not works formerly done under the Mosaic Law. Thus, Paul wrote: “A man is declared righteous, not due to works of law, but only through faith toward Christ Jesus.” —Galatians 2:16; Romans 3:20-24.

Faith and Works

³ Salvation comes by faith, but faith and appreciation for all that God has done should move us to action. It should motivate us to do things that show our faith. Jesus’ half brother James wrote: “Faith, if it does not have works, is dead in itself.” He further said: “Show me your faith apart from the works, and I shall show you my faith by my works.” James pointed out that even the demons “believe and shudder,” but obviously demons do not do godly works. Abraham, on the other hand, had both faith and works. “His faith worked along with his works and by his works his faith was perfected.” James repeated: “Faith without works is dead.” —James 2:17-26.

⁴ Jesus also showed the importance of right works, saying: “Let your light shine

2. (a) What is the most outstanding thing that God has done for us? (b) Can we earn salvation through works?

3. What did James say about faith and works?

4. What did Jesus say those who want to follow him should do?

before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.” “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually.”* If we “disown” ourselves, we give up many of our personal choices. We recognize that we owe everything to God, so we give ourselves to him as his slaves, seeking to learn and to do his will, as Jesus did.—Matthew 5:16; Luke 9:23; John 6:38.

Lives Are Affected

⁵ Peter pointed out that Christ’s “precious blood,” given in our behalf, is of such excelling value that our appreciation for it should be evident in our entire way of life. The apostle listed many things that our appreciation should prompt us to do. He counseled: “Put away all badness.” “Form a longing for the unadulterated milk belonging to the word.” “Declare abroad the excellencies of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” “Turn away from what is bad and do what is good.” “Make a defense before everyone that demands of you a reason for the hope in you.” “Live the remainder of [your] time in the flesh, no more for the desires of men, but for God’s will.” —1 Peter 1:19; 2:1, 2, 9; 3:11, 15; 4:2.

⁶ First-century Christians lived their faith. It changed their outlook and their personalities, motivating them to bring their lives into harmony with God’s will.

* *The Jerusalem Bible* renders this “renounce himself.” The version by J. B. Phillips says “give up all right to himself.” *The New English Bible* says “leave self behind.”

5. (a) What did Peter show should affect our entire way of life? (b) What fine works did he recommend?

6. (a) How did first-century Christians demonstrate their faith? (b) What example should this set for us?

They suffered exile, stonings, beatings, imprisonment, and even death rather than violate their faith. (Acts 7:58-60; 8:1; 14: 19; 16:22; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 4:3; Philemon 9, 10) The noted Roman historian Tacitus, born about 56 C.E., says that the Christians "were doomed to the flames and burnt, to serve as a nightly illumination, when daylight had expired." Yet they did not waver! —*The Annals*, Book XV, paragraph 44.

⁷ In some congregations you may find people who have attended the meetings for years. They love Jehovah's organization, think his people are the finest people they have ever met, make fine comments about the truth, and defend the truth to outsiders. But something stands in their way, something holds them back. They have never taken the fine step that the 3,000 did on the day of Pentecost, that the believing Ethiopian asked about, or that Ananias urged Saul to take as soon as that former persecutor had realized that Jesus really was the Messiah. (Acts 2:41; 8:36; 22:16) What is lacking in such ones today? Why have they not taken the step that the Bible calls "the request made to God for a good conscience"? (1 Peter 3:21) If you find yourself in this situation —knowing the truth but hesitating to do something about it—view this article as prepared out of special love for you.

Overcoming Obstacles to Baptism

⁸ What could stand in your way? The preceding article showed that some might find personal study to be a problem. God gave us wonderful minds, and he expects us to use them in serving him. Some people who had not even learned to read

7. In what situation might some people find themselves?

8. If you have never been a good student, what would be the wise course to take now?

applied themselves to that task in order to learn more about God and his purposes. What about you? If you already know how to read, do you really study, as the Bereans did, "carefully examining the Scriptures daily" to see if these things are so? Have you explored "the breadth and length and height and depth" of the truth? Have you dug deeply enough into God's Word? Have you found out how exciting it really is? Have you developed a real desire to know God's will? Do you have a genuine hunger for the truth?—Acts 17:10, 11; Ephesians 3:18.

⁹ Sometimes people hold back because of a real or imagined problem that they have had with someone in the congregation. Has someone seriously offended you? Then follow the guideline indicated by Jesus' words: "Go lay bare his fault between you and him alone." (Matthew 18:15) You may be surprised to find that the person did not even know that you were offended. But even if he does know, you may still 'gain your brother,' as Jesus said. You may also help him avoid stumbling someone else. Moreover, when you think about it, who are you really serving—that person or God? Is your love for God so limited that you would let any imperfect human's mistake interfere with your love for Him?

¹⁰ A secret sin may hold a person back from baptism. This could be something that happened in the past, or it might be a continuing wrong pattern. If this is a problem for you, is it not time to correct the matter? (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) Many of Jehovah's people have had to make changes in their lives. The Bible says: "Repent, therefore, and turn around so as

9. What is the right thing to do if you have a problem with someone in the congregation?

10, 11. What should you do if some secret sin has been holding you back?

What kind of "soil" am I?

Jesus gave an illustration of a man who went out to sow seed. Some seed fell alongside the road and were eaten by birds. Others fell on rocky places without much soil. These sprouted, but when the sun came up, they withered and died. Still other seed fell among thorns and were choked. Jesus said that these three groups represented: first, the person who "hears the word of the kingdom but does not get the sense of it"; second, one who accepts the word but is turned away by the heat of "tribulation or persecution"; and third, the person for whom "the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches choke the word."

But Jesus also told of other seed that fell on fine soil. He said: "This is the one hearing the word and getting the sense of it, who really does bear fruit."—Matthew 13:3-8, 18-23.

It might be well to ask ourselves: 'What kind of "soil" am I?'

to get your sins blotted out, that seasons of refreshing may come from the person of Jehovah.”—Acts 3:19.

¹¹ No matter what you may have done in the past, you can repent, change, and ask for God's forgiveness. “Deaden, therefore, your body members that are upon the earth as respects fornication, uncleanness, sexual appetite, hurtful desire . . . Strip off the old personality, with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it.” You can bring your life into harmony with his ways, enjoy a clean conscience, and have the hope of everlasting life in his righteous new world. Is that not worth whatever effort it may take?—Colossians 3:5-10; Isaiah 1:16, 18; 1 Corinthians 6:9-11; Hebrews 9:14.

¹² Does tobacco use, alcohol abuse, or addiction to drugs stand between you and a clean conscience? Do not such life-threatening habits show disrespect for God's marvelous gift of life? If such habits stand in your way, surely it is time to correct them. Are these habits worth your life? Paul said: “Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in God's fear.” Do you appreciate God's clean and righteous ways enough to do that?*—2 Corinthians 7:1.

* For information on quitting such habits, see *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1981, pages 3-12; June 1, 1973, pages 336-43; and *Awake!*, July 8, 1982, pages 3-12; May 22, 1981, pages 3-11. These may be available in the library at the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses.

12. What should you do if tobacco, alcohol abuse, or addictive drugs stand between you and a clean conscience?

They died for their faith

Do you know anyone who would rather die than violate his faith? Thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses have done that. In *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity*, Dr. Christine E. King wrote: "One out of every two German Witnesses was imprisoned, one in four lost their lives."

When the horror of the camps finally ended in 1945, "the Witnesses' numbers had increased and no compromises had been made." In *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*, J. S. Conway wrote of the Witnesses: "No other sect displayed anything like the same determination in the face of the full force of Gestapo terrorism."

Jehovah's Witnesses were not persecuted because of politics or race. Rather, they suffered entirely because of their love of God and their refusal to violate their Bible-trained consciences.

Material Things

¹³ Today's world puts success and "the showy display of one's means of life" ahead of almost everything else. But Jesus likened "the anxieties of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches" to "thorns" that choke out the word of God. He also asked: "What benefit will it be to a man if he gains the whole world but forfeits his soul?"—1 John 2:16; Mark 4:2-8, 18, 19; Matthew 16:26.

¹⁴ Jesus pointed out that God arranged for the birds to find food and the lilies to blossom splendidly. Then he asked: "Of how much more worth are you than birds? . . . How much rather will [God] clothe you!" Wisely, Jesus told us to "quit being anxious" about material things. He said:

13, 14. (a) What do the Scriptures say about material goals? (b) Why is it important to put heavenly things first?

"Seek continually [God's] kingdom, and these things will be added to you." He pointed out that we should put heavenly things first because 'where our treasure is, there our heart would be also.'—Luke 12: 22-31; Matthew 6:20, 21.

Godly Service With God's Help

¹⁵ Does witnessing to others seem to present a problem for you? Does shyness cause you to hold back? If so, it is important to remember that first-century Christians had the same kind of feelings that we have today. God did not choose many wise and powerful ones, but he chose "the weak things of the world, that he might put the strong things to shame." (1 Corinthians 1:26-29) Powerful religious leaders opposed these "ordinary" people and ordered them to stop preaching. What did

15. What fine encouragement does the example of first-century Christians give us?

the Christians do? They prayed. They asked God for boldness, and he gave it to them. As a result, their message filled Jerusalem and later shook the whole world!—Acts 4:1-4, 13, 17, 23, 24, 29-31; 5:28, 29; Colossians 1:23.

¹⁶ Thus, fear of men should never stand between us and service to God. Hebrews chapter 11 tells of a great “cloud of witnesses” who feared, not men, but God. We should show similar faith. The apostle wrote: “Because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.”—Hebrews 12:1.

¹⁷ God can provide his servants tremendous help. The Creator of the universe told Isaiah: “Those who are hoping in Jehovah will regain power. They will mount up with wings like eagles. They will run and not grow weary; they will walk and not tire out.”—Isaiah 40:31.

¹⁸ The courageous and happy Witnesses that you see in the local congregation are only a small portion of more than three and a half million zealous servants earth wide. They rejoice to have a part in the work that Jesus Christ himself foretold in these words: “This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come.” If participating in Kingdom preaching presents a problem for you even though you qualify to do so, why not ask a Witness who does well in the ministry to let you go along with him or her to share in the preaching work? God really does provide “power beyond

16. What do we learn from the great “cloud of witnesses” described in Hebrews chapter 11?

17. What encouragement did God give through Isaiah?

18. How might you overcome timidity in order to share in the Kingdom preaching?

what is normal,” and you may be surprised to find out what a joy this godly service really is.—Matthew 24:14; 2 Corinthians 4:7; see also Psalm 56:11; Matthew 5:11, 12; Philippians 4:13.

¹⁹ Jesus expects those who appreciate the Kingdom message to act on it. He said: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.”—Matthew 28:19, 20.

²⁰ Does your appreciation for God’s blessings, for the “precious blood” of Jesus, and for the marvelous hope of everlasting life move you to action? (1 Peter 1:19) Have you brought your life into harmony with God’s righteous requirements? Do you share regularly in making disciples? Have you disowned yourself and dedicated your life to God? If the answer to all these questions is a definite yes, it may be time to ask one of the elders in the congregation you attend the same question that the believing Ethiopian asked Philip: “What prevents me from getting baptized?”—Acts 8:36.

19. What teaching work did Jesus command his followers to do?

20. If you are moving ahead spiritually, what question may soon be appropriate?

Do You Remember?

- What special reasons do we have for being thankful to God?
- What should faith and appreciation motivate us to do?
- What problems may stand between us and obedience to God, and what could we do about them?
- What questions may persons who are not yet baptized ask themselves?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

Good News From Norway

MANY fine experiences are being had by the over 9,500 Kingdom proclaimers of the good news in Norway. Honest-hearted ones recognize the Bible message proclaimed by Jehovah's Witnesses as the truth and an answer to their prayers, as noted in the following experiences.

□ A young couple prayed to God to help them find a purpose in life. One week later Jehovah's Witnesses called, and the wife invited them in. The husband had been warned against the Witnesses, so he went out of the house to wash his car. The wife was born in Lebanon and had a language problem, so the Witnesses showed her Jehovah's name in her Arabic Bible. Two weeks later the Witnesses returned, and the husband once more went outside to wash his car. The Witnesses asked the wife if she thought her husband

could be present the next time they came so that he could interpret, and she promised to ask him.

On the third visit, the car was so clean that the man did not feel he could use it as an excuse to leave, so he stayed and asked several questions to find out the difference between the Witnesses and the State church. The visit lasted three hours, and a brochure was placed with the couple. When the Witnesses left, the wife went to bed but the husband started reading the brochure, looking up all the scriptures. In the middle of the night he woke his wife up and said: "You have to read this." She got up, and they read together until five in the morning. Realizing they had found the truth, they wept for joy and prayed to Jehovah, using his name. A regular Bible study was started with them, and they be-

gan attending meetings. He gave up his job with the military, and they resigned from the church and stopped smoking. They are now baptized and happily serving Jehovah along with their brothers and sisters throughout the world.

□ Two sisters in their house-to-house ministry in Norway met a woman who showed interest. She invited them back and asked if she could invite other women. On the next visit, four other women were present. One of them was very active in the church. She stated that ever since she was young, she had wanted to obey Jesus' command to make disciples. This had led her to Africa with her husband on a foreign-aid project. All the women had many questions, and it was arranged that the sisters would visit them every two weeks. New neighbors were invited, and some continued to come while others stopped attending, but the active church member appreciated that she was learning the truth. One day, when the minister of her church stated that he would support war and that he believed the Trinity doctrine, she withdrew from the church. She started attending the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses and soon began sharing in the preaching work. Shortly thereafter she was baptized. Finally now, after 30 years, she can delight in truly obeying Jesus' command to make disciples.—Matthew 28:19.

Jehovah is blessing the brothers in Norway in their sacred service as well as those listening to the good news!



IN 1901 the Nobel Prize for Peace, presented for the first time, was shared by Jean-Henri Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, and economist Frédéric Passy. Since then it has been awarded 69 times, 55 times to 71 different individuals, either singly or jointly, and 14 times to 16 groups or organizations. Some groups have won it more than once, such as the International Red Cross Committee (1917, 1944, and 1963) and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (1954 and 1981). Evidently for lack of a worthy recipient, the Nobel prize committee declined to make an award 19 times.

As one would imagine, most of the prizewinners have been statesmen, diplomats, or persons otherwise connected with politics. But journalists, jurists, sociologists, economists, and social reformers have also received

it. Even scientists, among them Linus Pauling in 1962 and Andrey Sakharov in 1975, have been so honored, as have also labor leaders, notably Lech Walesa in 1983. And in 1970 the prize was given to agricultural expert Norman E. Borlaug.

The first religious personage to be awarded the prize was Swedish Lutheran archbishop Nathan Söderblom, chosen in 1930. In 1946 Methodist layman and evangelist John R. Mott shared the prize, followed in 1952 by theologian and philosopher Albert Schweitzer and in 1958 by Belgian cleric Dominique Georges Pire. In 1964 the choice was civil rights leader and Baptist minister Martin Luther King, Jr.

But in recent years, religion has been playing a more prominent role in the world's pursuit of peace. In keeping with this trend, three of the last nine individuals to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace have been religious figures: Catholic nun Mother Teresa of Calcutta in 1979, Anglican bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa in 1984, and last year Tibet's exiled Buddhist "god-king," the Dalai Lama.

It is true that Jesus Christ said: "Blessed are the peacemakers." (Matthew 5:9, King James Version) But will religious efforts—whether Catholic, Protestant, Buddhist, or otherwise—to serve as peacemakers in this world be crowned with success?

The Bible tells us that this present wicked world alienated from God will never experience lasting peace, a fact that religious involvement in the world's charitable, social, and political affairs cannot change. By replacing present-day governments with his Kingdom under Christ Jesus, the "Prince of Peace," the Creator himself will shortly bless believing mankind with peace.—Isaiah 9:6, 7; 57:21; Psalm 46:9; Daniel 2:44.

Peaceable persons who recognize this truth and who pattern their lives accordingly will be happy indeed. As the *New World Translation* renders Jesus' words: "Happy are the peaceable."

"HAPPY ARE THE PEACEABLE"

THE ROMANS

get the best of news

HOW can a sinful human be righteous in God's eyes and thus gain everlasting life? This question caused heated discussions in the first century of our Common Era. Do you know the answer? Whether you do or not, you owe it to yourself to read the apostle Paul's masterful discussion of the problem in the Bible book of Romans. Doing so will help you to understand the vital relationship that exists between faith, works, righteousness, and life.

PAUL AND THE ROMANS

The book of Romans is a letter written by Paul about 56 C.E. to the Christians in Rome. Why did he write the letter? Although Paul in 56 C.E. had not yet visited Rome, he evidently knew many Christians there, since in his letter he addressed a number of them by name. Additionally, Paul very much wanted to go to Rome in order to give encouragement to his Christian brothers there, and he also seems to have planned to make Rome a staging point in his proposed missionary trip to Spain.—Romans 1:11, 12; 15:22-24.

However, Paul's major purpose in writing this letter was to answer the question: How can people gain the righteousness that leads to life? The answer turns out to be the best of news. Righteousness is counted on the basis of faith. Paul makes this point and sets the theme of his letter when he writes: "I am not

ashamed of the good news; it is, in fact, God's power for salvation to everyone having faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek; for in it God's righteousness is being revealed by reason of faith and toward faith, just as it is written: 'But the righteous one—by means of faith he will live.'”—Romans 1:16, 17.

FAITH AND THE LAW

In the first century, not everyone agreed that righteousness was counted on the basis of faith. A vocal minority insisted that more was needed. Had not Jehovah provided the Mosaic Law? How could anyone be righteous who did not submit to that inspired provision? (See Galatians 4:9-11, 21; 5:2.) In the year 49 C.E., the question of adherence to the Law was discussed by the governing body in Jerusalem, and they concluded that Gentiles who accepted the good news need not get circumcised and submit to the regulations of the Jewish Law.—Acts 15:1, 2, 28, 29.

About seven years later, Paul wrote his letter to the Romans supporting that landmark decision. Indeed, he went further. Not only was the Law unnecessary for Gentile Christians but Jews who depended on obedience to it would not be declared righteous for life.

RIGHTEOUSNESS THROUGH FAITH

As you read through the book of Romans, you will notice how

carefully Paul builds his case, supporting his statements with many quotations from the Hebrew Scriptures. When speaking to the Jews, who might have difficulty accepting his inspired teaching, he shows affection and concern. (Romans 3:1, 2; 9:1-3) Nevertheless, he presents his case with notable clarity and indisputable logic.

In Romans chapter 1 through chapter 4, Paul begins with the truth that everyone is guilty of sin. Hence, the only way that humans can be declared righteous is on the basis of faith. True, the Jews tried to be righteous by keeping the Mosaic Law. But they failed. Hence, Paul boldly says: "Jews as well as Greeks are all under sin." He proves this unpopular truth with a number of Scripture quotations.—Romans 3:9.

Since "by works of law no flesh will be declared righteous," what hope is there? God will declare humans righteous as a free gift on the basis of Jesus' ransom sacrifice. (Romans 3:20, 24) To avail themselves of this, they must have faith in that sacrifice. Is this teaching that humans are declared righteous on the basis of faith something novel? Not at all. Abraham himself was declared righteous because of his faith before the Law was even inaugurated.—Romans 4:3.

Having established the importance of faith, Paul in chapter 5 discusses the basis of Christian faith. This is Jesus, whose course of righteousness annuls the bad effects of Adam's sin for those who have faith in Him. Thus, "through one act of justification," not by obeying the Mosaic Law, "the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life."—Romans 5:18.

ANSWERING OBJECTIONS

If, though, Christians are not under the Law, what is to prevent them from going ahead and committing sins and counting on being declared righteous anyway, thanks to God's undeserved kindness? Paul answers this objection in Romans chapter 6. Christians have died to their past sinful course. Their new life in Jesus obligates them to fight their fleshly weaknesses. He urges: "Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies."—Romans 6:12.

But should not the Jews, at least, still cling to the Mosaic Law? In chapter 7, Paul carefully explains that this is not the case. Just as a married woman is freed from the law of her husband when he dies, so the death of Jesus freed believing Jews from subjection to the Law. Paul says: "You also were made dead to the Law through the body of the Christ."—Romans 7:4.

Does this mean that there was something wrong with the Law? By no means. The Law was perfect. The problem was that imperfect people could not obey the Law. "We know that the Law is spiritual," wrote Paul, "but I am fleshly, sold under sin." An imperfect human cannot keep God's perfect Law and so is condemned by it. How wonderful, then, that "those in union with Christ Jesus have no condemnation!" Anointed Christians have

been adopted by spirit to be God's sons. Jehovah's spirit helps them to wrestle with the imperfections of the flesh. "Who will file accusation against God's chosen ones? God is the One who declares them righteous." (Romans 7:14; 8:1, 33) Nothing can separate them from God's love.

RIGHTEOUSNESS AND FLESHLY JEWS

If the Law is no longer necessary, where does this leave the nation of Israel? And what about all those scriptures promising a restoration of Israel? These questions are taken up in Romans chapters 9 through 11. The Hebrew Scriptures foretold that only a minority of Israelites would be saved and that God would turn his attention to the nations. In harmony with this, the prophecies about the salvation of Israel are fulfilled not by fleshly Israel but by the Christian congregation, which is made up of a nucleus of believing fleshly Jews and filled out with righthearted Gentiles.—Romans 10:19-21; 11:1, 5, 17-24.

PRINCIPLES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

In Romans chapters 12 through 15, Paul goes on to explain some practical ways in which anointed Christians can live in harmony with their being declared righteous. For example, he says: "Present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with

"There is no [secular] authority except by God." This does not mean that God puts each individual ruler in place. Rather, secular rulers exist only by God's permission. In many cases, human rulers were foreseen and foretold by God and thus were "placed in their relative positions by God."—Romans 13:1.

your power of reason. And quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over." (Romans 12:1, 2) We should trust in the power of good and not fight evil with evil. "Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil," wrote the apostle, "but keep conquering the evil with the good."—Romans 12:21.

Rome was the center of political power in Paul's day. Hence, Paul wisely counseled Christians: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities, for there is no authority except by God." (Romans 13:1) The dealings of Christians with one another are also part of living in harmony with righteousness. "Do not you people be owing anybody a single thing," says Paul, "except to love one another; for he that loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law."—Romans 13:8.

Museo della Civiltà Romana, Roma





Christians are told: "Put on the Lord Jesus Christ." This means they should follow Jesus' footsteps closely, imitating him by putting spiritual rather than fleshly interests first in their lives, thus, "not . . . planning ahead for the desires of the flesh."—Romans 13:14.

Furthermore, Christians should be considerate of one another's conscience and not be judgmental. Paul urges: "Let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another." (Romans 14:19) What fine counsel to apply in every aspect of a Christian's life! Then, in chapter 16, Paul concludes with personal greetings and final words of encouragement and counsel.

FOR ANOINTED AND OTHER SHEEP

The topic discussed in Romans was important in the first century and is still of vital concern today. Righteousness and everlasting life are of compelling interest to all of Jehovah's servants. True, Romans was written to a congregation of anointed Christians, whereas today the vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses are of the "great crowd" and have an earthly hope. (Revelation 7:9) Nevertheless, this letter has a vital message for these also. What is it?

The book of Romans proves that Christians are declared righteous by means of faith. For anointed ones, this is with a

view to their becoming rulers with Jesus in the heavenly Kingdom. However, members of the great crowd are also declared righteous, but as 'friends of God,' as was the patriarch Abraham. (James 2:21-23) Their righteousness is with a view to their surviving the great tribulation, and it is based on faith in the blood of Jesus, just as is the case with the anointed. (Psalm 37:11; John 10:16; Revelation 7:9, 14) Hence, Paul's reasoning in Romans is of great concern to other sheep as well as anointed ones. And the book's fine counsel for living in harmony with our being declared righteous is vital for all Christians.

The Book of Life, edited by Doctors Newton Marshall Hall and Irving Francis Wood, states: "On the argumentative and doctrinal side [Romans] reaches the highest point of Paul's inspired teaching. It is courteous, tactful, but none the less authoritative. . . . The study of this epistle brings its own rich and abundant reward." Why not read the book for yourself and rejoice in "the good news" that it contains, which is "God's power for salvation."—Romans 1:16.

Paul told the Romans to "greet one another with a holy kiss." However, he was not here establishing a new Christian custom or religious rite. In Paul's day, a kiss on the forehead, lips, or hand was often given as a sign of greeting, affection, or respect. Hence, Paul was merely referring to a custom that was common in his day.—Romans 16:16.

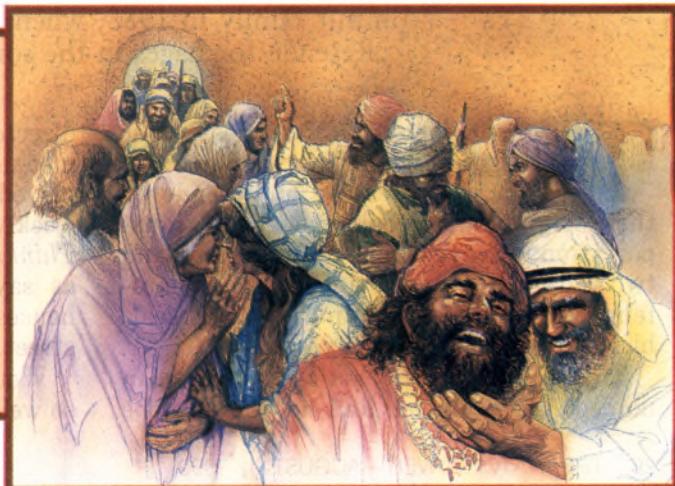




Foto: MOURA

We brought up eight children in the discipline of Jehovah

AS TOLD BY OVERLAC MENEZES

"They arrived on a two-seater bicycle."

This is how the *Jornal de Resende* began its full-page report
on our family in 1988, when we were leaving
Resende for Lages in the south of Brazil.

THE report went on: "Doubtless, older persons will remember the couple who caught the attention of Resende by their original and peculiar means of transportation: a bicycle with a huge frame and two seats. Up front, driving, was the 'chauffeur,' Overlac Menezes; in the second seat, his wife, Maria José. The year: 1956."

The author of the article was a man named Arisio Maciel, and he was also the

director of the local radio station. He first met us back in 1956 when my wife and I played parts in the Watch Tower Society's weekly radio program, *Things People Are Thinking About*. In the article, he quoted me as saying that during our stay "all the houses in Resende were visited, street by street."

Would you like to know how we got to be so well-known in Resende? And how, while

we were there, we managed to raise eight children 'in the discipline of Jehovah' while helping to visit all the houses in Resende with the Kingdom good news?—Ephesians 6:4.

Learning Jehovah's Ways

In January 1950, Maria Minc, one of Jehovah's Witnesses, began to study the Bible with my sister Adeilde in São Paulo. I was 16 years old at the time and had been baptized as a Catholic, but I had not been to church for some time. Nevertheless, I still believed in God and wanted to serve him. So one night, I went to Adeilde's home to find out about the new religion she was studying. Maria Minc invited me to join in the study, and for the

dom Hall of the Belém Congregation in São Paulo. Expecting to see only adults in attendance, I was pleasantly surprised to find many youths of my own age. On February 5, 1950, I took part in the preaching work for the first time, and on November 4 of that same year, I symbolized my dedication to Jehovah by water baptism.

Shortly thereafter I was appointed as a public speaker. At that time, this meant I gave talks on the streets and in the parks by using a loudspeaker mounted on the bumper of an automobile. Another activity was the magazine work. In those days we used to stand on street corners with our magazine bags, calling out: "Watchtower and Awake! Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom!" I did not place many magazines, but I did gain the courage to speak in public.

Full-Time Service as a Goal

My attention was soon drawn to the importance of the pioneer service, or full-time preaching activity. The April 1, 1950, issue of *The Watchtower* (English) had an article entitled "More and More Pioneers of Good News." This stated: "Seeking the Kingdom first means

one would have uppermost in his mind at all times the Kingdom interests. Such one would be looking for opportunities to serve in its behalf, and not be forever seeking first his material needs and laying up worldly goods to safeguard his future." These words implanted the pioneer spirit in my heart.

Soon, an attractive young lady named Maria José Precerutti changed my life in



Foto: CALINO

first time in my life, I saw a Bible. During subsequent studies I was amazed to learn from the Bible that God's name is Jehovah, that soon the earth will be a paradise, that hellfire and purgatory do not exist, and that man does not have an immortal soul. My relatives told me: "You'll go crazy reading the Bible so much!"

I made good progress in my Bible study and began to attend meetings at the King-

a significant way. She was making good progress in her study of the Bible with a Witness couple, José and Dilia Paschoal. On January 2, 1954, she became my dear wife, companion, friend, and helper. Her goal, too, was to pioneer. So, encouraged by the examples of missionaries like Harry Black, Edmundo Moreira, and Richard Mucha, we applied to enter the pioneer service. Imagine our joy—and anxiety—when we received an answer: "Your recommendation to be a circuit overseer has been approved!"

When I received my first circuit assignment, I was panic-stricken. My new circuit included ten congregations in Brazil's then capital, Rio de Janeiro, including some near Bethel. A missionary home of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead was in the first congregation I was assigned to visit. At 22 years of age, I felt very inadequate and said to Brother Mucha, at that time in charge of the work in Brazil: "What can I teach these people?" He answered: "Brother, just apply the counsel from the Bible and the organization." Good advice indeed!

A year later, Maria José became pregnant, and we had to leave the circuit work. Happily, though, we remained in full-time service. In answer to a request by two Finnish families, the Edviks and the Leiniös, the Society assigned us to Resende as special pioneers, an almost virgin territory of 35,000 inhabitants. It was the Leiniös who gave us the two-seater bicycle mentioned in the article in the *Jornal de Resende*. Using it, we were able to plant many seeds of truth in that fertile territory, and we continued working there for some months after our daughter Alice was born in 1956. When we left, two sisters, Anita Ribeiro and Marian Weiler, came to water the seed and 'God kept making it grow.' Today, Resende has nine congrega-

tions and over 700 publishers.—1 Corinthians 3:7.

One of the first persons I met in Resende was Manoel Queiroz. While waiting for a bus, I placed two books with him where he worked. He, and later his wife, Piedade, made good progress and they were both baptized. Manoel became an elder in the congregation and continued faithful until his death. I also studied with Álvaro Soares. At the first meeting he attended, he was surprised to see just six people present, but today he is city overseer in Resende where more than a thousand attend the meetings in the different congregations. In 1978, Álvaro's son Carlos married our daughter Alice. Today, more than 60 of the Soares family are Witnesses.

Leaving Resende meant that our full-time service was exchanged for another Christian obligation, 'providing for those who are members of our household.' (1 Timothy 5:8) However, we strove to maintain the pioneer spirit, keeping full-time service as our goal. I obtained work with a firm in São Paulo, and for one year I traveled each weekend the 190 miles to Resende to help the group of 15 publishers there. Then, in 1960, we moved back to Resende.

In Our Next Issue

■ Should Fate Rule Your Life?

■ Loyalty—At What Price?

■ Do Not Neglect Your Mate!

Raising Children —An Added Privilege

We really did not plan to have quite so many children, but they came anyway, one after the other. After Alice there was Léo, then Márcia, Maércio, Plínio, André, and finally, in 1976, the twins, Sônia and Sofia. Each was happily accepted as "an inheritance from Jehovah." (Psalm 127:3) And each was raised in the "mental-regulating of Jehovah" with his help.—Ephesians 6:4.

This was not an easy task, however. At times we wept because of the problems. But it was rewarding. How did we go about raising them? By family study, by taking them with us to meetings and in the field ministry from their infancy, by doing things together, by making sure they had good associations, by giving them firm discipline, and by setting a good example ourselves.

A few years ago, on the program at an assembly in Cruzeiro, São Paulo, we were interviewed by the circuit overseer. After talking about our family study, the circuit overseer asked me: "What role did your wife play in this?" I remember that tears came to my eyes, and I had such a large lump in my throat that I could not answer. Why? Because I truly appreciated the decisive role Maria José played in maintaining our theocratic family. Without her faithful support, it would have been very difficult indeed!

Right from our engagement, Maria José and I studied the Bible together. When the children came along, it became a real challenge to keep the study going on a regular basis. To help in this, each week on the refrigerator door I indicated the time of the study for the following week and the material to be considered. I also made special assignments as needed. For example, one day Márcia and Plínio were fighting at the table. So the next day, they

found on the refrigerator the assignment "How to get along with your brothers." At the following study, both of them had their say and resolved their differences.

Another problem was on Sunday mornings when the boys would often say that they felt too sick to go out in field service. Léo and Plínio were experts at inventing stomachaches and other ailments to avoid accompanying us in the preaching work. Whenever I had doubts about whether they were really sick, I said something like this: 'If you're too sick to go in the service, then of course you will not be well enough to play football later.' Usually, they had a remarkably rapid recovery.

On occasion, we needed to handle situations carefully. When Léo was 11, he went on a picnic with fellow Witnesses, and without permission he bought two pounds of ham to eat. Later, when we received the bill, Maria José asked Léo: "Did you forget you bought the ham?" "No," he answered innocently. "I didn't buy it." "Well," she said, "let's go talk to the owner of the store." On the way there, Léo's amnesia cleared up. "Now I remember," he confessed, "I didn't have enough money, so I bought it on credit and forgot to pay for it." I paid the bill myself and asked the owner to hire Léo, letting him work until he earned enough money to pay me back. That was his punishment. Every morning at four o'clock, Léo was the first to arrive at work, and in one month he had paid back to me the amount in full.

Our house was always full of pioneers, traveling overseers, missionaries, and Bethelites. Most of the time we did not have a television in the house, and this helped us to form good study habits and Christian attitudes. It was in this atmosphere that we raised our children. Some of the letters they sent us after they grew up confirm that it worked well.—See box on page 30.

Pioneering Again!

When the majority of our children had grown up, I recalled an article in the March 1, 1955, issue of *The Watchtower* entitled "Is the Full-Time Ministry for You?" This said in part: "Some may be inclined to view the full-time ministry as the exception. But in this they err, for by virtue of his dedication vow every Christian is obligated to serve full time unless circumstances over which he has no control make that impossible."

One night I prayed to Jehovah to open the door again for me to enter the full-time service. My family cooperated, and friends encouraged me. To my great surprise, the director of the firm where I had worked for 26 years agreed to let me work part-time so that I could serve as a regular pioneer. Therefore I happily took up the work that I had had to leave so many years before. And three of the children followed my example.

We served for two years in Itatiaia, where I had been an elder for 15 years, and then we decided to move to serve where the need was greater. This meant living on a

modest pension, equal to about one fourth of a good salary. Nevertheless, trusting in Jesus' promise in Matthew 6:33, we wrote the Society about our plans. A week later, we almost jumped for joy to receive their reply: "It seems reasonable to us to suggest that you move to the city of Lages. In spite of its population of over 200,000, there are only 100 publishers there in three small congregations. You would be of great help in that territory."

We moved in February 1988. And here we still are, more than 600 miles from our children and friends. We have just come through the worst winter in 20 years. I am the only elder in our congregation, so there is much to do. Yet, we are very, very blessed. Especially delightful is the territory. When we knock at their doors, the people say: "Please come in!" Bible studies are easy to start. We accept different items as donations when money is scarce, and we have come home with soap, deodorant, razor blades, baby's clothes (for our grandchild), cereals, vegetables, fruit, yogurt, wine, and even ice cream. Once we accepted some wooden stools!

After they grew up, our children sometimes expressed appreciation in letters for the way we brought them up. Here are a few of their comments:

"Dad, be sure that you and Mother did the very best for us, even though you may have made mistakes —something that happens a lot now with Carlos and me in handling our son Fabrício."

Daughter Alice, 33, mother of two boys.

"We must admit that you made a joint effort to raise us in the mental-regulating of Jehovah. And how much

we are benefiting from it now!"

Daughter Márcia, 27, and her husband, who is in circuit work.

"I realize that the privilege I have now would never have been possible without the help both of you gave me to establish a firm spiritual basis and love for Jehovah and his service."

Son Maércio, 23, special pioneer.

"André, take full advantage of Dad's company and experience. Never ignore his counsel. You will be able to help each other. I'm happier than ever now."

Son Plínio, 20, at Bethel.

Fruitage That Brings Rich Rewards

Today, at 56 years of age, I am thrilled whenever I consider our family. The children were not "born in the truth." They were born into a Christian home, and the truth had to be inculcated in their young minds and hearts. Those who married did so "in the Lord." (1 Corinthians 7:39; Deuteronomy 6:6, 7) True, we made mistakes and errors in judgment. Sometimes we committed injustices. On occasion, I failed to set the best example or neglected my responsibility as father and husband. When I realized what I had done, I asked forgiveness of Jehovah and my wife or my

children, and I strove to correct the wrong.

Despite our imperfections, the family—now increased by sons-in-law, daughters-in-law, and grandchildren—has six in the full-time ministry, four elders, and one ministerial servant. All except the grandchildren are baptized. The three minor children still with us plan on the full-time service as their vocation. What greater reward could one hope for? I am grateful to Jehovah for having guided us in bringing up our children in his discipline. We are thrilled to see them still following his teachings. And I pray that we, as well as they, will never turn aside from the way of life.

"Prescriptions for raising a happy and successful child"

UNDER this heading, the magazine *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality* published an article in which Dr. Irene Jakab, a university professor of psychiatry, outlined what she felt is necessary if a child is to be raised to be a successful adult. Among the ingredients of her "prescriptions" was the need for parents to love their child, guide him as to what is right and wrong, and train him in making decisions. She felt that the

"prescriptions" should definitely not include a quick temper on the part of the parents, perfectionism, over-anxiety, or permissiveness.

Dr. Jakab's "prescriptions" are quite sound as far as they go. Indeed, thousands of years ago, the Bible gave similar counsel to parents. (See, for example, Proverbs 4:1; 13:24; 22:6; Colossians 3:21.) However, the Bible includes something that Professor Jakab omitted: the vital importance of teaching

children to love their Creator and be familiar with his Word. The apostle Paul wrote: "You, fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."

—Ephesians 6:4; Deuteronomy 6:4-7.

Without such training, children may well grow up without a moral anchor. The result could be disastrous in this immoral and corrupt world.



Musée du Louvre, Paris



Museo Egizio, Turin



Musée des Beaux-Arts de Troyes



Musée du Louvre, Paris

Museo Bardini,
Florence

Should You Believe in the Trinity?

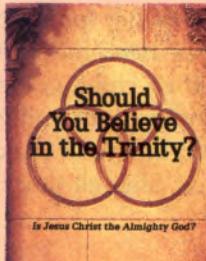
Ian Boyne, the religion writer for *The Sunday Gleaner*, Jamaica, West Indies, discussed a recent brochure published by Jehovah's Witnesses, saying in part:

"The Witnesses deserve an 'A' for this document which, though so simply written that a teenager can read it, is laced—without exaggeration—with quotations from reputable scholars and sources. . . . The publication of *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* is a masterstroke of the Witnesses and now no Trinitarian—or binatarian—is safe. The booklet piles quotation upon quotation from historical and theological sources to show that the Trinity doctrine was not derived from the Bible. It quotes the authoritative *Encyclopedia of Religion* as saying, 'Theologians agree that the New Testament also does not contain an explicit doctrine of the Trinity.'"

Boyne also observes: "It is most difficult for this religion writer to see how the average—or even above average church member—can answer the compelling and commanding arguments marshalled by the Witnesses against the view that Jesus is God."

According to Boyne:
"The Witnesses' brochure is lucidly written and well-referenced. It is a valuable addition to any library."

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"The Witnesses' brochure is lucidly written and well-referenced. It is a valuable addition to any library."



Is Jesus Christ the Almighty God?