



School for Congregation Elders

Manual

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w08 8/15 p. 19 Jehovah Tenderly Cares for His Elderly Servants

How You Can Help

¹⁰ In many congregations, the elderly are being cared for in an exemplary manner. Loving brothers and sisters help them with shopping, cooking, and cleaning. They help the elderly to study, to get ready for meetings, and to remain regular in the ministry. Younger Witnesses accompany them and provide transportation. If older ones are unable to leave home, they are tied in to meetings by telephone or recordings are made for them. Whenever possible, elders make sure that practical arrangements are implemented in order to meet the needs of older ones in the congregation.

¹¹ Individual Christians too can extend hospitality and display generosity. After the wife of one older brother died, he could no longer afford to pay the rent without her pension. He and his wife had studied the Bible with a family—father, mother, and two teenage daughters—who had a large house. They gave him two rooms to live in. For 15 years, they shared meals, laughter, and brotherly affection. The younger ones gained much from his faith and wealth of experience, and he benefited from joyful association. This elderly brother lived with them until he died at age 89. The family still thank God for the many blessings they received through their association with him. They have not ‘lost their reward’ for having helped a fellow disciple of Jesus Christ.—Matt. 10:42.

¹² You may not be in a position to assist an elderly brother or sister in the way this family did, but you may be able to help older ones to get to meetings and out in the field ministry. You can also invite them to your home and include them when you go on outings. You can visit them, especially when they are sick or confined. Moreover, you can and should always treat them as mature adults. As long as they are mentally able, older Christians should be included in all decision-making that affects them. Even those who have lost much of their mental ability can sense whether their dignity is being respected.

w07 8/1 pp. 4-7 True Spirituality—How Can You Find It?

“TO BE carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace,” wrote the apostle Paul. (Romans 8:6, *King James Version*) With those words, the apostle was pointing out that being a spiritual person is more than a matter of personal preference or inclination. Essentially, it is a matter of life and death. In what sense, though, does a spiritual person receive “life and peace”? According to the Bible, such a person enjoys peace now—with self and with God—and will be blessed with everlasting life in the future. (Romans 6:23; Philippians 4:7) No wonder Jesus observed: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need”!—Matthew 5:3.

The fact that you are reading this magazine indicates that you have an interest in spirituality—and wisely so. Yet, views on this subject differ widely, so you may wonder: ‘What is true spirituality? And how does one attain it?’

“The Mind of Christ”

In addition to pointing out the importance and benefits of being spiritually-minded, the apostle Paul had much to say about what true spirituality is. To the Christians in the ancient city of Corinth, Paul explained the difference between a physical man, that is, a person who follows the impulses of the flesh, and a spiritual man, a person who cherishes spiritual things. Paul wrote: “A physical man does not receive the things of the spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him.” On the other hand, Paul explained that the spiritual man is characterized by having “the mind of Christ.”—1 Corinthians 2:14-16.

Having “the mind of Christ” basically means having “the same mental attitude that Christ Jesus had.” (Romans 15:5; Philippians 2:5) In other words, a spiritual man is one who thinks as Jesus does and walks in His footsteps. (1 Peter 2:21; 4:1) The more a person’s mind resembles that of Christ, the deeper his spirituality is and the closer he is to gaining “life and peace.”—Romans 13:14.

How to Get to Know “the Mind of Christ”

To *have* the mind of Christ, however, one must first *know* that mind. Therefore, the first step in developing spirituality is to get to know Jesus’ way of thinking. But how do you come to know the mind of someone who lived on earth 2,000 years ago? Well, how, for example, did you learn about the historical figures of your country? Likely by reading about them. Similarly, reading a written history of Jesus is an important way to get to know the mind of Christ.—John 17:3.

In Jesus’ case, there are four vivid historical accounts—the Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Reading these accounts carefully will help you to perceive Jesus’ way of thinking, his depth of feeling, and the motivation behind his actions. When you take time to reflect on what you read about Jesus, you build a picture in your mind of the kind of person he was. Even if you already consider yourself a follower of Christ, such reading and reflection will help you to “*go on* growing in the undeserved kindness and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”—2 Peter 3:18.

With that in mind, let us examine some passages in the Gospels to see what made Jesus such a spiritual person. Then, ask yourself how you can imitate the pattern set by him.—John 13:15.

Spirituality and “the Fruitage of the Spirit”

Gospel writer Luke stated that God’s holy spirit was poured out on Jesus at his baptism and that Jesus was “full of holy spirit.” (Luke 3:21, 22; 4:1) Jesus, in turn, impressed upon his followers the importance of being guided by God’s holy spirit, or “active force.” (Genesis 1:2; Luke 11:9-13) Why is that so important? Because God’s spirit has the power to transform a person’s mind, so that it begins to resemble the mind of Christ. (Romans 12:1, 2) The holy spirit produces in a person such qualities as “love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control.” These qualities—which the Bible calls “the fruitage of the spirit”—mark a truly spiritual person. (Galatians 5:22, 23) In short, a spiritually-minded person is one who is guided by God’s spirit.

Jesus displayed the fruitage of the spirit throughout his ministry. Such qualities as love, kindness, and goodness were particularly evident in the way he treated those who were considered lowly members of society. (Matthew 9:36) Note, for example, an incident described by the apostle John. We read: “As [Jesus] was passing along he saw a man blind from birth.” Jesus’ disciples also noticed the man but saw him as a sinner. “Who sinned,” they asked, “this man or his parents?” The man’s neighbors also noted the man, but all they saw was a beggar. “This is the man that used to sit and beg, is it not?” they said. Jesus, however, saw the blind man as an individual who needed help. He spoke to the blind man and cured him.—John 9:1-8.

What does this incident tell you about the mind of Christ? First, Jesus did not overlook lowly ones but treated them with tender compassion. Second, he took the initiative to help others. Do you see yourself following this pattern set by Jesus? Do you see people as Jesus did, giving them the help they need to improve their life and brighten their future? Or do you tend to favor those who are prominent and overlook those who are not? If the former is the case, you are doing well in following Jesus’ example.—Psalm 72:12-14.

Spirituality and Prayer

The Gospel accounts show that Jesus often turned to God in prayer. (Mark 1:35; Luke 5:16; 22:41) During his ministry on earth, Jesus deliberately set aside time to pray. The disciple Matthew wrote: “Having sent the crowds away, [Jesus] went up into the mountain by himself to pray.” (Matthew 14:23) From such moments spent in quiet communication with his heavenly Father, Jesus gained strength. (Matthew 26:36-44) Today, spiritually-minded people likewise look for opportunities to communicate with God, knowing that this will strengthen their relationship with the Creator and help them to become more Christlike in their thinking.

Jesus often spent extended periods of time in prayer. (John 17:1-26) For instance, before he chose the 12 men who would become his apostles, Jesus “went out into the mountain to pray, and he continued *the whole night* in prayer to God.”

(Luke 6:12) Although not necessarily spending the whole night in prayer, those who are spiritually-minded follow Jesus’ example. Before making major decisions in life, they take ample time to pray to God, seeking the direction of the holy spirit in making choices that will deepen their spirituality.

In his prayers, Jesus also showed the depth of feeling that we ought to imitate in our prayers. Note what Luke recorded about the way Jesus prayed on the evening before he died. “Getting into an agony he continued praying *more earnestly*; and his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground.” (Luke 22:44) Jesus had prayed earnestly before, but on this occasion, faced with the most severe test of his earthly life, he prayed “*more earnestly*”—and his prayer was answered. (Hebrews 5:7) Spiritually-minded people follow Jesus’ example. When faced with trials that are particularly severe, they pray “more earnestly” to God for holy spirit, guidance, and support.

Since Jesus was clearly a man of prayer, it is not surprising that his disciples wanted to imitate him in this regard. Therefore, they asked him: “Lord, teach us how to pray.” (Luke 11:1) Similarly today, those who value spiritual matters and want to be guided by God’s holy spirit follow Jesus’ example in how they pray to God. True spirituality and prayer go hand in hand.

Spirituality and the Preaching of the Good News

In the Gospel of Mark, we find an account in which Jesus cured many ill people, doing so late into the night. Early the next morning when he was alone praying, his apostles came and told him that many people were looking for him, perhaps wanting to be cured. However, Jesus told them: “Let us go somewhere else, into the village towns nearby, that I may *preach* there also.” Then Jesus explained why: “It is for this purpose I have gone out.” (Mark 1:32-38; Luke 4:43) Although curing people was important to Jesus, preaching the good news of God’s Kingdom was Jesus’ primary mission.—Mark 1:14, 15.

Today, telling others about God’s Kingdom is still an identifying mark of those who have the mind of Christ. To all who want to be his followers, Jesus gave the command: “Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, . . . teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19, 20) In addition, Jesus foretold: “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.” (Matthew 24:14) Since God’s Word indicates that the preaching work is accomplished by the power of the holy spirit, having a meaningful share in that work is a sign of true spirituality.—Acts 1:8.

Preaching the Kingdom message to people around the world requires the united efforts of millions of people. (John 17:20, 21) Those engaged in this work need to be not only spiritually-minded but also well-organized on a global scale. Can you identify the people who are following in the footsteps of Christ and preaching the good news of the Kingdom around the world?

How Do You Measure Up?

Of course, there are other characteristics that identify a truly spiritual person, but how do you measure up to those already considered? To find out, ask yourself: ‘Do I regularly read God’s Word, the Bible, and reflect on what I read? Do I manifest the fruitage of the spirit in my life? Am I a man or a woman of prayer? Do I want to associate with the people who are carrying out the worldwide preaching of the good news of God’s Kingdom?’

An honest self-examination may help you to determine the depth of your spirituality. We urge you to take the necessary steps now so that “life and peace” may be your lot.—Romans 8:6; Matthew 7:13, 14; 2 Peter 1:5-11.

[Box/Pictures on page 7]

MARKS OF SPIRITUALITY

- ◆ Having love for God’s Word
- ◆ Manifesting the fruitage of the spirit
- ◆ Praying to God regularly and sincerely
- ◆ Sharing the Kingdom good news with others

[Picture on page 5]

The Bible helps you get to know “the mind of Christ”

w04 3/15 p. 15 par. 2 “Fully Accomplish Your Ministry”

² All dedicated Christians do the work of evangelizers, but especially do overseers, or elders, need to set a good example in the ministry. Elders “who work hard in speaking and teaching” are noted by God and Christ, as well as by fellow Witnesses of Jehovah. (1 Timothy 5:17; Ephesians 5:23; Hebrews 6:10-12) Under all circumstances, an elder’s teaching must be spiritually healthful, for the apostle Paul told the overseer Timothy: “There will be a period of time when they will not put up with the healthful teaching, but, in accord with their own desires, they will accumulate teachers for themselves to have their ears tickled; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, whereas they will be turned aside to false stories. You, though, keep your senses in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.”—2 Timothy 4:3-5.

w98 2/1 pp. 20-22 pars. 10-12 The Other Sheep and the New Covenant

¹⁰ “Everyone” who “exercises faith in the Son” will benefit from the ransom sacrifice. (John 3:16, 36) Paul said: “The Christ was offered once for all time to bear the sins of many; and the second time that he appears it will be apart from sin and to those earnestly looking for him for their salvation.” (Hebrews 9:28) Today, those earnestly looking for Jesus include surviving anointed Christians of the Israel of God and the millions making up the great crowd, who also have an everlasting inheritance. Both classes thank God for the new covenant and for the life-giving blessings associated with it, including the greater Atonement Day and the ministry of the High Priest, Jesus, in the heavenly Most Holy.

Busy in Sacred Service

¹¹ In his letter to the Hebrews, Paul stressed the superior value of Jesus’ sacrifice in the new covenant arrangement as compared with the sin offerings under the old covenant. (Hebrews 9:13-15) Jesus’ better sacrifice is able to “cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God.” For Hebrew Christians, “dead works” included “the transgressions under the former covenant.” For Christians today, they include sins committed in the past over which there has been true repentance and which God has forgiven. (1 Corinthians 6:9-11) With consciences cleansed, anointed Christians render “sacred service to the living God.” And so do the great crowd. Having cleansed their consciences through “the blood of the Lamb,” they are in God’s great spiritual temple, “rendering him sacred service day and night.”—Revelation 7:14, 15.

¹² In addition, Paul said: “Let us approach with true hearts in the full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water.” (Hebrews 10:22) How can we show that we have “the full assurance of faith”? Paul urged Hebrew Christians: “Let us hold fast the public declaration of our [heavenly] hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near.” (Hebrews 10:23-25) If our faith is alive, we too will not ‘forsake the gathering of ourselves together.’ We will delight to incite our brothers and be incited by them to love and fine works and to be strengthened for the vital work of publicly declaring our hope, whether it is earthly or heavenly.—John 13:35.

w96 7/1 pp. 8-10 “A House of Prayer for All the Nations”

⁵ In 1513 B.C.E., the Israelites entered into a covenant relationship with God and agreed to obey his laws. That Law covenant should be of great interest to all who want to worship God today because it pointed to the promised Seed. Paul said it contained “a shadow of the good things to come.” (Hebrews 10:1) When Paul made this statement, he was discussing the service of Israel’s priests at a movable tabernacle, or tent of worship. It was called “the temple of Jehovah” or “the house of Jehovah.” (1 Samuel 1:9, 24) By examining the sacred service performed at Jehovah’s earthly house, we can come to appreciate more fully the merciful arrangement whereby sinful humans today can become reconciled with God.

The Most Holy

⁶ “The Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands,” states the Bible. (Acts 7:48) However, God’s presence in his earthly house was represented by a cloud in the innermost compartment called the Most Holy. (Leviticus 16:2) Evidently, this cloud shone brightly, providing the Most Holy with light. It was positioned above a sacred chest called “the ark of the testimony,” which contained stone tablets engraved with some of the commands that God gave Israel. On the cover of the Ark were two golden cherubs with outstretched wings, which pictured spirit creatures of high rank in God’s heavenly organization. The miraculous cloud of light was situated above the cover and between the cherubs. (Exodus 25:22) This was pictorial of Almighty God enthroned upon a heavenly chariot supported by living cherubs. (1 Chronicles 28:18) It explains why King Hezekiah prayed: “O Jehovah of armies, the God of Israel, sitting upon the cherubs.”—Isaiah 37:16.

The Holy

⁷ The second compartment of the tabernacle was called the Holy. Inside this section, to the left of the entrance stood a beautiful seven-branched lampstand, and on the right was a table of showbread. Straight ahead stood an altar from which the aroma of burning incense ascended. It was situated in front of a curtain that separated the Holy from the Most Holy.

⁸ Every morning and every evening, a priest had to enter the tabernacle and burn incense on the altar of incense. (Exodus 30:7, 8) In the morning, while the incense burned, the seven lamps that rested upon the golden lampstand had to be replenished with oil. In the evening the lamps were lit to provide light for the Holy. Every Sabbath a priest had to place 12 fresh loaves on the table of showbread.—Leviticus 24:4-8.

The Courtyard

⁹ The tabernacle also had a courtyard, surrounded by a fence of tent cloths. In this courtyard was a large basin where the priests washed their hands and feet before entering the Holy. They also had to wash before offering sacrifices on the altar that was situated in the courtyard. (Exodus 30:18-21) This requirement of cleanliness is a strong reminder to God’s servants today that they must strive for physical, moral, mental, and spiritual purity if they want their worship to be

acceptable to God. (2 Corinthians 7:1) In time the wood for the fire on the altar and the water for the basin were supplied by non-Israelite temple slaves.—Joshua 9:27.

¹⁰ Every morning and every evening, a young sacrificial ram was burned on the altar along with a grain and drink offering. (Exodus 29:38-41) Other sacrifices were made on special days. Sometimes a sacrifice had to be made because of a specific personal sin. (Leviticus 5:5, 6) At other times an Israelite could offer a voluntary communion sacrifice in which portions were eaten by the priests and by the one who made the offering. This denoted that human sinners could have peace with God, enjoying a meal with him, as it were. Even an alien resident could become a worshiper of Jehovah and be privileged to present voluntary offerings at His house. But in order to show due honor to Jehovah, the priests could only accept offerings of the best quality. The flour of grain offerings had to be finely ground, and animals for sacrifices had to be without any defect.—Leviticus 2:1; 22:18-20; Malachi 1:6-8.

"We have such a high priest as this, . . . a public servant of the holy place and of the true tent, which Jehovah put up, and not man."—HEBREWS 8:1, 2.

JEHOVAH GOD, out of his great love for mankind, provided a sacrifice to take away the sins of the world. (John 1:29; 3:16) It required transferring the life of his firstborn Son from heaven to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary. Jehovah's angel clearly explained to Mary that the child she would conceive would "be called holy, God's Son." (Luke 1:34, 35) Joseph, who was engaged to Mary, was told about the miraculous nature of Jesus' conception and learned that this one would "save his people from their sins."—Matthew 1:20, 21.

² As Jesus grew up, he must have grasped some of these facts about his miraculous birth. He knew that his heavenly Father had a lifesaving work for him to do on earth. So, as a full-grown man of about 30 years of age, Jesus came to God's prophet John to get baptized in the Jordan River.—Mark 1:9; Luke 3:23.

³ Jesus was praying at the time of his baptism. (Luke 3:21) Evidently, from this point on in his life, he fulfilled the words of Psalm 40:6-8, as later indicated by the apostle Paul: "Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body for me." (Hebrews 10:5) Thus Jesus showed his awareness that God "did not want" animal sacrifices to continue being offered at Jerusalem's temple. Instead, he realized that God had prepared a perfect human body for him, Jesus, to offer as a sacrifice. This would remove any further need of animal sacrifices. Showing his heartfelt desire to submit to God's will, Jesus continued praying: "Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God." (Hebrews 10:7) What a magnificent example of courage and unselfish devotion Jesus set on that day for all who would later become his disciples!—Mark 8:34.

⁴ Did God show approval of Jesus' baptismal prayer? Let one of Jesus' chosen apostles give us the answer: "After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God's spirit coming upon him. Look! Also, there was a voice from the heavens that said: 'This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved.'"—Matthew 3:16, 17; Luke 3:21, 22.

⁵ God's acceptance of the presentation of Jesus' body for sacrifice meant that, in a spiritual sense, an altar greater than that in Jerusalem's temple had come to the fore. The literal altar where animals were presented for sacrifice foreshadowed that spiritual altar, which was in effect God's "will" or arrangement for accepting Jesus' human life as a sacrifice. (Hebrews 10:10) That is why the apostle Paul could write to fellow Christians: "We have an altar from which those who do sacred service at the tent [or, temple] have no authority to eat." (Hebrews 13:10) In other words, true Christians benefit

from a superior sin-atoning sacrifice, which most Jewish priests rejected.

⁶ The anointing of Jesus with holy spirit meant that God had now brought forth his entire spiritual temple arrangement, with Jesus serving as High Priest. (Acts 10:38; Hebrews 5:5) The disciple Luke was inspired to pinpoint the year of this momentous event as being "the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." (Luke 3:1-3) That corresponds to the year 29 C.E.—exactly 69 weeks of years, or 483 years, from the time that King Artaxerxes had given the command for Jerusalem's walls to be rebuilt. (Nehemiah 2:1, 5-8) According to prophecy, "Messiah the Leader" would appear in that marked year. (Daniel 9:25) Many Jews were evidently aware of this. Luke reports that "the people were in expectation" about the appearance of the Messiah, or Christ, titles that come from Hebrew and Greek words that have the same meaning, "anointed one."—Luke 3:15.

⁷ At the time of Jesus' baptism, God's heavenly abode was anointed, or set apart, as "the Holy of Holies" in the great spiritual temple arrangement. (Daniel 9:24) "The true tent [or, temple], which Jehovah put up, and not man" had come into operation. (Hebrews 8:2) Also, through his baptism with water and holy spirit, the man Jesus Christ was born again as a spiritual Son of God. (Compare John 3:3.) This meant that God would in due course recall his Son to heavenly life, where he would serve at his Father's right hand as King and High Priest "according to the manner of Melchizedek forever."—Hebrews 6:20; Psalm 110:1, 4.

The Heavenly Most Holy

⁸ On the day of Jesus' baptism, God's heavenly throne had taken on new features. The identification of a perfect human sacrifice to atone for the sins of the world emphasized God's holiness in contrast with man's sinfulness. God's mercy was also highlighted in that he now showed his willingness to be appeased, or propitiated. Thus God's throne in heaven had become like the innermost compartment of the temple, where the high priest entered once a year with animal blood to atone for sin in an illustrative way.

⁹ The curtain that separated the Holy from the Most Holy pictured Jesus' fleshly body. (Hebrews 10:19, 20) It was the barrier that kept Jesus from entering into his Father's presence while he was a man on earth. (1 Corinthians 15:50) At the time of Jesus' death, "the curtain of the sanctuary was rent in two, from top to bottom." (Matthew 27:51) This dramatically indicated that the barrier preventing Jesus' entry into heaven had now been removed. Three days later, Jehovah God performed an outstanding miracle. He raised Jesus from the dead, not as a mortal human of flesh and blood, but as a glorious spirit creature "continuing alive forever." (Hebrews 7:24) Forty days later, Jesus ascended to heaven and entered the real "Holy of Holies," "to appear before the person of God for us."—Hebrews 9:24.

¹⁰ Did God accept the value of Jesus' shed blood as atonement for the sins of the world? Indeed he did. Proof of this came exactly 50 days after Jesus' resurrection, on the festival day of Pentecost. God's holy spirit was poured out upon 120 disciples of Jesus gathered together in Jerusalem. (Acts 2:1, 4, 33) Like their High Priest, Jesus Christ, they

were now anointed to serve as “a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices” under God’s great spiritual temple arrangement. (1 Peter 2:5) Furthermore, these anointed ones constituted a new nation, God’s “holy nation” of spiritual Israel. Henceforth, all prophecies of good things about Israel, such as the “new covenant” promise recorded at Jeremiah 31:31, would apply to the anointed Christian congregation, the real “Israel of God.”—1 Peter 2:9; Galatians 6:16.

Other Features of God’s Spiritual Temple

¹¹ Although the Most Holy pictured “heaven itself,” where God is enthroned, all the other features of God’s spiritual temple relate to things on the earth. (Hebrews 9:24) In the temple in Jerusalem, there was an inner priestly courtyard containing an altar for sacrifice and a large basin of water, which the priests used to cleanse themselves before performing sacred service. What do these things picture in God’s spiritual temple arrangement?

¹² In the case of Jesus Christ, the inner priestly courtyard pictured his sinless condition as a perfect human Son of God. Through exercising faith in Jesus’ sacrifice, anointed followers of Christ are credited with righteousness. Thus, God can justly deal with them as if they were sinless. (Romans 5:1; 8:1, 33) Hence, this courtyard also pictures the imputed righteous human condition that individual members of the holy priesthood enjoy before God. At the same time, anointed Christians are still imperfect and subject to committing sin. The water basin in the courtyard pictures God’s Word, which the High Priest uses to cleanse the holy priesthood progressively. By submitting to this cleansing process, they have attained a splendid appearance that honors God and draws outsiders to his pure worship.—Ephesians 5:25, 26; compare Malachi 3:1-3.

The Holy

¹³ The first compartment of the temple pictures a condition superior to that of the courtyard. In the case of the perfect human Jesus Christ, it pictures his rebirth as a spiritual Son of God destined to return to heavenly life. After being declared righteous on the basis of their faith in Christ’s shed blood, these anointed followers also experience this special operation of God’s spirit. (Romans 8:14-17) Through “water [that is, their baptism] and spirit,” they are “born again” as spiritual sons of God. As such, they have the hope of being resurrected to heavenly life as spirit sons of God, provided they remain faithful till death.—John 3:5, 7; Revelation 2:10.

¹⁴ Priests who served inside the Holy of the earthly temple were unseen by worshipers on the outside. Likewise, anointed Christians experience a spiritual condition that is not shared or fully understood by the majority of worshipers of God, whose hope is to live forever on a paradise earth. The golden lampstand of the tabernacle pictures the enlightened condition of anointed Christians. The operation of God’s holy spirit, like the oil in the lamps, sheds light on the Bible. The understanding that Christians gain as a result, they do not keep to themselves. Rather, they obey Jesus, who said: “You are the light of the world. . . . Let your light shine before men, that they may see your fine works and give glory to your Father who is in the heavens.”—Matthew 5:14, 16.

¹⁵ To remain in this enlightened condition, anointed Christians must regularly feed upon what is pictured by the bread on the table of showbread. Their primary source of spiritual food is the Word of God, which they endeavor to read and meditate upon daily. Jesus also promised to provide them with “food at the proper time” through his “faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45) This “slave” is the entire body of anointed Christians on earth at any particular time. Christ has used this anointed body to publish information on the fulfillment of Bible prophecies and to give timely direction on the application of Bible principles in modern daily life. Hence, anointed Christians appreciatively feed on all such spiritual provisions. But the sustenance of their spiritual lives depends on more than taking knowledge of God into their minds and hearts. Jesus said: “My food is for me to do the will of him that sent me and to finish his work.” (John 4:34) Likewise, anointed Christians experience satisfaction by daily applying themselves to doing God’s revealed will.

¹⁶ In the morning and in the evening, a priest offered incense to God upon the altar of incense in the Holy. At the same time, nonpriestly worshipers would pray to God while standing in the outer courtyards of his temple. (Luke 1:8-10) “The incense,” explains the Bible, “means the prayers of the holy ones.” (Revelation 5:8) “May my prayer be prepared as incense before you,” wrote the psalmist David. (Psalm 141:2) Anointed Christians also treasure their privilege of approaching Jehovah in prayer through Jesus Christ. Fervent prayers that flow from the heart are like sweet-smelling incense. Anointed Christians also praise God in other ways, using their lips to teach others. Their endurance in the face of hardships and their integrity under trial are especially pleasing to God.—1 Peter 2:20, 21.

¹⁷ On the Day of Atonement, Israel’s high priest had to enter the Most Holy and burn incense on a golden censer containing fiery coals. This had to be done before he brought in the blood of sin offerings. In fulfillment of this prophetic picture, the man Jesus kept absolute integrity to Jehovah God before offering his life as the one lasting sacrifice for our sins. Thus he demonstrated that a perfect man could keep his integrity to God no matter what pressure Satan brought upon him. (Proverbs 27:11) When put to the test, Jesus made use of prayer “with strong outcries and tears, and he was favorably heard for his godly fear.” (Hebrews 5:7) In this way he glorified Jehovah as the righteous and rightful Sovereign of the universe. God rewarded Jesus by resurrecting him from the dead to immortal heavenly life. In this lofty position, Jesus gives attention to the secondary reason for his coming to earth, namely, to reconcile repentant human sinners with God.—Hebrews 4:14-16.

The Greater Glory of God’s Spiritual Temple

¹⁸ “Greater will the glory of this later house become than that of the former,” Jehovah foretold. (Haggai 2:9) By resurrecting Jesus as an immortal King and High Priest, Jehovah brought outstanding glory to his spiritual temple. Jesus is now in a position to bring “everlasting salvation to all those obeying him.” (Hebrews 5:9) The first to show such obedience were the 120 disciples who received holy spirit at Pentecost in 33 C.E. The book of Revelation foretold that these spiritual sons of Israel would finally number 144,000.

(Revelation 7:4) Upon death, many of them had to lie unconscious in the common grave of mankind, awaiting the time of Jesus' presence in kingly power. The prophetic chronology contained at Daniel 4:10-17, 20-27 points to 1914 as the time for Jesus to begin ruling in the midst of his enemies. (Psalm 110:2) For decades in advance, anointed Christians keenly awaited that year. The first world war and accompanying woes on mankind furnished proof that Jesus was indeed enthroned as King in 1914. (Matthew 24:3, 7, 8) Shortly thereafter, the time having arrived for "judgment to start with the house of God," Jesus would fulfill the promise to his anointed disciples who had fallen asleep in death: "I am coming again and will receive you home to myself."—1 Peter 4:17; John 14:3.

¹⁹ The 144,000 members of the holy priesthood have not all been finally sealed and gathered to their heavenly home. A remnant of them still live on earth in the spiritual condition pictured by the Holy, separated from God's holy presence by the "curtain," or barrier, of their fleshly bodies. As these ones die in faithfulness, they are instantaneously resurrected as immortal spirit creatures to join those of the 144,000 already in heaven.—1 Corinthians 15:51-53.

²⁰ With so many priests serving along with the great High Priest in heaven, God's spiritual temple has received added glory. Meanwhile, the remaining ones of the holy priesthood are performing a valuable work on earth. Through their preaching, God is 'rocking all the nations' with expressions of his judgment, as foretold at Haggai 2:7. At the same time, millions of worshipers described as "the desirable things of all the nations" are flocking into the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's temple. How do these ones fit into God's arrangement for worship, and what future glory can we expect for his great spiritual temple? These questions will be examined in the next article.

w96 7/1 pp. 20-24 The Triumph of True Worship Draws Near

⁶ Among the sacrifices that these foreigners offer are “the fruit of lips [like finely prepared grain offerings] which make public declaration to [God’s] name” and “the doing of good and the sharing of things with others.” (Hebrews 13:15, 16) The large container of water that the priests had to use to wash themselves is also an important reminder to these foreigners. They too must submit to spiritual and moral cleansing as God’s Word is made progressively clearer to them.

The Holy and Its Furnishings

⁷ Do the Holy and its furnishings have any meaning for this great crowd of foreigners? Well, they will never be in the condition pictured by the Holy. They are not born again as spiritual sons of God with heavenly citizenship. Does this make them feel envious or covetous? No. Rather, they rejoice in their privilege of supporting the remnant of the 144,000, and they show deep appreciation for God’s purpose in adopting these spiritual sons, who will share with Christ in uplifting mankind to perfection. Also, the great crowd of foreigners cherish God’s great undeserved kindness in granting them an earthly hope of everlasting life in Paradise. Some of these foreigners, like the Nethinim of old, have been given privileges of oversight in assisting the holy priesthood. (Isaiah 61:5) From among these Jesus appoints “princes in all the earth.”—Psalm 45:16.

⁸ While they will never enter the antitypical Holy, the great crowd of foreigners learn valuable lessons from its furnishings. Just as the lampstand needed a constant supply of oil, so the foreigners need holy spirit to help them grasp progressive truths from God’s Word, channeled through “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45-47) Further, God’s spirit helps them to respond to this invitation: “The spirit and the bride [the anointed remnant] keep on saying: ‘Come!’ And let anyone hearing say: ‘Come!’ And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life’s water free.” (Revelation 22:17) Thus, the lampstand is a reminder to the great crowd of their obligation to shine as Christians and to avoid anything in attitude, thought, word, or deed that would grieve God’s holy spirit.—Ephesians 4:30.

⁹ The table of showbread reminds the great crowd that to remain spiritually healthy, they must regularly partake of spiritual food from the Bible and from publications of “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 4:4) The altar of incense reminds them of the importance of earnestly praying to Jehovah for help so as to keep their integrity. (Luke 21:36) Their prayers should include heartfelt expressions of praise and thanksgiving. (Psalm 106:1) The incense altar also reminds them of the need to praise God in other ways, such as through their wholehearted singing of Kingdom songs at Christian meetings and by their preparing well to make effective “public declaration for salvation.”—Romans 10:10.

The Complete Triumph of True Worship

¹⁰ Today “many peoples” out of all nations are streaming to Jehovah’s house of worship. (Isaiah 2:2, 3) Confirming this, Revelation 15:4 states: “Who will not really fear you,

Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest.” Zechariah chapter 14 describes what follows. In the near future, the bad attitude of the majority of the people on earth will reach a climax as they gather for the last time to wage war against Jerusalem—the representatives on earth of the heavenly Jerusalem. Then Jehovah will act. As a Warrior-God, he “will certainly go forth and war against those nations” who dare to make this attack.—Zechariah 14:2, 3.

¹¹ “This is what will prove to be the scourge with which Jehovah will scourge all the peoples that will actually do military service against Jerusalem: There will be a rotting away of one’s flesh, while one is standing upon one’s feet; and one’s very eyes will rot away in their sockets, and one’s very tongue will rot away in one’s mouth. And it must occur in that day that confusion from Jehovah will become widespread among them; and they will actually grab hold, each one of the hand of his companion, and his hand will actually come up against the hand of his companion.”—Zechariah 14:12, 13.

¹² Whether this scourge is literal or figurative, we will have to wait and see. However, one thing is certain. While God’s enemies are moving to make their global attack on Jehovah’s servants, they will be stopped by awesome demonstrations of God’s almighty power. Their mouths will be silenced. It will be as if their tongues of defiance had rotted away. Their united goal will become blurred to their vision, as if their eyes had rotted away. Their physical powers, which emboldened them to make the attack, will waste away. In confusion, they will turn upon one another with a great slaughter. Thus all the earthly enemies of God’s worship will be wiped out. At last, all nations will have been forced to recognize Jehovah’s universal sovereignty. The prophecy will be fulfilled: “Jehovah must become king over all the earth.” (Zechariah 14:9) Thereafter, Satan and his demons will be bound as the Thousand Year Reign of Christ commences with great blessings in store for mankind.—Revelation 20:1, 2; 21:3, 4.

The Earthly Resurrection

¹³ Zechariah’s prophecy continues at chapter 14, verse 16: “It must occur that, as regards everyone who is left remaining out of all the nations that are coming against Jerusalem, they must also go up from year to year to bow down to the King, Jehovah of armies, and to celebrate the festival of the booths.” According to the Bible, all people alive today who continue living to the end of this wicked system and who are judged to be enemies of true worship will undergo the “judicial punishment of everlasting destruction.” (2 Thessalonians 1:7-9; see also Matthew 25:31-33, 46.) They will not have a resurrection. Likely, then, the ones “left remaining” include the members of the nations who died before God’s final war and for whom there is a Bible-based hope of a resurrection. “The hour is coming,” Jesus promised, “in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment.”—John 5:28, 29.

¹⁴ All these resurrected ones must do something in order for their resurrection to turn out to be one of life and not one of adverse judgment. They must come to the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's temple and bow down in dedication to God through Jesus Christ. Any resurrected ones who refuse to do this will suffer the same scourge that befalls the present-day nations. (Zechariah 14:18) Who knows how many resurrected ones will gladly join the great crowd in celebrating the antitypical Festival of Booths? Doubtless, there will be many, and Jehovah's great spiritual temple will become even more glorious as a result!

The Antitypical Festival of Booths

¹⁵ Each year, ancient Israel was required to celebrate the Festival of Booths. It lasted for one week and came at the conclusion of the gathering in of their harvest. It was a joyful time of thanksgiving. For the duration of the week, they had to live in temporary shelters covered with the leaves of trees, especially palm branches. This festival reminded Israel of how God had saved their forefathers out of Egypt and how he cared for them as they dwelt in booths while moving about for 40 years in the wilderness until they reached the Promised Land. (Leviticus 23:39-43) During the festival, 70 bulls were sacrificed upon the temple altar. Evidently, this feature of the festival was prophetic of the perfect and complete lifesaving work performed by Jesus Christ. The benefits of his ransom sacrifice will eventually flow to countless descendants of the 70 families of mankind that descended from Noah.—Genesis 10:1-29; Numbers 29:12-34; Matthew 20:28.

¹⁶ Thus the ancient Festival of Booths pointed to the joyful ingathering of redeemed sinners into Jehovah's great spiritual temple. The antitype of this festival started at Pentecost in 33 C.E. with the commencement of the joyful ingathering of spiritual Israelites into the Christian congregation. (Acts 2:41, 46, 47) These anointed ones appreciated that they were "temporary residents" in Satan's world because their real "citizenship exists in the heavens." (1 Peter 2:11; Philippians 3:20) The joyful festival was temporarily eclipsed by the apostasy that resulted in the formation of Christendom. (2 Thessalonians 2:1-3) However, the festival was resumed in 1919 with the joyful ingathering of the final members of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites, followed by that of the international great crowd of Revelation 7:9.

¹⁷ The great crowd are depicted as having palm branches in their hands, which shows that they too are joyful celebrators of the antitypical Festival of Booths. As dedicated Christians, they joyfully share in the work of gathering more worshipers into Jehovah's temple. Furthermore, as sinners, they appreciate that they do not have permanent dwelling rights on earth. They, along with future resurrected ones, must keep exercising faith in Christ's ransom sacrifice until they reach human perfection at the end of the Thousand Year Reign of Christ.—Revelation 20:5.

¹⁸ Then, God's worshipers on earth will stand before him in human perfection without the need of a heavenly priesthood. The time will have come when Jesus Christ "hands over the kingdom to his God and Father." (1 Corinthians 15:24) Satan will be let loose "for a little while" to test perfected humanity. Any unfaithful ones will be

destroyed forever, along with Satan and his demons. Those who remain faithful will be granted everlasting life. They will become permanent dwellers in the earthly Paradise. Thus the antitypical Festival of Booths will have come to a glorious, successful conclusion. True worship will have triumphed to Jehovah's everlasting glory and mankind's eternal happiness.—Revelation 20:3, 7-10, 14, 15.

w96 3/15 pp. 10-11 Behold the Loyal!

Loyalty Is Something Special

⁵ "Loyalty" is a very special word. Thus *Insight on the Scriptures* states: "There appear to be no English words that exactly express the full meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words, but 'loyalty,' including, as it does, the thought of devotion and faithfulness, when used in connection with God and his service, serves to give an approximation." Regarding "loyalty" *The Watchtower* once stated: "Faithfulness, duty, love, obligation, allegiance. What do these words have in common? They are different facets of loyalty." Yes, ever so many virtues are but different facets of loyalty. It is indeed noteworthy how often loyalty and righteousness are linked in the Scriptures.

IN MANY places it is possible to observe how shepherds attend to a flock. They lead, protect, and provide for the sheep. This is of interest to Christian elders, since their work includes shepherding activities. Indeed, it is their responsibility “to shepherd the congregation of God” and “to pay attention to all the flock.”—Acts 20:28.

If you are a member of the Christian congregation, how can spiritual shepherds serve you? And how should you react to their efforts in your behalf? Why does the congregation need their help?

Protection Against What?

In ancient times lions and other wild animals put flocks in danger and preyed upon individual sheep. Shepherds had to provide protection. (1 Samuel 17:34, 35) Well, Satan the Devil “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Peter 5:8) He wrathfully wages war not only against Jehovah’s earthly organization as a whole but also against each individual servant of God. What is Satan’s aim? He wants to discourage Jehovah’s people and even prevent them from ‘observing the commandments of God’ and carrying out “the work of bearing witness to Jesus.”—Revelation 12:17.

Jehovah charged the governmental shepherds of ancient Israel with neglect because his sheep had become “food for every wild beast of the field.” (Ezekiel 34:8) However, Christian elders have a heartfelt desire to protect those in the congregation so that no one is lost through neglect or because of the influence of Satan, the world, or apostate “wolves.” (Acts 20:29, 30) How do the shepherds help all members of the flock to keep their senses and be watchful? One means is by giving well-prepared Scriptural talks from the Kingdom Hall platform. Another is by positive, encouraging conversations before and after the meetings. Still another effective means is by visiting the “sheep” personally at home. (Compare Psalm 95:7.) But what is a shepherding call? How should such a visit be carried out? And who ought to be visited?

What Is a Shepherding Call?

A shepherding call is not merely a social visit with conversation about trivialities. One elder observed: “Most publishers thoroughly enjoy reading a scripture or discussing a particular Bible character. Of course, the elder does not do all the talking. The Kingdom publisher being visited normally enjoys expressing his thoughts on the Bible, and doing this strengthens his own faith. The elder might take along a *Watchtower* or *Awake!* magazine so as to discuss an upbuilding article. Perhaps this spiritual discussion is what distinguishes a shepherding call from a social call.”

Another experienced elder commented: “Prior to the visit, the elder spends some time thinking about the publisher he is to call on. What could build the publisher up? Sincere commendation is an essential part of shepherding calls, for it strengthens a person to endure.” Yes, a shepherding call is

more than simply a friendly visit that anyone in the congregation might make.

Why Does a Shepherd Visit You?

When an elder visits a home, he is prepared to encourage fellow believers and help them to be firm in the faith. (Romans 1:11) So when one or two elders wish to visit you, how do you react? Said one traveling overseer: “If shepherding calls are made only when something is not quite right, initial reaction to the proposed visit may be, ‘What have I done wrong?’” Loving spiritual shepherds imitate Jehovah, who took care of the psalmist and always ‘refreshed his soul,’ especially in times of distress and special need.—Psalm 23:1-4.

The objective of a shepherding call is ‘to build up, not to tear down.’ (2 Corinthians 13:10) Encouraging, indeed, are words of appreciation for the endurance, the zeal, and the faithful work of the one visited. One elder observed: “On a shepherding call, it is not good to give the impression that one has come with the intention of discovering and discussing problems. Of course, the publisher himself might want to talk about some particular difficulty. And if a sheep is limping or isolating himself from the rest of the flock, the elder needs to do something to help.”

Christian shepherds will undoubtedly take special care of any who are like those described in these words: “The lost one I [Jehovah] shall search for, and the dispersed one I shall bring back, and the broken one I shall bandage and the ailing one I shall strengthen.” (Ezekiel 34:16) Yes, sheep may need to be sought after, brought back, bandaged, or strengthened. Israel’s shepherds neglected these responsibilities. Performing such work requires that a shepherd come close to a certain sheep and attend to its needs. Basically, this should be a distinguishing feature of each shepherding call today.

Healthy Sheep Need Care

Should we conclude that present-day spiritual shepherds need not show particular attentiveness to healthy sheep? Well, when a literal sheep gets into trouble, helping it is much easier if it has confidence in the shepherd. One handbook observes that “sheep are naturally shy of humans, and gaining their trust is not always easy.” Among other things, the same book suggests this basic guideline for winning the confidence of sheep: “Speak to the animals regularly. They get used to the voice, which reassures them. Visit the sheep in the pasture often.”—*Alles für das Schaf. Handbuch für die artgerechte Haltung* (Everything for the Sheep. Handbook on How to Keep Them Properly).

Personal contact is therefore necessary if a trusting relationship is to exist between the shepherd and the sheep. The same is true in the Christian congregation. An elder noted: “Being known in the congregation as an elder who regularly visits the sheep makes it easier to call on one who has problems.” Hence, spiritual shepherds should not try to feed and care for the sheep exclusively at the Kingdom Hall. As far as circumstances allow, elders should get to know the sheep by making shepherding calls at their homes. One Christian recalls that when he was a newly appointed elder, the presiding overseer telephoned and asked him to visit and

comfort a brother who had just lost his daughter in a dreadful road accident. The elder admits: “How awful I felt, since I had never called on the brother and did not even know where he lived! It was a relief when a mature elder offered to come with me.” Yes, elders assist one another on shepherding calls.

In preparing for and making certain shepherding calls, an elder may be joined by a ministerial servant who is reaching out for the “fine work” of an overseer. (1 Timothy 3:1, 13) How much a ministerial servant appreciates seeing how an elder serves the sheep on shepherding calls! Elders and ministerial servants thus get closer to all in the congregation, strengthening the bonds of Christian love and unity.—Colossians 3:14.

Planning Time for Shepherding Calls

When one body of elders left shepherding calls to the initiative of the Congregation Book Study conductors, all the publishers in some groups were visited within six months, whereas none were called on in other groups. This moved one elder to say: “It appears that some elders take the initiative and do a lot of shepherding work, but others need the encouragement of their fellow elders to do so.” So some bodies of elders make arrangements for all publishers to be visited by shepherds within a definite period of time.

Of course, an elder or any other publisher can visit someone in the congregation without waiting for special arrangements to be made. Before making a shepherding call, one elder phones and says, “I call on one family each month. Can I visit you for an hour or so sometime next month? When would this suit you?”

Blessings of Shepherding Calls

As pressures from this wicked system continue to increase, encouraging visits by understanding shepherds become ever more beneficial. When all those in the flock are given encouragement and help through shepherding calls, each sheep feels safe and secure.

Concerning a congregation in which all Kingdom publishers were visited by shepherds regularly, it was reported: “The publishers became very positive about the shepherding calls. It was quite common for a publisher to approach one of the elders to ask when he would make another call, as the inquirer had enjoyed the upbuilding discussion during the previous visit. Shepherding calls were one factor that helped to improve the spirit of the congregation.” Other reports indicate that when shepherds lovingly minister in such a way, the congregation can grow in love, unity, and warmth. What a blessing!

Christian shepherds call to promote the spiritual well-being of the sheep. Elders want to encourage and strengthen their fellow believers. If a serious problem requiring counsel should surface during a visit, it may be best to make arrangements for discussion at another time, especially if the elder is accompanied by a ministerial servant. In any case, a prayer to conclude the shepherding visit is appropriate.

Does a spiritual shepherd want to call at your home in the near future? If that is so, be in happy anticipation of the encouragement that awaits you. He is coming to serve you

and to strengthen you in your resolve to remain on the road leading to everlasting life.—Matthew 7:13, 14.

[Box on page 26]

Suggestions for Shepherding Calls

- ***Make an appointment:*** It is usually good to make an appointment. If the elder plans to handle a serious problem, it would be proper to inform the publisher of this beforehand.
- ***Preparation:*** Consider the person’s nature and situation. Offer heartfelt commendation. Make it your aim to impart an encouraging, faith-strengthening “spiritual gift.” —Romans 1:11, 12.
- ***Whom to take along:*** Another elder or a qualified ministerial servant.
- ***During the visit:*** The elder should be relaxed, loving, positive, and flexible. Inquire about the family, its well-being, and so forth. Listen carefully. If a serious problem surfaces, it may be best to arrange for a special shepherding call.
- ***Duration of the call:*** Keep to the agreed time, and leave while your host is still enjoying the visit.
- ***Concluding the visit:*** A prayer is appropriate and truly appreciated.—Philippians 4:6, 7.

[Picture on page 24]

Christian shepherds provide spiritual protection

[Pictures on page 26]

Shepherding calls provide fine opportunities for spiritual encouragement

Increased Light on Terminology

¹⁵ “The congregator sought to find the delightful words and the writing of correct words of truth.” (Ecclesiastes 12:10) These words might well be applied to our present subject, for light has shone not only on such important matters as doctrine and conduct but also on Christian terminology and its accurate meaning. For example, among the Bible Students, one of the most beloved publications was volume one of *Studies in the Scriptures*, entitled *The Divine Plan of the Ages*. However, in time, it was realized that God’s Word speaks only of humans as making plans. (Proverbs 19:21) The Scriptures never speak of Jehovah as planning. He does not need to plan. Whatever he purposes is sure to succeed because of his infinite wisdom and power, even as we read at Ephesians 1:9, 10: “It is according to his good pleasure which he purposed in himself for an administration at the full limit of the appointed times.” So it was gradually seen that the term “purpose” is the more appropriate one when referring to Jehovah.

¹⁶ Then there was the matter of getting a clearer understanding of Luke 2:14. According to the *King James Version*, it reads: “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.” It was seen that this did not express the correct thought, for God’s goodwill is not expressed toward the wicked. The Witnesses therefore viewed this as a matter of peace to men who were of goodwill toward God. So they kept referring to those interested in the Bible as persons of goodwill. But then it was understood that what was involved was goodwill, not on the part of men, but on the part of God. Thus, the *New World Translation* footnote on Luke 2:14 speaks of “men whom he [God] approves.” All Christians who are living up to their vow of dedication have God’s goodwill.

¹⁷ Similarly, for a long time, Witnesses spoke of the vindication of Jehovah’s name. But had Satan called Jehovah’s name into question? For that matter, had any of Satan’s agents done so, as if Jehovah did not have a right to that name? No, not at all. It was not the name of Jehovah that was challenged and that needed to be vindicated. That is why the Watch Tower Society’s recent publications do not speak of Jehovah’s *name* as being *vindicated*. They speak of Jehovah’s *sovereignty* as being *vindicated* and of his *name* as being *sanctified*. This is in keeping with what Jesus told us to pray: “Let your *name* be *sanctified*.” (Matthew 6:9) Time and again, Jehovah said that he was going to sanctify his name, which the Israelites had not challenged but had profaned.—Ezekiel 20:9, 14, 22; 36:23.

¹⁸ Interestingly, in 1971, the book “*The Nations Shall Know That I Am Jehovah*”—How? made this distinction: “Jesus Christ fights . . . for the vindication of Jehovah’s universal Sovereignty and for the glorification of Jehovah’s name.” (Pages 364-5) In 1973, *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* said: “The coming ‘great tribulation’ is the time for Almighty God Jehovah to vindicate his universal sovereignty and to sanctify his worthy name.” (Page 409) Then, in 1975, *Man’s Salvation Out Of World*

Distress at Hand! stated: “The greatest event of universal history will then have been accomplished, the vindication of Jehovah’s universal sovereignty and the sanctification of his sacred name.”—Page 281.

w91 5/15 pp. 29-30 Can You Be Happy With Much to Do?

Be Balanced

If we are to be happy even though we have much to do, we need to be balanced. And what is balance? It is “mental and emotional steadiness.” A balanced person strives to be orderly in his activities. He plans ahead, avoids procrastination, and is moderate in habits. He displays self-control in food, drink, recreation, hobbies, and entertainment. Actually, he demonstrates “self-control *in all things*!”—1 Corinthians 9:24-27; compare Titus 2:2.

Prayer plays a vital role in maintaining Christian balance. A servant of Jehovah can pray for God’s holy spirit and for his heavenly Father’s help in cultivating its fruitage, including self-control. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Especially should a Christian look to God in prayer when beset by trials that threaten to disturb his balance. “Roll upon Jehovah your way, and rely upon him, and he himself will act,” said the psalmist David. (Psalm 37:5) We may sometimes need to pray as David did when he pleaded: “O God, do act quickly for me. You are my help and the Provider of escape for me. O Jehovah, do not be too late.” (Psalm 70:5) Never forget that by prayer it is possible to maintain balance and to enjoy ‘the peace of God that excels all thought and guards our hearts and mental powers.’—Philippians 4:6, 7.

Because he depends on Jehovah and enjoys the peace of God, a balanced Christian is sound in mind. (Titus 2:11, 12) This comes from having a good comprehension of Bible principles and by applying them in his life. Such a person is not hypocritical, nor is he hasty in judgment. Reasonableness keeps him from being opinionated or obstinate. He maintains a modest view of himself and his capabilities, and this enables him to cooperate with others. (Micah 6:8) Interestingly, the traits that help a person to be balanced are also among the qualities required of those appointed to serve as overseers in the Christian congregation.—1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

We can add greatly to our happiness by striving to be more balanced in our daily activities. By displaying the qualities associated with good balance, we can get necessary things done without severe physical or emotional stress. Our life-style will reflect greater stability, and we will accomplish more. Others will find increased pleasure in our association, and we will experience greater contentment and joy. But what are some practical ways to maintain balance?

Practical Ways to Maintain Balance

In order to maintain balance, we should try to be prompt and organized in handling our personal affairs. We need to plan ahead, caring for matters in an orderly, systematic manner. Those lacking good organization and tending to procrastinate complicate their lives with increased levels of tension and anxiety. Success in this area of life will help us to feel that we are in control instead of feeling that we are helpless victims of circumstances.

We should not try to do everything ourselves. Those unwilling to accept help from others often pay a heavy price in exhaustion and frustration. There are various tasks that

could be cared for by others. Therefore, it is wise to take advantage of the capabilities of those willing to lend a helping hand. Besides lightening our own load, this may be encouraging to those wishing to draw closer to us.

It is unwise to compare ourselves with those who may be able to do more. Trying to be like those apparently achieving more than we can is discouraging, making us feel inferior and unworthy. Such thinking is destructive, undermining our determination and self-confidence. “Let each one prove what his own work is,” wrote Paul, “and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person.” (Galatians 6:4) Remember that the most valued worker is the one who follows instructions, is steady and reliable, and does work of sound quality. If we are that way, our services will be appreciated and in demand.—Proverbs 22:29.

We need to take good care of our health. It is one of our most valuable possessions, for without it we may be able to do very little. Hence, we should try to maintain a healthful diet by eating nutritious food. We ought to get the rest we need, going to bed at a reasonable hour at night. When we are severely fatigued or feel illness coming on, we should not keep on pushing ourselves; we may pay a heavy price.

It is important to guard against developing a complaining spirit. If we give free rein to negative thinking, we can find something wrong with almost anything or anyone. This is a sure way to rob ourselves and others of joy. Rather than gossip or complain about what we feel is not right, we should inform those responsible for handling the matter and leave it up to them to correct things. (Compare 1 Corinthians 1:10-12.) We are wise to maintain a positive outlook, always seeking and expecting to find good in others and in the events that shape our life.—Compare Jude 3, 4, 16.

In planning our activities, we should remember that a frantic pace may set records, but it can rarely be maintained for long. Continuous overexertion not only leads to exhaustion but can also bring on discouragement that can undermine our determination to carry on. Hence, let us set a pace we can maintain indefinitely. For instance, it is good to establish a practical schedule for regular participation in the house-to-house preaching work and other features of the Christian ministry. We need to allow time for relaxation and upbuilding recreation. And we will find it beneficial to talk with older people who have decades of experience, for they may have learned how to get necessary things done without exhausting themselves physically or emotionally.

Use Good Judgment

It is proper to feel an obligation and a desire to fulfill all our assigned responsibilities, including those within the congregation of Jehovah’s people. God is pleased with diligent, dependable workers. (Compare Matthew 25:21; Titus 2:11-14.) But the Scriptures urge: “Safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability.” (Proverbs 3:21) The application of Biblical wisdom will benefit us, and we need to use common sense and good judgment, making careful plans and always keeping within the limits of our strength.

“Our being adequately qualified issues from God.”—2 CORINTHIANS 3:5.

JEHOVAH GOD and Jesus Christ are workers. Said Jesus: “My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.” (John 5:17) God does not approve of people who refuse to work; neither does his approval rest upon those seeking responsibility so as to gain power over others. The Christian congregation has no room for slackers or for the selfishly ambitious.—Matthew 20:25-27; 2 Thessalonians 3:10.

² Jehovah’s Witnesses have ‘plenty to do in the Lord’s work,’ especially now that so many people are streaming to “the mountain” of true worship. (1 Corinthians 15:58; Isaiah 2:2-4) There is a great need for spiritually qualified men to shoulder responsibility in the congregation. Not driven by selfish ambition, such men exalt Jehovah, not themselves. (Proverbs 8:13) They know that God helps them to qualify for congregation duties, even as he ‘adequately qualifies ministers of the new covenant.’—2 Corinthians 3:4-6.

³ Today, as among early Christians, men are appointed by holy spirit and through Jehovah’s organizational arrangement to serve as elders and ministerial servants. (Acts 20:28; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5) Elders shepherd God’s flock spiritually, providing protective supervision. They are assisted by ministerial servants, whose duties do not directly involve spiritual oversight. (1 Peter 5:2; compare Acts 6:1-6.) Like God’s Son, who came to minister, such appointees desire to serve fellow believers. (Mark 10:45) If you are a Christian man, do you have that spirit?

Qualifications Held in Common

⁴ Particularly are the requirements for those entrusted with congregation responsibility set out by the apostle Paul at 1 Timothy 3:1-10, 12, 13 and Titus 1:5-9. As we consider these qualifications, some of which apply to both elders and ministerial servants, we should not view them according to worldly standards. Rather, we should see them in their first-century setting and as applicable among Jehovah’s people. Meeting these requirements does not demand perfection, for then no human would qualify. (1 John 1:8) But if you are a Christian man, whether you now have congregation duties or not, why not analyze your personal qualifications?

⁵ *Irreprehensible; having fine testimony from people outside; free from accusation.* (1 Timothy 3:2, 7, 8, 10; Titus 1:6, 7) When appointed and while serving, ministerial servants and elders must be irreprehensible, that is, free of blame and of any need to be reproved for a *just* accusation of wrong conduct or teaching. *Untrue* charges made by “false brothers” or others do not make a man reprehensible. To disqualify a man from serving in the congregation, a charge must not be frivolous, and it must be proved in harmony with Scriptural standards. (2 Corinthians 11:26; 1 Timothy 5:19) One appointed in the congregation “should also have a fine testimony from people on the outside, in order that he might not fall into reproach and a snare of the Devil.” If a man committed some serious sin in the past, he could be appointed

only if he had lived down any reproach and made a good name for himself.

⁶ *Husband of one wife.* (1 Timothy 3:2, 12; Titus 1:6) This does not mean that only married men can be ministerial servants and elders. If married, though, a man must have only one living wife and be faithful to her. (Hebrews 13:4) Unlike many non-Christian men in the first century, he cannot be a polygamist.

⁷ *Presiding over his household in a fine manner, with children in subjection.* (1 Timothy 3:4, 5, 12; Titus 1:6) Some may feel that elders must be at least 30 years old, but the Bible does not set a minimum age. Yet, the person must act as an older man in a spiritual sense. Ministerial servants and elders should be old enough to have children. If married, a man does not qualify if he acts in a godly way elsewhere but is a tyrant at home. He must have earned respect for presiding over his household according to Bible principles, and his objective should be to have spiritual success with every family member. As a general rule, an elder who is a father should have well-behaved minor children who are “believing.” Either they are progressing toward dedication to God or they are already baptized as Jehovah’s Witnesses. A man unable to build faith in his children is unlikely to do so in others.

⁸ Before a family man can be an elder capable of providing spiritual oversight in a congregation, he must learn how to direct his own household. ‘If any man *does not know how* to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God’s congregation?’ (1 Timothy 3:5) True, a man may be opposed by an unbelieving wife. (Matthew 10:36; Luke 12:52) Or one of his children may become guilty of serious sin, though the others are doing well spiritually. Still, if the man has done all that can be expected, and especially if he has had spiritual success with others in his household, rejection of his fine direction by one family member would not necessarily disqualify him from being a ministerial servant or an elder.

⁹ *Not a drunken brawler or given to a lot of wine.* (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7) A ministerial servant or an elder must not overindulge in alcoholic beverages. Addiction to them can result in losing control of thoughts and emotions, leading to drunken brawls or fights. He should not be ‘given to a lot of wine’ or have the reputation of being a habitual or heavy drinker. (Proverbs 23:20, 21, 29-35) How tragic if a shepherding visit were to be marred by intemperance! If a brother drinks at all, he should not do so when sharing in meetings, the ministry, or other sacred service.—Leviticus 10:8-11; Ezekiel 44:21.

¹⁰ *Not a lover of money or greedy of dishonest gain.* (1 Timothy 3:3, 8; Titus 1:7) Money lovers are in spiritual peril, and “greedy persons” will not inherit God’s Kingdom. Hence, such men do not qualify to be elders or ministerial servants. (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10; 1 Timothy 6:9, 10) The root word in Greek rendered “dishonest” basically means “disgraceful,” and that translated “gain” refers to any kind of profit or advantage. (Philippians 1:21; 3:4-8) Of course, a man whose disposition indicates that he would treat God’s “sheep” dishonestly is not qualified for congregation

responsibility. (Ezekiel 34:7-10; Acts 20:33-35; Jude 16) The need for caution in making recommendations is heightened when we realize that a man, once appointed, might be entrusted with funds and be tempted to steal some of the money.—John 12:4-6.

¹¹ *Not newly converted; tested as to fitness.* (1 Timothy 3:6, 10) A newly baptized person has not had time to prove that he will faithfully care for assigned duties. He may lack sympathy for the afflicted or needed wisdom to help fellow worshipers and may even look down on others. Before being recommended as a ministerial servant and especially as an elder, therefore, a man should be “tested as to fitness” and should give evidence of good judgment and reliability. No set time is given for this testing, and individuals vary in rate of spiritual growth. But elders should not quickly recommend a new man “for fear that he might get puffed up with pride and fall into the judgment passed upon the Devil.” Let the man first manifest Christlike humility.—Philippians 2:5-8.

Spotlight on Ministerial Servants

¹² Some requirements are listed for ministerial servants. Yet, if such requirements were not also met by elders, they would not be qualified to serve. As a Christian man, do you qualify in these respects?

¹³ *Serious.* (1 Timothy 3:8) A man qualifying to serve as a ministerial servant should not take responsibility lightly. He ought to deport himself in a dignified manner that wins respect. Though occasional humor is acceptable, he would not qualify if he was constantly acting in a frivolous way.

¹⁴ *Not double-tongued; having a clean conscience.* (1 Timothy 3:8, 9) Ministerial servants (and elders) must be truthful, not gossipy or devious. Since they are not to be double-tongued, they must not hypocritically say one thing to one person and the very opposite to another. (Proverbs 3:32; James 3:17) These men must also be staunch supporters of revealed truth, “holding the sacred secret of the faith with a clean conscience.” Before God, such a man’s conscience should bear witness that he is upright and does not practice anything underhanded or defiling. (Romans 9:1; 2 Corinthians 1:12; 4:2; 7:1) Nobody qualifies to serve God’s flock unless he clings to the truth and to godly principles.

Focus on Elders’ Qualifications

¹⁵ Certain qualifications apply particularly to elders and deal largely with their work as shepherds and teachers. As a Christian man, do you meet these requirements?

¹⁶ *Moderate in habits; self-controlled.* (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8) An elder should be temperate, not enslaved to bad habits. When he faces trials, God will help him to maintain balance if he prays as did the psalmist: “Distresses of my heart have multiplied; from the stresses upon me O bring me out.” (Psalm 25:17) An overseer should also pray for God’s spirit and display its fruitage, including self-control. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:22, 23) Keeping thoughts, speech, and actions in check enables an elder to avoid extremes as he provides spiritual guidance for the congregation.

¹⁷ *Sound in mind.* (1 Timothy 3:2) An elder must be sensible, discreet, and prudent. He should be purposeful and

rational in speech and actions. His humble, balanced thinking is based on godly wisdom and on the healthful teachings of Jehovah’s Word, of which he ought to be a diligent student.—Romans 12:3; Titus 2:1.

¹⁸ *Orderly.* (1 Timothy 3:2) The Greek word used here is translated “well-arranged” at 1 Timothy 2:9. So an elder should have a decent, well-arranged pattern of life. For instance, he should be punctual. First-century Christians apparently did not make a major point of record-keeping, and an overseer today need not be an expert accountant or clerk. Ministerial servants might care for things required in these respects. But the Greek term for “orderly” can denote good behavior, and a man surely would not qualify to be an elder if he was unruly or disorderly.—1 Thessalonians 5:14; 2 Thessalonians 3:6-12; Titus 1:10.

¹⁹ *Hospitable.* (1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8) An elder “follows the course of hospitality.” (Romans 12:13; Hebrews 13:2) The Greek word for “hospitable” literally means “fond of strangers.” Thus, the hospitable elder welcomes new ones to Christian meetings, showing the same interest in the poor as he does in the materially prosperous. He is hospitable to those traveling in the interests of Christianity and sends them on their way “in a manner worthy of God.” (3 John 5-8) Indeed, an elder shows hospitality especially to fellow believers according to their needs and as his circumstances permit.—James 2:14-17.

²⁰ *Qualified to teach.* (1 Timothy 3:2) An elder’s ability as a spiritual teacher does not result from mental aptitude or worldly wisdom. (1 Corinthians 2:1-5, 13) It comes about because he is “holding firmly to the faithful word as respects his art [or, manner] of teaching, that he may be able both to exhort by the teaching that is healthful and to reprove those who contradict.” (Titus 1:9; compare Acts 20:18-21, 26, 27.) He must be able to “instruct with mildness those not favorably disposed.” (2 Timothy 2:23-26) Even if an elder is not the best public speaker in the congregation, he should be such a fine student of God’s Word that he is skillful enough to instruct and counsel believers, who also study the Bible. (2 Corinthians 11:6) He must qualify to impart “healthful teaching” that helps families and individuals to pursue godly lives.—Titus 2:1-10.

²¹ *Not a smiter, but reasonable, not belligerent.* (1 Timothy 3:3; Titus 1:7) Being peaceable, an elder does not strike people physically or browbeat them by making abusive or cutting remarks. (Compare 2 Corinthians 11:20.) (The preceding comment that he is “not a drunken brawler” shows that he avoids alcohol abuse that so often leads to strife.) Being “reasonable” (or, “yielding”), not authoritarian and hard to please, he does not make issues of minor matters. (1 Corinthians 9:12; Philippians 4:5; 1 Peter 2:18) Since an elder is not belligerent, or contentious, he avoids quarrels and is “not prone to wrath.”—Titus 3:2; James 1:19, 20.

²² *Not self-willed.* (Titus 1:7) Literally, this means “not self-pleasing.” (Compare 2 Peter 2:10.) An elder must not be dogmatic but should take a humble view of his abilities. Not thinking he handles things better than anyone else, he humbly shares responsibility with others and values a multitude of

counselors.—Numbers 11:26-29; Proverbs 11:14; Romans 12:3, 16.

²³ *A lover of goodness; righteous.* (Titus 1:8) To qualify as an elder, a man must love goodness and be righteous. A lover of goodness loves what is good in Jehovah's sight, performs kind and helpful deeds, and shows appreciation for the goodness of others. (Luke 6:35; compare Acts 9:36, 39; 1 Timothy 5:9, 10.) Being righteous means conforming to God's laws and standards. Among other things, such a man is impartial and keeps righteous, chaste, and virtuous things in mind. (Luke 1:6; Philippians 4:8, 9; James 2:1-9) Since goodness differs from righteousness in that it goes beyond what justice requires, a lover of goodness does more for others than what is required of him.—Matthew 20:4, 13-15; Romans 5:7.

²⁴ *Loyal.* (Titus 1:8) A man qualified to be an elder maintains unbreakable devotion to God and adheres to divine law, no matter how his integrity is tested. He does what Jehovah expects of him, and this includes serving as a faithful Kingdom proclaimer.—Matthew 24:14; Luke 1:74, 75; Acts 5:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:10.

Meeting the Qualifications

²⁵ Most of the qualifications just discussed involve things required of every Witness of Jehovah and are attainable through God's blessing on each one's study, effort, good association, and prayer. Individuals may be stronger in some qualifications than in others. But to a reasonable degree, ministerial servants and elders must meet all requirements for their particular privilege.

²⁶ All of Jehovah's Witnesses should want to do everything possible in God's service. This spirit moves Christian men to make themselves available for congregation responsibility. Are you a dedicated, baptized man? If so, reach out and make every effort to qualify to serve!

[Footnotes]

See also *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1983, page 29, under the subheading "Scriptural Divorce."

w90 8/15 pp. 10-15 Loyalty—At What Price?

"With someone loyal you will act in loyalty."—PSALM 18:25.

FAITHFULNESS, duty, love, obligation, allegiance. What do these words have in common? They are different facets of loyalty. Loyalty is a godly quality that stems from heartfelt devotion. For many people today, however, loyalty means little. Faithfulness to a marriage mate, obligations to older family members, allegiance of an employee to his employer—all are casual and often compromised. And what happens when a conflict of loyalties arises? Recently, in England, when an accountant told the truth about his company's finances to the tax inspectors, he lost his job.

² It is easy merely to speak of loyalty, but true loyalty has to be backed by action that does not involve fearful compromise. As imperfect humans, we often fail in this. So it is good for us to consider the example of one whose loyalty cannot successfully be questioned, Jehovah God himself.

Loyalty Exemplified

³ When Adam sinned, Jehovah clearly expressed his purpose to redeem the human family that was as yet unborn. The basis for this action was his love for his human creation. (John 3:16) In due time, Jesus Christ, the seed of promise foretold at Genesis 3:15, proved to be the ransom sacrifice, and it would have been unthinkable for Jehovah to renege on his expressed purpose. In accepting Jesus' sacrifice, our faith will not lead to disappointment.—Romans 9:33.

⁴ Jehovah's loyalty to Jesus greatly strengthened the Son during his time on earth. Jesus knew that he must face death, and he was firmly resolved to remain loyal to his God to the end. Fuller knowledge of his prehuman existence was revealed to him at his baptism and anointing by holy spirit. On the night of his betrayal, he prayed to be restored to his heavenly Father, to 'the glory that he had alongside Jehovah before the world was.' (John 17:5) How was this going to be possible? Only by Jehovah's not leaving his loyal Son in the grave to see corruption. Jehovah raised him from death to immortality, thus loyally fulfilling the prophetic promise recorded at Psalm 16:10: "You will not leave my soul in Sheol."—Acts 2:24-31; 13:35; Revelation 1:18.

⁵ Following his resurrection, Jesus likewise knew that he could rely on Jehovah's utterance to 'place his enemies as a stool for his feet.' (Psalm 110:1) That time arrived in 1914, at the end of "the appointed times of the nations," with the establishing of the Kingdom in the heavens. The promised ascendancy of Jesus over his enemies began with the ousting of Satan and his demons from heaven. It will culminate when they are abyssed for a thousand years and "the kings of the earth and their armies" have been destroyed.—Luke 21:24; Revelation 12:7-12; 19:19; 20:1-3.

⁶ The psalmist urged: "Hope in Jehovah and keep his way, and he will exalt you to take possession of the earth." (Psalm 37:34) We can be confident that Jehovah will continue to keep his word, and right through the end of this wicked world, he will save men, women, and children who "keep his way." That phrase in the original Hebrew conveys the thought of

both diligence and faithfulness in serving Jehovah. Now, therefore, is not the time to grow weary or to give up privileges of service extended to us. This is the time to exert ourselves in loyal service of our God and his Kingdom. (Isaiah 35:3, 4) There are fine examples to encourage us. Let us consider some of them.

Patriarchs Reflect Loyalty

⁷ When Jehovah purposed to destroy a wicked human society by a deluge of water, he made a covenant with the patriarchal family head Noah for the preservation of his family and the continuation of life on this earth. (Genesis 6:18) Noah was grateful for the prospect of divine protection, but he and his family had to prove worthy of it. How? By doing what Jehovah commanded. They were first confronted with the prodigious task of building the ark. When it was completed, Noah was to fill it with representatives of the animal realm and with enough food to sustain them for a long period. But that was not all. During the extended time of preparation, Noah was doing all that he could in an unprecedented preaching work, warning of the divine judgment to come.—Genesis, chapters 6 and 7; 2 Peter 2:5.

⁸ The Bible tells us that “Noah proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him. He did just so.” (Genesis 6:22; 7:5) Noah and his family proved loyal in fulfilling their assignments. Their self-sacrificing spirit meant that their time was spent profitably, but the task was hard and the preaching difficult. By their not producing children before the Flood, Noah’s sons and their wives were helped to concentrate on the assigned work at hand and to coordinate their activity. That cataclysmic Flood brought a just end to a wicked world. Only Noah, his wife, and their three sons and three daughters-in-law survived. We can be glad that they were loyal to God and his directions, as every one of us is directly descended from Noah through either Shem, Ham, or Japheth.—Genesis 5:32; 1 Peter 3:20.

⁹ When Abraham prepared to offer up Isaac as a sacrifice, he was acting in faithful obedience to Jehovah’s command. What a test of his loyalty that was! Yet, Jehovah stayed Abraham’s hand, saying: “Now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me.” We do well, though, to reflect on what preceded that. During the three-day trip to Mount Moriah, Abraham surely had enough time to weigh things and to change his mind. What about Isaac, who carried the wood for the sacrifice and who permitted himself to be bound hand and foot? He did not falter in his allegiance to his father, Abraham, nor did he question the role he had to play, even though it appeared that his course of loyalty would cost him his life.—Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:17.

Christian Loyalty

¹⁰ Jehovah has always acted in true loyalty. “Become imitators of God,” urges the apostle Paul. (Ephesians 5:1, 2) As the patriarchs responded, so Christians were to respond. The early Christians set fine examples in loyal worship, as the following experience shows.

¹¹ Roman emperor Constantius I, father of Emperor Constantine, apparently had deep respect for the followers of

Jesus Christ. To test the loyalty of Christians attached to his palace, he told them they could remain in his service only if they agreed to sacrifice to idols. Refusal would lead to their dismissal and vengeance at his hand, they were told. By this simple ploy, Constantius wanted to identify those who would never compromise their loyalty. Those who proved loyal to God and his principles were retained in the emperor’s service, some even becoming trusted counselors. Those disloyal to God’s command were ignominiously dismissed.

¹² Although loyalty must characterize the lives of all Christians, it is specifically mentioned at Titus 1:8 in the list of qualities necessary for a man to be a Christian overseer. William Barclay says that *ho’si-os*, the Greek word here translated as “loyal,” describes “the man who obeys the eternal laws which were and are before any manmade laws.” It is essential that elders take such a loyal stand of obedience to God’s laws. This right example will help the congregation to grow and be strong enough to meet all trials and pressures that may threaten it as a body or its members individually. (1 Peter 5:3) Appointed elders have a great responsibility to the flock never to compromise their loyalty to Jehovah, for the congregation is admonished to “imitate their faith.”—Hebrews 13:7.

Loyalty—At What Price?

¹³ “All men have their price” is an axiom attributed to Sir Robert Walpole, a British prime minister of the 18th century. It nicely sums up the fact that throughout history loyalties have often been traded for selfish gain. Consider Bible translator William Tyndale, who mistakenly accepted Henry Phillips as a loyal friend. In 1535 Phillips disloyally betrayed Tyndale to his enemies, leading to Tyndale’s immediate imprisonment and untimely death. One historian says that Phillips, probably an agent of either the English king or the English Catholics, “was well paid for his Judas-work.” The historian was alluding, of course, to Judas Iscariot, who accepted 30 pieces of silver as the price for betraying Jesus Christ. We should not conclude from these examples, however, that the “price” for a person’s loyalty is always money. It is not.

¹⁴ When Potiphar’s wife importuned Joseph to “lie down with [her],” his loyalty to Jehovah was put to the test. What would he do? With a mind already clear on the principles involved, Joseph ran from the house, determined that he could never “commit this great badness and actually sin against God.” The prospect of sexual pleasure could not overcome Joseph’s loyalty to his God, Jehovah.—Genesis 39:7-9.

¹⁵ Yet, there are other dangers; ambition can undermine loyalty. That was the motivation behind Absalom’s rebellion against his father, King David. By scheming and intrigue, Absalom sought to ingratiate himself with the people. Eventually, he raised an army to confront his father’s loyal supporters. His death at the hand of Joab brought an end to Absalom’s disloyalty to his father, David, but what a price to pay for attempting to overthrow the theocratic arrangement!—2 Samuel 15:1-12; 18:6-17.

The Loyalty That Has No Price

¹⁶ Though Satan claims that everybody has his price, and this was true of Absalom, it was not true of Joseph, and it has never been true of loyal worshipers of Jehovah. Nevertheless, Satan will make any offer to get us to break our loyalty to our Creator. The apostle Paul expressed his fear that “somehow, as the serpent seduced Eve by its cunning,” our thinking might be corrupted, leading us to compromise our loyalty to Jehovah and worship of him.—2 Corinthians 11:3.

¹⁷ It is appropriate that we ask ourselves: ‘Is there any price I would accept in exchange for my privilege of loyally worshipping my Creator?’ It is a sad fact that, unlike Joseph, some who were Jehovah’s dedicated servants asked very little in exchange. Even some elders have traded their priceless privileges of sacred service for the temporary enjoyment of immoral sensual pleasures. Whether elders or not, many of those doing this have irretrievably lost family unity, the love and respect of the congregation, and the approval of Jehovah—the very One who can give strength to maintain loyalty and to resist any temptation from Satan.—Isaiah 12:2; Philipians 4:13.

¹⁸ Others, in ambitious determination to get on in worldly pursuits, have “stabbed themselves all over with many pains,” in spite of the Bible’s clear warnings. (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) Demas, a Christian mentioned by Paul, lost out on this account, either temporarily or permanently. (2 Timothy 4:10) Loyalty to Jehovah can never be compromised without disastrous results. “God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”—Galatians 6:7.

¹⁹ Sometimes the bargaining price appears in a very subtle way. For example, a report from the United States says that many families spend about half their waking hours at home watching television, with young people particularly addicted. If a Christian was to feed his mind primarily on television, with its sex and violence, he could soon undermine his Christian principles. That could easily lead to his becoming disloyal, alienated from Jehovah. Such bad association does spoil useful habits. (1 Corinthians 15:33) We must not forget that the Scriptures admonish us to take time to study and meditate on Jehovah’s Word. Is excessive time spent relaxing in front of a television screen a fair exchange for time that could be used to acquire knowledge leading to everlasting life as a loyal worshiper of Jehovah? Many coming to a knowledge of the truth today have had to make major adjustments in their thinking in this regard.—1 Timothy 4:15, 16; 2 Timothy 2:15.

²⁰ Takashi is a Japanese businessman living in England. He used to spend three or four hours most evenings watching television with his family. After he and his wife were baptized three years ago, he resolved that personal and family Bible study must take priority. By reducing his television viewing to a mere 15 or 30 minutes a day on the average, he took a fine lead in the family. Though Takashi has to study using two Bibles, one English and the other Japanese, his spiritual growth has been rapid, and he now serves as a ministerial servant in an English-language congregation. His wife is an auxiliary pioneer. “To safeguard the spirituality of our two

young boys,” he says, “each day I also carefully monitor what my wife and I allow them to see on television.” Such self-discipline is rewarding.

²¹ We can be sure of this: Satan knows our weaknesses, perhaps better than we know them ourselves. He will stop at nothing as he tries to get us to compromise or weaken our allegiance to Jehovah. (Compare Matthew 4:8, 9.) How, then, can we safeguard ourselves? By constantly keeping our dedication before us and by taking delight in developing skills as we minister to the spiritual needs of others. As loyal servants of Jehovah, we must keep busy in his service and be guided at all times by his holy Word. This will help us in our firm resolve that no price Satan can ever offer will swerve us from loyalty to God.—Psalm 119:14-16.

w89 2/1 pp. 10-15 Covenants Involving God’s Eternal Purpose

“Jehovah . . . has remembered his covenant even to time indefinite, the word that he commanded, to a thousand generations.”—PSALM 105:7, 8.

MOST likely a covenant has affected you—your past, your present, and your future. ‘What covenant?’ you may wonder. In this case, it is marriage, for most of us are the offspring of a marriage and many of us are married ourselves. Even those not yet married may think about the blessings of a happy marriage in the future.

² Centuries ago the Hebrew prophet Malachi wrote about “the wife of your youth,” “your partner and the wife of your covenant.” (Malachi 2:14-16) He could call marriage a covenant, for that is a contract or formal agreement, an arrangement between parties to do something jointly. The marriage compact is a bilateral covenant in which two parties agree to become husband and wife, accepting obligations toward each other and looking forward to lasting benefits.

³ Marriage might seem to be the covenant with the greatest personal impact on us, and yet the Bible discusses covenants of much wider import. In contrasting Biblical covenants with those of non-Biblical religions, one encyclopedia says that only in the Bible “does this ordering of the relation between God and his people become a comprehensive system with ultimately universal implications.” Yes, these covenants involve the eternal purpose of our loving Creator. As you will see, your receiving untold blessings is tied in with these covenants. ‘But how is that so?’ you have reason to ask.

⁴ You are well aware of the tragic results when Adam and Eve rejected God’s authority. We inherited imperfection from them, which fact is behind the sicknesses that we have suffered, and which leads to death. (Genesis 3:1-6, 14-19) We can be grateful, however, that their sin could not thwart God’s purpose to fill the earth with true worshipers enjoying lasting health and happiness. In this connection, Jehovah made the covenant recorded at Genesis 3:15: “And I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him

in the heel.” However, the brevity and symbolic language of this statement left many questions unanswered. How would Jehovah fulfill this covenant promise?

⁵ God further chose to arrange for a particular series of divine covenants, which, with the Edenic covenant, make seven in all. Each of us hoping to enjoy eternal blessings should understand these covenants. This includes knowing when and how they were made, who were involved, what their objectives or terms were, and how the covenants relate to one another in God’s purpose to bless obedient mankind with everlasting life. This is an appropriate time to review these covenants, for on March 22, 1989, congregations of Christians will convene to commemorate the Lord’s Evening Meal, which directly involves these covenants.

⁶ Of course, to some people the idea of covenants might sound dry, legalistic, with little human interest. Consider, though, what the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* says: “The terms for ‘covenant’ in the ancient Near East as well as in the Greek and Roman world . . . are distributed according to two semantic fields: *oath and commitment* on the one hand, *love and friendship* on the other.” We can see both aspects—oath and friendship—as the keystone of Jehovah’s covenants.

Abrahamic Covenant—Basis for Eternal Blessings

⁷ The patriarch Abraham, “the father of all those having faith,” was “Jehovah’s friend.” (Romans 4:11; James 2:21-23) God swore to him with an oath, setting out a covenant that is basic to our receiving eternal blessings.—Hebrews 6:13-18.

⁸ While Abraham was in Ur, Jehovah told him to move to another land, which turned out to be Canaan. At that time Jehovah promised Abraham: “I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great; . . . and all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of you.” (Genesis 12:1-3) Thereafter, God gradually added details to what we rightly speak of as the Abrahamic covenant: Abraham’s seed, or heir, would inherit the Promised Land; his seed would lead to unnumbered offspring; Abraham and Sarah would be the source of kings.—Genesis 13:14-17; 15:4-6; 17:1-8, 16; Psalm 105:8-10.

⁹ God called it “my covenant between me and you [Abraham].” (Genesis 17:2) But we certainly should feel that our lives are involved, for God later amplified the covenant, stating: “I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves.” (Genesis 22:17, 18) We are part of those nations; a potential blessing is in store for us.

¹⁰ Let us pause to consider what we can learn from the Abrahamic covenant. Like the Edenic covenant before it, this points to a coming “seed,” thus suggesting that the seed would have a human lineage. (Genesis 3:15) That would be of the line of Shem, down to Abraham, and through his son Isaac. This line would involve kingship, and it would

somehow allow for a blessing for not just one family but humans of all lands. How was that covenant fulfilled?

¹¹ Abraham’s descendants through Jacob, or Israel, multiplied to become a great nation. As an unnumbered literal seed of Abraham, they were dedicated to the pure worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 28:13; Exodus 3:6, 15; 6:3; Acts 3:13) Often the Israelites turned from pure worship, yet “Jehovah showed them favor and had mercy upon them . . . for the sake of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and he did not want to bring them to ruin.” (2 Kings 13:23; Exodus 2:24; Leviticus 26:42-45) Even after God accepted the Christian congregation as his people, he continued for a time to show special favor to the Israelites as a people who were the literal seed of Abraham.—Daniel 9:27.

Spiritual Seed of Abraham

¹² The Abrahamic covenant had another fulfillment, a spiritual one. This greater fulfillment would not have been obvious before Jesus’ time, but we can be happy that it is clear in our time. We have the explanation of its fulfillment in God’s Word. Paul writes: “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It says, not: ‘And to seeds,’ as in the case of many such, but as in the case of one: ‘And to your seed,’ who is Christ.”—Galatians 3:16.

¹³ Yes, the seed would come through just one line, or family, which was true of Jesus, born a natural Jew, a literal descendant of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-34) Additionally, he was part of the family of the Greater Abraham in heaven. Recall that with deep faith the patriarch Abraham had been willing to sacrifice his son Isaac if God wanted that. (Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:17-19) Similarly, Jehovah sent his only-begotten Son to earth to become a ransom sacrifice for believing mankind. (Romans 5:8; 8:32) It is thus understandable why Paul identified Jesus Christ as the principal part of the seed of Abraham according to this covenant.

¹⁴ Paul went on to indicate that God would ‘multiply Abraham’s seed’ in the spiritual fulfillment. He wrote: “If you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham’s seed, heirs with reference to a promise.” (Genesis 22:17; Galatians 3:29) Such ones are the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians who form a secondary part of the seed of Abraham. They are not in opposition to the primary part of the seed but “belong to Christ.” (1 Corinthians 1:2; 15:23) We know that many of them cannot trace their ancestry to Abraham, for they are from non-Jewish nations. More crucial in the spiritual fulfillment, though, they are not naturally part of the family of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah; rather, they come from the imperfect family of sinner Adam. So we will need to see from later covenants how they can qualify to become part of “Abraham’s seed.”

Law Covenant Temporarily Added

¹⁵ After God made the Abrahamic covenant as a fundamental step toward accomplishing his purpose, how would the line of the Seed be protected from contamination or extermination until the time for him to appear? When the Seed did arrive, how could true worshipers identify him? Paul

answers such questions by pointing out God's wisdom in temporarily adding the Law covenant. The apostle writes:

¹⁶ "Why, then, the Law? It was added to make transgressions manifest, until the seed should arrive to whom the promise had been made; and it was transmitted through angels by the hand of a mediator. . . . The Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith."—Galatians 3:19, 24.

¹⁷ At Mount Sinai, Jehovah made a unique national covenant between himself and Israel—the Law covenant, with Moses as its mediator. (Galatians 4:24, 25) The people agreed to be in this covenant, and it was validated with the blood of bulls and goats. (Exodus 24:3-8; Hebrews 9:19, 20) It gave Israel theocratic laws and an outline for a righteous government. The covenant forbade intermarrying with pagans or sharing in immoral and false religious practices. It thus guarded the Israelites and was a force in preserving the line of the seed uncontaminated. (Exodus 20:4-6; 34:12-16) But since no imperfect Israelite could keep the Law completely, it made sins manifest. (Galatians 3:19) It also pointed to the need for a perfect, permanent priest and for a sacrifice that would not have to be repeated yearly. The Law was like a tutor that led a child to the needed instructor, who would be the Messiah, or Christ. (Hebrews 7:26-28; 9:9, 16-22; 10:1-4, 11) When it had accomplished its purpose, the Law covenant would end.—Galatians 3:24, 25; Romans 7:6; see "Questions From Readers," page 31.

¹⁸ When making this temporary covenant, God also mentioned this thrilling objective: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property . . . And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6) What a prospect! A nation of king-priests. How could that be, though? As the Law later specified, the ruling tribe (Judah) and the priestly tribe (Levi) were allotted different responsibilities. (Genesis 49:10; Exodus 28:43; Numbers 3:5-13) No man could be both a civil ruler and a priest. Still, God's words at Exodus 19:5, 6 gave reason to believe that in some undisclosed manner, those in the Law covenant would have opportunity to provide the members of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Davidic Kingdom Covenant

¹⁹ In time Jehovah added another covenant that further clarified how he would accomplish his purpose, to our eternal blessing. We have seen that the Abrahamic covenant pointed forward to kingship among the literal seed of Abraham. (Genesis 17:6) The Law covenant also anticipated kings among God's people, for Moses told Israel: "When you eventually come into the [Promised Land] and you have said, 'Let me set a king over myself like all the nations who are round about me'; you should without fail set over yourself a king whom Jehovah your God will choose. . . . You will not be allowed to put over yourself a foreigner." (Deuteronomy 17:14, 15) How would God arrange for such kingship, and how would it bear on the Abrahamic covenant?

²⁰ Though Israel's first king was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, he was followed by the courageous and loyal David of Judah. (1 Samuel 8:5; 9:1, 2; 10:1; 16:1, 13) Well

into David's reign, Jehovah chose to make a covenant with David. First He said: "I shall certainly raise up your seed after you, which will come out of your inward parts; and I shall indeed firmly establish his kingdom. He is the one that will build a house for my name, and I shall certainly establish the throne of his kingdom firmly to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:12, 13) As there indicated, David's son Solomon became the next king, and he was used to construct a house, or temple, for God in Jerusalem. Yet, there was more.

²¹ Jehovah went on to make this covenant with David: "Your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:16) Plainly, God was thus establishing a kingly dynasty for Israel in David's family. It was not to be just a constant succession of Davidic kings. Eventually, someone in David's line would come to rule "to time indefinite, and his throne [would be] as the sun in front of [God]."—Psalm 89:20, 29, 34-36; Isaiah 55:3, 4.

²² It is evident, then, that the Davidic covenant further narrowed down the line of the Seed. Even the first-century Jews realized that the Messiah would have to be a descendant of David. (John 7:41, 42) Jesus Christ, the primary part of the seed of the Abrahamic covenant, qualified to become the permanent Heir of this Davidic Kingdom, as an angel testified. (Luke 1:31-33) Jesus thus gained the right to rule over the Promised Land, the earthly realm over which David had reigned. This should increase our confidence in Jesus; he rules, not by illegal usurpation, but through an established legal arrangement, a divine covenant.

²³ We have considered but four of the divine covenants bearing on how God arranged to accomplish his purpose to bring eternal blessings to mankind. Likely, you can see that the picture is not complete. Questions remain: Since humans continued imperfect, what priest or sacrifice could ever permanently change that? How would humans qualify to become part of Abraham's seed? Is there reason to believe that the right to rule would expand to include more than a mere earthly territory? How could Abraham's seed, both primary and secondary parts, bring a blessing to "all nations of the earth," including each of us? Let us see.

[Footnotes]

This is a *unilateral* covenant, since only one party (God) is committed to carrying out its terms.

"The covenantal idea was a special feature of the religion of Israel, the only one to demand exclusive loyalty and to preclude the possibility of dual or multiple loyalties such as were permitted in other religions."—*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Volume II, page 278.

w89 2/1 pp. 15-20 Will You Benefit From God's Covenants?

“By means of you all the nations will be blessed.’ Consequently those who adhere to faith are being blessed together with faithful Abraham.”—GALATIANS 3:8, 9.

“BENEVOLENT [or, enlightened] despots” is what some 18th-century European rulers are called. They ‘meant well to govern their people with fatherly kindness, but their plans went wrong and their reforms fell flat.’ (*The Encyclopedia Americana*) This was a leading cause of the revolutions that soon engulfed Europe.

² How different Jehovah is from unpredictable human rulers. We can easily see mankind’s aching need for change that will finally produce real remedies for injustice and suffering. But we need not worry that God’s actions to bring this about depend on some whim. In the world’s most widely distributed book, he has documented his promise to bring lasting blessings to believing mankind. This will be regardless of people’s former nationality, race, education, or social standing. (Galatians 3:28) But can you rely on this?

³ The apostle Paul quoted part of the assurance God had given to Abraham: “Assuredly in blessing I will bless you.” Paul added that since “it is impossible for God to lie,” we “may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us.” (Hebrews 6:13-18) Our confidence in those blessings can be further strengthened by noting the orderly way in which God laid the basis for accomplishing this.

⁴ We have already seen that God made a covenant with Abraham involving a seed who would be instrumental in blessing “all nations of the earth.” (Genesis 22:17, 18) The Israelites became a fleshly seed, but in the more important spiritual sense, Jesus Christ proved to be the principal part of the seed of Abraham. Jesus was also the Son, or Seed, of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah. Christians who “belong to Christ” make up the secondary part of the seed of Abraham. (Galatians 3:16, 29) After forming the Abrahamic covenant, God temporarily added the Law covenant with the nation of Israel. It proved that the Israelites were sinners who needed a permanent priest and a perfect sacrifice. It guarded the line of the Seed and helped to identify him. The Law covenant also showed that, somehow, God would bring forth a nation of king-priests. While the Law was still in effect, God made a covenant with David to have a kingly dynasty in Israel. The Davidic Kingdom covenant also pointed to someone having permanent rulership over the earth.

⁵ Yet, there were aspects or objectives of these covenants that seemed incomplete or in need of clarification. For example, if the coming Seed was to be a king in David’s line, how could he be a permanent priest who would do more than previous priests? (Hebrews 5:1; 7:13, 14) Could this King govern more than a limited earthly realm? How would the secondary part of the seed qualify to be in the family of the Greater Abraham? And even if they could, what domain would they have, since most members did not descend from David? Let us see how God took legal steps in the form of

additional covenants that would settle these questions, opening the way for our eternal blessing.

Covenant for a Heavenly Priest

⁶ As we saw, within the scope of the Law covenant, God covenanted with David for a descendant (a seed) who would reign permanently over an earthly domain. But Jehovah also revealed to David that a lasting priest would come. David wrote: “Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret): ‘You are a priest to time indefinite according to the manner of Melchizedek!’” (Psalm 110:4) What was behind this sworn word of God that amounted to a personal covenant between Jehovah and the coming Priest?

⁷ Melchizedek had been king of ancient Salem, which evidently was on the site where later the city Jerusalem (a name incorporating “Salem”) was built. The account of Abraham’s dealings with him highlights that he was a king who worshiped “the Most High God.” (Genesis 14:17-20) Yet, God’s statement at Psalm 110:4 shows that Melchizedek was also a priest, making him a unique person. He was both a king and a priest, and he served where the Davidic kings and the Levitical priests later carried out their divinely arranged functions.

⁸ Paul supplies us with added details about this covenant for a priest like Melchizedek. For example, he says that it was Jesus Christ who was “called by God a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek.” (Hebrews 5:4-10; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 22) Though Melchizedek obviously had human parents, there is no record of his genealogy. So rather than Jesus’ inheriting the office of priest according to a recorded lineage from Melchizedek, his appointment came directly from God. Jesus’ priesthood will not be passed to a successor, for “he remains a priest perpetually.” This is so, for the benefits of his priestly service will be eternal. We can truly be blessed in having a priest who “is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him” and to instruct and guide faithful ones eternally.—Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17, 23-25.

⁹ Another significant fact is that Jesus’ role as King-Priest goes beyond the earthly sphere. In the same context where he mentioned this covenant for a priest like Melchizedek, David wrote: “The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is: ‘Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.’” We can thus see that Jesus—David’s Lord—was to have a place in heaven with Jehovah, which occurred at his ascension. From heaven, Christ can wield authority with his Father to subdue enemies and to execute judgments.—Psalm 110:1, 2; Acts 2:33-36; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 12:2.

¹⁰ Consequently, by knowing about this fifth covenant, we have an expanded view of the orderly, thorough way in which Jehovah will accomplish his purpose. It establishes that the primary part of the seed will also be a priest in heaven and that his authority as King-Priest will have universal range.—1 Peter 3:22.

New Covenant and the Secondary Part of the Seed

¹¹ When we earlier considered the Abrahamic covenant, we noted that Jesus became the primary part of the seed by natural right. He directly descended from the patriarch Abraham, and as a perfect human, he was an accepted Son of

the Greater Abraham. What, though, about humans who have the privilege of becoming the secondary part of Abraham's seed, "heirs with reference to a promise"? (Galatians 3:29) Being imperfect, part of the family of sinner Adam, they would be unqualified to be in the family of Jehovah, the Greater Abraham. How could the impediment of imperfection be overcome? That would be impossible for humans, but it is not impossible for God.—Matthew 19:25, 26.

¹² While the Law was still in effect, God foretold through his prophet: "I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers . . . 'which covenant of mine they themselves broke' . . . I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. And they will no more teach . . . 'Know Jehovah!' for they will all of them know me . . . For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more."—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

¹³ Observe that a feature of this new covenant was the forgiveness of sins, evidently in a way that was 'not like' the arrangement with animal sacrifices under the Law. Jesus shed light on this the day he died. After joining his disciples in celebrating the Passover as required by the Law, Christ instituted the Lord's Evening Meal. This annual celebration would involve a shared cup of wine, about which Jesus said: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf."—Luke 22:14-20.

¹⁴ Hence, the new covenant would be made operative by Jesus' blood. On the basis of such a perfect sacrifice, God could 'forgive error and sin' once and for all. Think what that would mean! Being able to forgive completely the sins of devoted humans in Adam's family, God could view them as sinless, beget them as spiritual sons of the Greater Abraham, and then anoint them with holy spirit. (Romans 8:14-17) Thus, the new covenant validated by Jesus' sacrifice enables his disciples to become the secondary part of the seed of Abraham. Paul wrote: "Through his death [Jesus would] bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil; and [he would] emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives. For he is really not assisting angels at all, but he is assisting Abraham's seed."—Hebrews 2:14-16; 9:14.

¹⁵ While Jesus would be Mediator and the validating sacrifice of the new covenant, who were the parties to the covenant? Jeremiah foretold that God would make this covenant with "the house of Israel." Which Israel? Not fleshly Israel circumcised under the Law, for the new covenant made that former covenant obsolete. (Hebrews 8:7, 13; see page 31.) Now God would deal with Jews and Gentiles who by faith were figuratively 'circumcised in the heart by spirit.' This harmonizes with his saying that those in the new covenant would have 'his laws written in their mind and in their hearts.' (Romans 2:28, 29; Hebrews 8:10) Paul called such spiritual Jews "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16; James 1:1.

¹⁶ Since God was now dealing with spiritual Israel, a door of opportunity opened. When God established the Law, he had spoken of the sons of Israel becoming to him "a kingdom

of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6) Actually, fleshly Israel never could and never did become a nation in which all of them were king-priests. But Jews and Gentiles that were accepted as the secondary part of the seed of Abraham could become king-priests. The apostle Peter confirmed this, telling such ones: "You are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called you out of darkness." He also wrote that an 'unfading inheritance was reserved in the heavens for them.'—1 Peter 1:4; 2:9, 10.

¹⁷ Consequently, the new covenant works with the preexisting Abrahamic covenant to produce the secondary part of the seed. This new covenant between Jehovah and spirit-begotten Christians allows for the formation of a heavenly nation of king-priests in the royal family of the Greater Abraham. We can see, then, why Paul said that this is "a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises." (Hebrews 8:6) Those promises include the blessing of having God's law written in the hearts of devoted ones whose sins are not called to mind, and with all 'knowing Jehovah, from the least to the greatest.'—Hebrews 8:11.

Jesus' Covenant for a Kingdom

¹⁸ Reflecting on the six covenants that we have discussed, it might seem that Jehovah has legally arranged all that is needed to accomplish his purpose. Yet, the Bible brings up another covenant that ties in with what we have considered, a covenant that rounds out additional aspects of this vital matter. Spirit-begotten Christians rightly expect that 'the Lord will deliver them from every wicked work and will save them for his heavenly kingdom.' (2 Timothy 4:18) In heaven, they will be a nation of king-priests, but what will be their domain? When they are raised to heaven, Christ is already there as a perfect high priest. He will also have stood up with kingly power for universal rule. (Psalm 2:6-9; Revelation 11:15) What is there for the other king-priests to do?

¹⁹ On Nisan 14, 33 C.E., the evening Jesus instituted the Lord's Evening Meal and mentioned "the new covenant by virtue of [his] blood," he spoke of another covenant, the seventh for discussion. He told his faithful apostles: "You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:20, 28-30) Just as the Father had made the covenant with Jesus to be a priest like Melchizedek, so Christ made a personal covenant with his loyal followers.

²⁰ The 11 apostles had certainly stuck with Jesus in his trials, and the covenant showed that they would sit on thrones. Further, Revelation 3:21 proves that all spirit-begotten Christians who prove faithful will sit on heavenly thrones. Thus, this covenant is with all 144,000 who have been bought with Jesus' blood to be taken to heaven as priests and "to rule as kings over the earth." (Revelation 1:4-6; 5:9, 10; 20:6) The covenant that Jesus makes with them joins them to him to share his dominion. In a sense, it is as though a bride from a noble family was joined by marriage to a ruling monarch. She

thus comes into position to share his kingdom rule.—John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8.

²¹ What benefits will this open up for obedient mankind? Neither Jesus nor the 144,000 will be like the benevolent despots who “could provide no real solutions.” Rather, we are assured that Jesus is a high priest “who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin.” We can therefore understand why he ‘can sympathize’ with human weaknesses and why the “other sheep,” as has been true of anointed Christians, can also, through Christ, approach God’s throne “with freeness of speech.” Thus, they also “may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time.”—Hebrews 4:14-16; John 10:16.

²² Those covenanted to share with Jesus as king-priests also share in the blessing of mankind. As the ancient Levitical priests benefited the entire nation of Israel, so those serving on heavenly thrones with Jesus will judge in righteousness all those living on earth. (Luke 22:30) Those king-priests were once human, so they will be sympathetic to mankind’s needs. This secondary part of the seed will cooperate with Jesus in seeing that “all the nations will be blessed.”—Galatians 3:8.

²³ All who desire to share in that blessing upon mankind, thus benefiting from God’s covenants, are now being invited to do so. (Revelation 22:17) One fine step is to be present for the celebration of the Lord’s Evening Meal, which will be held after sunset on Wednesday, March 22, 1989. Please make plans now to attend with one of the congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses. There you will learn more about divine covenants and will further see how you can benefit from them.

[Footnotes]

“Even the most adventurous reforms left an impoverished peasantry, an overprivileged, undertaxed nobility, a middle class inadequately integrated into government and society . . . It must be said that while enlightened despotism began to face questions that could no longer be ignored, it could provide no real solutions within the political and economic realities of the era.”—*Western Civilization—Its Genesis and Destiny: The Modern Heritage*.

Jesus is not a party to the new covenant. He is its Mediator and is without sins needing forgiveness. Furthermore, it is not necessary for him to become a king-priest by it, for he is a king according to the Davidic covenant and also a priest like Melchizedek.

g87 12/8 pp. 24-27 Time—Are You Its Master or Its Slave?

“WHY are you late?” inquired the teacher as Albert walked into the classroom. “Because I ran alongside my bicycle all the way to school,” Albert replied, almost out of breath.

“Why didn’t you *ride* your bicycle?” asked the teacher curiously. “Because,” explained Albert, “I was so late I didn’t have time to stop and get on the bike.”

This exaggerated, comical story illustrates a situation that many of us face daily. Rushed, with many tasks to be done and deadlines to be met, we may feel that we are racing from one thing to the next. But, like Albert, we sometimes slow ourselves down by concluding that we do not have the time to stop and reorganize for effectiveness.

Nevertheless, we could save time, accomplish more in the long run, and reduce stress if we did pause to sharpen our skills in managing time. Then, instead of viewing time as a relentless master, it could become a helpful servant.

How can you achieve more effective management of your time? Following are some suggestions. As you read them, choose those that fit your needs and adapt them to your circumstances.

Plan Your Day

Imagine that your day has just begun. Before you is a seemingly endless number of tasks. The thought of all these duties may cause you to dread the day. Where should you begin? By planning your day.

Many start by writing what is known as a To Do List. One person with many responsibilities in a large organization notes how he stays on schedule. He states: “I keep a written list of things to be done. As new tasks present themselves or come to mind, I add them to the list. Then I cross off each item as it is completed.”

Might a similar written plan help you to organize your daily activities? You may respond: ‘That might help me get started, but I would never finish everything on my list!’ And you are probably right. That is why it is helpful to . . .

Set Priorities

You can set priorities by numbering each item on your list according to importance. Then, to the extent possible, handle each activity in that order. Naturally, there will be times when you may choose to make an exception and not handle a matter in strict priority order, according to your circumstances and preferences. So stay flexible. Your objective is to stay in control so that what you do accomplish each day is by choice rather than by chance.

Do not rush from job to job or worry about doing everything that you have listed. Time-management consultant Alan Lakein stresses: “One rarely reaches the bottom of a To Do List. It’s not completing the list that counts, but making the best use of your time.”

You will have accomplished this if the bulk of your time was directed toward what is truly important. As for the unfinished items, see if they can be delegated to others or transferred to tomorrow’s list. A hard look at lower-priority items sometimes reveals that they do not need to be done at all. On the other hand, an item at the bottom of today’s list may have a higher priority tomorrow.

But how do you go about determining which activities on your list are of high priority? After all, when looking at a long list of duties, many things may appear to be equally important. So to set priorities effectively, you must . . .

Distinguish Between “Urgent” and “Important”

A wise king in Bible times said that a man should “see good for all his hard work.” (Ecclesiastes 3:13) Some tasks yield better results than others. So when looking over a list of duties, consider the *results* each one will bring. Will finishing the job produce significant benefits? Will you “see good” for your hard work? If not, it may not be a high-priority task.

True, at first glance everything on your list may seem urgent. But are urgent matters always important, deserving a major time investment? Michael LeBoeuf, a professor of time management at the University of New Orleans, makes this observation: “Important things are seldom urgent and urgent things are seldom important. The urgency of fixing a flat tire when you are late for an appointment is much greater than remembering to pay your auto insurance premium, but its importance [the tire] is, in most cases, relatively small.”

Then he laments: “Unfortunately, many of us spend our lives fighting fires under the tyranny of the urgent. The result is that we ignore the less urgent but more important things in life. It’s a great effectiveness killer.”

So when setting priorities, ask yourself which activities are truly important. Then try to spend most of your time on these. Perhaps an urgent matter does not need immediate attention. Does it justify a large time investment? Can you handle it quickly and move on to an activity that will result in greater accomplishment? Better yet, can it be delegated to someone else?

No doubt you will agree that it is more rewarding to work at something that yields important results than it is simply to be busy at whatever activity happens to be at hand. Try to direct as many of your efforts as possible toward activities that result in true accomplishment.

The 80/20 Rule

Applying the principles discussed thus far, what percentage of your day’s activities would you expect to categorize as top priority? Of course, that will depend upon your specific responsibilities. But a number of time-management experts feel that, in many cases, you can narrow the top-priority items down to about 20 percent. They cite, as a guide, the 80/20 rule.

This principle was formulated by the 19th-century Italian economist Vilfredo Pareto. It states that only about 20 percent of the causes produce about 80 percent of the results. If you are alert, you may discover that there are a number of

situations in everyday life where Pareto's principle applies. But how can the 80/20 rule be applied to your use of time?

Analyze the items on your To Do List. Perhaps you can be 80 percent effective by accomplishing two out of ten items listed. If so, those are the two most important items on your list. Also, analyze a project before diving in. How much of it is truly important to your objective? What part of the job will produce the most significant results? This portion of the task is priority.

Time-management consultant Dru Scott, after discussing Pareto's principle, explains how to make it work for you. She says: "Identify the vital ingredients necessary to achieve your objective. Do these things first. You will get the most results in the least amount of time."

Enjoy the Benefits

Perhaps at this point you can better appreciate that being the master of your time is not a matter of being preoccupied with never wasting a minute or rushing from crisis to crisis. Rather, effective time management means selecting the appropriate task for right now. It means discerning what activities yield the best results and spending your time on these whenever possible.

There are no fixed rules for personal organization of your time. To benefit from the suggestions in this article, be flexible. Experiment. Adapt. Discover what works best for you. Read the ideas in the box on this page and see which ones will help you turn a relentless master into a helpful servant.

By getting better control of your time, what a sense of accomplishment you will have at the end of each day! Though more duties likely remain for tomorrow, you have the satisfaction of knowing that you directed your efforts toward the most important things. You will "see good" for your hard work.

You may even feel that—at last—there is enough time for the things that really matter. Then you will not be a victim of hectic circumstances, but you will be the master of your time. That will bring not only increased effectiveness to your work but likely increased joy as well.

[Box on page 27]

WAYS TO SAVE TIME

1. Have a clear set of values and goals in life. It is the key to setting daily priorities.
2. Work on tasks requiring concentration when you are most alert.
3. Make phone calls when you are most likely to contact the person.
4. Delegate work whenever possible. It frees you to accomplish more, and it gives experience to others.
5. When doing paperwork, try to handle each piece of paper once, rather than giving it a temporary 'parking place.'

6. At meetings with others, stick to an agenda. Have specific starting and finishing times.

7. Organize your work area with needed tools close at hand.

8. Do not feel obligated to accept every social invitation that comes your way. Learn to say no tactfully.

9. Standardize shopping and packing lists as much as possible rather than writing up new ones repeatedly.

10. Get sufficient rest and relaxation so that you can work effectively.

11. Set deadlines.

12. Do not procrastinate.

13. Break overwhelming tasks into smaller ones.

14. Do not be a perfectionist. Concentrate on what is truly important.

15. Make good use of waiting time. Write a letter, read, or accomplish some other essential task.

16. Know that there will be occasions when you will need to spend time on activities you would not choose. Do not waste time fretting about it. Instead, work to get it done.

[Picture on page 25]

Many find it helpful to make a priority list of things to be done

[Pictures on page 26]

Personal organization and the setting of priorities can make all the difference in the world

km 2/07 p. 8 Do Not Forget Those Who Are Inactive

¹ Are you acquainted with anyone who has become inactive? Perhaps he has stopped associating with the congregation and has drifted away. You may have contacted such a person while engaging in the house-to-house ministry. We must keep in mind that the individual continues to be our spiritual brother. We want to confirm our love for him and help him to return to the congregation and to ‘the shepherd and overseer of our souls.’—1 Pet. 2:25.

² **Demonstrate Interest:** A brief telephone call or visit may assure one who has become inactive that we have not forgotten him. What could we say? We may be encouraging by simply letting the person know that we were thinking of him. Keep the conversation positive and upbuilding. (Phil. 4:8) We might mention a point that we enjoyed from a recent meeting. We could also invite him to an upcoming meeting or assembly and offer to save him a seat or provide transportation.

³ A sister who had been inactive for more than 20 years was found in the territory. Although she was unwilling to accept a Bible study, the sister who found her called back, leaving the current magazines. After the district convention, the publisher shared some convention highlights with the inactive sister, and eventually she was reactivated.

⁴ **When Someone Returns:** When an inactive brother begins coming back to the meetings, how should we treat him? Well, how did Jesus treat his disciples after they had temporarily abandoned him? He warmly referred to them as his “brothers” and showed confidence in them. He even gave them an important assignment. (Matt. 28:10, 18, 19) Shortly thereafter, they were busy declaring the good news “without letup.”—Acts 5:42.

⁵ Before offering to study the Bible with someone who has become inactive or before inviting a brother who has been inactive a long time to accompany us in the ministry, we should seek direction from the elders. If we come across an inactive publisher in the territory, we should inform the elders so that they can render needed assistance.

⁶ As the Bible clearly shows, only those who run the course to the finish will receive salvation. (Matt. 24:13) Therefore, take note of those who may have stumbled or drifted away. If we patiently reflect Jehovah’s love by demonstrating sincere interest in such ones, we may experience the joy of seeing them resume their sacred service alongside us.—Luke 15:4-10.

km 2/03 p. 5 Help at the Right Time

¹ When the apostle Peter saw a need to strengthen fellow believers, concern moved him to give them loving reminders and encouragement. (2 Pet. 1:12, 13; 3:1) He urged ‘those who had obtained a faith’ to keep growing in spiritual qualities so as not to become “either inactive or unfruitful regarding the accurate knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (2 Pet. 1:1, 5-8) Peter’s purpose was to help them make the calling and choosing they had received from Jehovah sure, so that they might “be found finally by him spotless and unblemished and in peace.” (2 Pet. 1:10, 11; 3:14) For many, his encouragement proved to be help at the right time.

² Today, Christian overseers have similar concern for God’s people. In these “critical times hard to deal with,” many servants of Jehovah must contend with trying circumstances. (2 Tim. 3:1) Because of ongoing financial, family, or personal problems, some may feel as did David: “Calamities encircled me until there was no numbering of them. More errors of mine overtook me than I was able to see; they became more numerous than the hairs of my head, and my own heart left me.” (Ps. 40:12) These pressures can become so great that such ones may neglect vital spiritual matters and stop having an active share in the Christian ministry. Yet, despite their difficulties, ‘they have not forgotten Jehovah’s own commandments.’ (Ps. 119:176) Now is the right time for elders to provide such ones with needed help.—Isa. 32:1, 2.

³ To meet this need, the elders have been encouraged to make a special effort to assist those who are not currently having a share in the preaching work. A concerted effort to accomplish this is now in progress and will extend through the month of March. Book study overseers are being asked to visit inactive ones to offer spiritual assistance with a view to helping them renew their activity with the congregation. Where there is a need, a personal Bible study may be arranged. Others may be asked to assist. If you are invited to do so, your efforts could be very beneficial, especially if you give encouragement in a kind, understanding way.

⁴ There is reason for all to rejoice when someone resumes his activity with the congregation. (Luke 15:6) Our efforts to encourage inactive ones may truly result in “a word spoken at the right time for it.”—Prov. 25:11.

km 2/92 p. 7 par. 3 Showing Support for the Pioneers

³ **What Can Be Done:** Pioneers need the support of the elders. Much encouragement is provided when elders work with the pioneers. Many elders try to work with each pioneer in the congregation at least once a year. In this way the elders are able to give commendation for what the pioneers are doing and help them make further progress. Pioneers may need to readjust their schedule to be in service at a time when the elders are available. Also, elders will want to make sure that sufficient territory is available for the groups. Additional meetings for field service could be scheduled in the afternoons or evenings to accommodate the schedules of the pioneers. This would be especially true during those months when there are a number of auxiliary pioneers.—Isa. 40:11.

km 6/90 p. 8 Presenting the Good News—As a Family

¹ A dedicated family fully engaged in sacred service—with the father, mother, and children serving God whole-souled—is a praise to Jehovah's great name. We are happy that many such families are to be found in congregations of Jehovah's people earth wide.

² Of course, the father has the first responsibility to care for the spiritual needs of his family. (1 Cor. 11:3) With the cooperation of his wife and children, his family can exert a strong influence on others. (Matt. 5:16) What are some areas where this cooperation can be manifested?

PARENTS TAKE THE LEAD

³ In many instances, the father may be an elder or a ministerial servant. This means that in addition to the interests of his family, some of his time and attention must be given to congregation matters. The father's responsibility is to see to it that the available time is apportioned so that his family is not neglected. This may not always be easy in view of the demands made on his limited time. But because his family is his primary responsibility, he should regularly schedule some of his valuable time to be with his family in study, in field service, at meetings, and in suitable recreation. Circumstances and other responsibilities may alter the father's schedule on occasion, but how rewarding it is when he can spend time every month in field service with members of the family!

⁴ Cooperation from the wife is vital. She can complement her husband in a most important way by helping train the children in the ministry. Her exemplary zeal and devotion will do much to influence the children to grow in their appreciation for the ministry.—2 Tim. 3:14, 15.

⁵ There are many fine examples of situations in which one parent carried the spiritual load of responsibility and successfully trained the children in the ministry. Because of the excellent example of their mother or father, many young people have taken a firm stand for the truth, even taking up the full-time ministry.

CHILDREN'S RESPONSIBILITY

⁶ What about the responsibility of the children? Even the perfect Son of God, Jesus, while still a young child, was subject to the direction and instruction of his parents. (Luke 2:51) Therefore, when father and mother arrange for the family to spend time together in the ministry, it is the obligation of the children to show their godly devotion by cooperating with their parents.—Eph. 6:1-3.

⁷ Worshiping together as a family—studying, sharing in the field ministry, and attending meetings—strengthens the bonds of love and unity in the family circle. Parents and children share responsibility in this regard.

• **Before being approved for baptism, to what extent should an unbaptized publisher be sharing in the field ministry?**

One who qualifies as an unbaptized publisher has already demonstrated in a variety of ways his strong desire to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Ps. 110:3) A diligent study of the Scriptures has brought about a change in his thinking, attitude, and way of life. Stemming from a heartfelt desire to please Jehovah and do His will, such a serious Bible student associates regularly with Jehovah's people at congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Besides regular attendance at such Christian gatherings, likely he has also been moved from the heart to make public declaration of his faith by offering comments at the meetings, and probably he has enrolled in the Theocratic Ministry School.—Ps. 40:9, 10; *om* p. 73.

Once a Bible student embraces the truth and shows he genuinely appreciates the value of the Kingdom message, he may have the privilege of sharing in the house-to-house ministry. This is the primary work of Jehovah's Witnesses. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; *om* p. 111) In this connection, both the publisher conducting the study and the elders have a serious responsibility to make certain that the student's entire life is in harmony with Christian principles. He should have a real desire to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses and appreciate the privilege of sharing in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Gal. 6:6; w88 11/15 p. 17; *om* pp. 98-9, 174.

It need not be a very long time from when a Bible student qualifies to share with us in the ministry until he is able to present himself for water baptism. By now his life course is already in full harmony with Christian principles, but he lacks experience in the public ministry. He should be allowed sufficient time to demonstrate that he is steadfastly determined to have a regular and zealous share in the field ministry.—Ps. 40:8; Rom. 10:9, 10, 14, 15.

By the time the person is ready for baptism, most likely he will be regularly sharing the good news with others, spending more than just an hour or two in the field service each month. (w84 6/1 p. 8 par. 2) Of course, the personal circumstances of each one requesting baptism should be reviewed, taking into consideration background, age, limitations, and so forth. The elders will want to be guided by the direction given to them on page 175 of the *Our Ministry* book: "Our interest is in those whose hearts are turned to Jehovah and who have grasped the sense of fundamental Bible truths. With your loving assistance, those being baptized will be encouraged and helped to enter into the Christian ministry, adequately prepared to accomplish that important assignment."—Matt. 16:24; John 4:34; 1 Pet. 2:21.

¹ Zeal for field service has noticeably increased in the past few years. In part, this may be due to better education of God's people in how to present the good news to others effectively. Instructive meetings for field service play an important part in this educational process.

² These meetings should prepare the minds and hearts of the brothers and sisters for the work they will be doing. Those participating in field service appreciate meetings that highlight good practical points and suggestions that will help them to be effective in their preaching activity.

³ In order to benefit those attending, the one assigned to conduct the meeting should think in advance of what he will do to make it both interesting and instructive. The daily text can be discussed, especially if it is appropriate for field service. Points from Meetings for Field Service should be used. There may be times when it would be appropriate to consider portions from *Reasoning From the Scriptures*. As a result, those attending should feel better equipped to carry on their ministry. *The meeting for field service should be brief, limited to no more than 15 minutes.*

⁴ How can you help to make meetings for service beneficial? By reviewing the material in advance and thinking about points that would be helpful to others. If you have good success in applying the suggestions being discussed, you may have helpful comments that can be made.

⁵ Before concluding with prayer, generally the one conducting should check to make sure that those in the group know with whom they will go and where they will be working. Sufficient territory should be assigned so that all will be able to keep busy for the full time they are in the field ministry. After the prayer, all should proceed to the territory, thus making the best use of time.

⁶ Well-planned meetings for service can greatly help us to get organized and to present the message more effectively. Many report that they share more zealously in the ministry and stay out longer as a result of being properly instructed at the meetings for field service.

km 5/86 p. 7 Improving the Quality of Our Meetings

¹ The October 1985 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry* featured the article “Manifesting Spiritual Growth by Participating in Meetings.” Have you followed the suggestions given? If so, your comments at the meetings have probably been more to the point and more beneficial to you and to others. At this time, we want to address the matter of improving the quality of our meetings and point out the benefits we can derive through personal preparation.

² Let us illustrate it this way. If you were planning to visit the Bible lands, your anticipation would be greatly heightened if you first studied information about these lands and their history as presented in the Bible and in references such as the *Aid* book. If you were to make no advance preparation, there would be less eagerness on your part to see specific places of interest. The same is true with regard to attending congregation meetings. By taking time to review what is to be discussed at the meetings, we whet our spiritual appetite and become more eager to have a share in commenting.

³ Demands on our time are becoming greater with each passing year. How do we find the needed time to study? We have to buy out time from nonessential activities. (Eph. 5:16) By far the majority of Jehovah’s Witnesses are in attendance at all five weekly meetings, and for many it is with no small effort that they are present. In order to derive the greatest benefit from the time and effort spent in getting to the meetings, we need to spend some time on advance preparation.

⁴ When commenting, be conscious of such essentials as accuracy, brevity, and clarity. Advance preparation will help. Upon receiving a new issue of *The Watchtower*, read it through. Later, in preparation for the *Watchtower* Study, underline only key words and phrases. (Please see *Theocratic Ministry School Guidebook*, page 36.) This will enable us to give comments that are brief and to the point.

⁵ With more volunteering to comment, greater enthusiasm will be in evidence. This should stimulate shy ones to participate, giving a wider range of upbuilding comments. If we apply these suggestions, our joy will increase and the quality of the meetings will improve as we make “public declaration,” or “confession,” of our faith.—Heb. 10:23, *Rbi8* footnote.

km 5/86 pp. 7-8 Question Box

• How can we help our Bible students to qualify for baptism as disciples of Jesus Christ?

This can most effectively be done by (1) conducting a regular and progressive home Bible study, (2) encouraging regular attendance and participation at the five weekly congregation meetings, and (3) as soon as they become Scripturally qualified, helping and training them to have a meaningful share in the field ministry.

Jesus Christ commissioned his followers to make disciples, to baptize them, and to teach them to observe his commandments. That commission remains in effect to this day, as indicated by the words: “And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.”—Matt. 28:19, 20.

A disciple is one who accepts and actively promotes the teachings of another. Therefore, those being baptized not only must have gained a basic knowledge of Bible truth but should already be demonstrating by their life course that they understand and are conforming to Jehovah’s righteous standards. Additionally, as disciples of Jesus Christ, they recognize Jehovah’s visible organization and the authority of Jesus Christ as exercised through “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45-47; Acts 1:8) Sensing the urgency of our times, they have aligned themselves with Jehovah’s people in doing the work Jesus initiated and assigned to his followers. (Luke 8:1; Matt. 24:14) Water baptism for these disciples serves as an outward symbol of their whole-souled dedication to Jehovah God.—Compare Psalm 40:8.

It is good to keep in mind that we are helping Bible students to become disciples of Jesus Christ and not disciples of ourselves. If, because of personal circumstances, available time, natural abilities, or other valid considerations, it should become apparent that we are not able to help the Bible student to make the needed progress toward discipleship, we should talk with the elders about the matter. They may be able to make practical suggestions contributing to the spiritual development of the student, in harmony with the apostle Paul’s words at 1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

The home Bible study should continue until the completion of the two books *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth* and *United in Worship of the Only True God*, even if the student becomes qualified and is baptized before the two books are finished. If either or both of these books are not available in the language of the student, other comparable Society publications that set forth basic Bible teachings and explain Jehovah’s righteous requirements for mankind can be used.

km 5/86 p. 8 Presenting the Good News—In Rural Territory

¹ Although preaching the good news in rural territories offers challenges that are not generally present when working in metropolitan areas, it can bring rewarding experiences. Many people who live in isolated areas are responding favorably to the good news of the Kingdom, and we want to do all that we can to help them.—Compare Isaiah 42:10, 11.

ADVANCE PLANNING NECESSARY

² In order to cover rural territory thoroughly, advance planning is needed, especially on the part of the elders. They will consider whether the size of car groups of publishers should be limited so that all can keep busy and the most can be accomplished. In some rural areas, houses are close together; in other sections they are farther apart. These factors should be considered when car groups are arranged. Sometimes publishers can be dropped off and later picked up by the car driver. However, good judgment should be shown.

³ Weather and road conditions must also be taken into consideration when working rural areas. In some territories rain, mud, snow, or icy conditions may make it difficult to travel at times. Elders may make arrangements to concentrate on working certain territories during summer months.

COOPERATION NEEDED

⁴ Working rural territories requires cooperation and consideration on the part of all. Sometimes, when extensive driving is necessary, those traveling in car groups can assist with automobile expenses. Additionally, good judgment should be exercised when publishers are invited into homes. Others waiting in the car will want to be patient. On the other hand, the publisher who is at the house will not want to spend an excessive amount of time talking with the householder but be conscious that others are waiting. Arrangements can be made for a return visit.

⁵ Plan to spend long days working in distant rural territory. This may be done especially during summer months when days are longer so that more can be accomplished. Publishers can arrange to take their lunch, as well as a sufficient supply of literature.

⁶ If rural territory is not worked frequently, it may be appropriate to leave a back issue of a magazine or a tract at not-at-homes. Some individuals have read such literature with interest upon returning home and have learned the truth. Keep an accurate record of interest found, and strive to call back at a later date. Effectively working rural territory presents challenges and may call for sacrifices. However, the results can be most rewarding.

⁷ May Jehovah continue to bless the efforts of his people as we “declare abroad the kingdom of God” in rural territories.—Luke 9:60.