

FEBRUARY 1, 2001

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



SECURITY

IN A RISK-FILLED WORLD

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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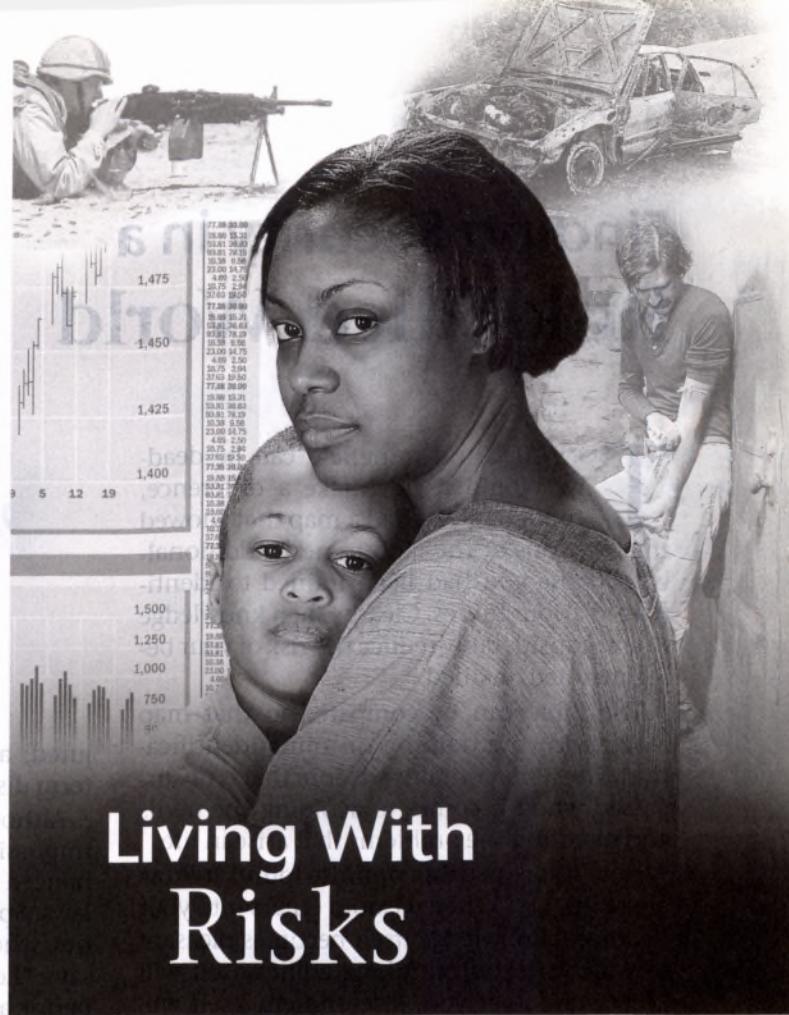
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"There is not a single thing you can do in an ordinary day—sleeping included—that isn't risky enough to be the *last* thing you ever do."

—Discover magazine.

LIFE has been compared to walking through a mine-field, for injury or death can come at any time, often without warning. Risk factors vary from country to country. They include traffic accidents, civil war, famine, AIDS, cancer, heart disease, and a host of other things. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, AIDS has become the number one killer, in a recent year "claiming 2.2 million lives, 10 times the death toll from all of Africa's civil wars," says *U.S. News & World Report*.

In the meantime, the world spends billions on prolonging life and reducing the risk of illness and disability. Many of the ideas promoted, such as sensible eating and drinking habits and physical exercise, can produce some beneficial results. However, there is a source of trustworthy information on every important facet of living that can help you to enjoy a safer, more secure life. That source is the Bible. It contains guidelines for handling a



Living With Risks

broad range of concerns that affect our health and welfare. Of course, the Bible does not deal with every problem in detail. Yet, it does provide excellent principles to guide us in such matters as eating habits, physical fitness, mental attitude, sex, the use of alcohol, tobacco, and so-called recreational drugs, and numerous other things.

Life for many is also fraught with financial uncertainties. Here, too, the Bible comes to our aid. Not only does it encourage a wise view of money and money management but it also shows how to be a better employee or employer. Simply put, the Bible is a sound guide, not just for financial security and physical well-being, but for life itself. Would you like to see how practical the Bible can be today? Then please read on.

Finding Security in a Risk-Filled World

TO WALK in a minefield can be deadly. Would it not make a difference, though, if you had a map that showed the locations of the land mines? Additionally, suppose you had been trained to identify the various mines. Clearly, such knowledge would considerably reduce the risk of your being maimed or killed.

The Bible can be compared to that map along with the training on mine identification. The Bible contains wisdom that is unsurpassed when it comes to avoiding the perils and handling the problems that arise in life.

Note this reassuring promise found at Proverbs 2:10, 11: "When wisdom enters into your heart and knowledge itself becomes pleasant to your very soul, thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you." The wisdom and discernment mentioned here are not of human origin but of divine origin. "As for the one listening to [godly wisdom], he will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity." (Proverbs 1:33) Let us see how the Bible can enhance our security and help us avoid many problems.



Avoiding Deadly Accidents

Figures recently published by the World Health Organization (WHO) show that the global annual mortality caused by traffic accidents is about 1,171,000. Nearly 40 million others are in-

jured, and just over 8 million suffer long-term disability.

Although absolute safety while driving is impossible, our personal security is enhanced considerably when we obey traffic laws. Speaking of the governmental authorities, who set and enforce traffic laws, the Bible says: "Let every soul be in subjection to the superior authorities." (Romans 13:1) Motorists who abide by this counsel reduce the risk of having an accident, with its often ghastly consequences.

Another inducement to drive safely is respect for life. The Bible says of Jehovah God: "With you is the source of life." (Psalm 36:9) So life is a divine gift. Consequently, we have no right to take that gift away from anyone or to show disrespect for life, including, of course, our own.—Genesis 9:5, 6.

Naturally, respect for human life includes making sure that our car and home are as safe as is reasonably possible. In ancient Israel, safety was a high priority in all aspects of life. For example, when a house was built, God's Law required that its roof—a place of considerable family activity—have a parapet. "You



must also make a parapet for your roof, that you may not place bloodguilt upon your house because someone . . . might fall from it." (Deuteronomy 22:8) If someone fell because this safety law had not been observed, God held the owner responsible. No doubt, application of the loving principle embodied in this law would minimize accidents at the workplace or even in recreation.



Combating Deadly Addictions

According to WHO, there are now over a billion smokers in the world, and some four million deaths a year can be attributed to tobacco. This figure is expected to rise to about 10 million over the next 20 to 30 years. Millions of other smokers, as well as users of "recreational" drugs, will ruin their health and quality of life because of their addictions.

While God's Word does not specifically mention tobacco use and drug abuse, its principles can protect us from these practices. For instance, 2 Corinthians 7:1 advises: "Let us cleanse ourselves of every defilement of flesh and spirit." There is no question that tobacco and drugs pollute, or defile, the flesh with many harmful chemicals. What is more, God wants our bodies to be "holy," which means pure and clean. (Romans 12:1) Do you not agree that applying these principles will reduce a significant risk to one's life?

Overcoming Risky Habits

Many people are given to extremes in eating and drinking. The consequences of overeating can include diabetes, cancer, and heart disease. The abuse of alcohol leads to



additional problems, such as alcoholism, cirrhosis, broken families, and traffic accidents. At the other extreme, obsessive dieting can also be harmful and can open the door to such life-threatening eating disorders as anorexia nervosa.

Though the Bible is not a medical textbook, it does give straightforward advice on the need for moderation in eating and drinking. "You, O my son, hear and become wise, and lead your heart on in the way. Do not come to be among heavy drinkers of wine, among those who are gluttonous eaters of flesh. For a drunkard and a glutton will come to poverty." (Proverbs 23:19-21) Yet, the Bible says that eating and drinking ought to be pleasurable. "Every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God."—Ecclesiastes 3:13.

The Bible also encourages a balanced attitude toward physical exercise, affirming that "bodily training is beneficial for a little." But it adds: "Godly devotion is beneficial for all things, as it holds promise of the life now and that which is to come." (1 Timothy 4:8) 'How,' you may ask, 'is godly devotion beneficial even now?' In many ways. Besides adding a vital spiritual dimension to one's life, godly devotion nurtures such beneficial qualities as love, joy, peace, and self-control—all of which contribute to a positive outlook and good health.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

Bitter Consequences of Immorality

Today, millions have abandoned all moral restraint. The AIDS epidemic is one of the consequences. According to WHO, over 16 million have died since the beginning of the AIDS epidemic, and at present, about 34 million are infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS. Many AIDS sufferers contracted the disease through promiscuous sexual activity, contaminated syringes used by drug addicts, or tainted blood transfusions.

Other consequences of loose morals include herpes, gonorrhea, hepatitis B and C, and syphilis. Although such medical terms were not used in Bible times, the target organs of certain sexually transmitted diseases common at the time were known. For example, Proverbs 7:23 describes the fearsome consequence of fornication as 'an arrow cleaving open the liver.' Syphilis commonly attacks the liver, as does hepatitis. Yes, how timely and loving is the Bible's counsel that Christians 'abstain from blood and from fornication'!—Acts 15:28, 29.

The Snare of the Love of Money

In an effort to get rich quickly, many people take big risks with their money. Sadly, taking such risks often leads to financial loss or ruin. To the servant of God, however, the Bible says:



Better Health and Security—Thanks to the Bible

To escape from life's realities, a young woman named Jane* habitually used marijuana, tobacco, cocaine, amphetamines, LSD, and other drugs. She also drank heavily. According to Jane, her husband was in no better shape. Their future looked grim. Then Jane came in contact with Jehovah's Witnesses. She began attending Christian meetings and reading *The Watchtower* and its companion magazine, *Awake!*, which she shared with her husband. They both started to study the Bible with the Witnesses. As they developed an appreciation for Jehovah's high standards, they quit all substance abuse. The result? "Our new life has brought us so much joy," Jane wrote some years later. "I am so grateful to Jehovah for the cleansing power of his Word and for the free and healthy life that we are now able to lead."

The value of being an honest employee is well illustrated by the case of Kurt, whose work involved caring for computer systems. New equipment was needed, and Kurt's employer entrusted him with the task of getting it at a good price. Kurt located a suitable supplier, and a price was agreed upon. However, the supplier's clerk made an error on the written quotation, so that the price was lowered by almost \$40,000 (U.S.). Noting the mistake, Kurt called the company, and the manager said that in his 25-year career, he had never seen such honesty. Kurt explained that his conscience was molded by the Bible. The result was that the manager asked for 300 copies of an issue of *Awake!* that dealt with honesty in business so that he could give them to his fellow workers. As for Kurt, his honesty led to a promotion.

* Names have been changed.



"Let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need." (Ephesians 4:28) True, the hard worker may not always become wealthy. Yet, he has peace of mind, self-respect, and perhaps even funds that he can donate to a worthy cause.

The Bible warns: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have...stabbed themselves all over with many pains." (1 Timothy 6:9, 10) There

"I, Jehovah, am your God, the One

teaching you to benefit yourself."

ISAIAH 48:17



is no denying that many "who are determined to be rich" do get rich. But at what cost? Is it not true that their health, family, spirituality, and even the quality of their sleep suffer?—Ecclesiastes 5:12.

A wise person realizes that "life does not result from the things he possesses." (Luke 12:15) Money and some possessions are necessary in most societies. In fact, the Bible states that "money is for a protection," but it adds that "the advantage of knowledge is that wisdom itself preserves alive its owners." (Ecclesiastes 7:12) Unlike money, the right knowledge and wisdom can help us in *all* circumstances, but especially in matters affecting our life.—Proverbs 4:5-9.

When Wisdom Alone Will Protect Us

True wisdom will soon 'preserve alive its owners' in an unprecedented way—protection through the fast-approaching "great tribulation," when God destroys the wicked. (Matthew 24:21) At that time people will be throwing their money into the streets as "an abhorrent thing," according to the Bible. Why? Because they will have learned the hard way that gold and silver will not buy them life during "the day of Jehovah's fury." (Ezekiel 7:19) On the other hand, "a great crowd," who prudently 'stored up their treasures in heaven' by putting spiritual interests first in their life, will benefit from their sure investment and



gain eternal life in a paradise earth.—Revelation 7:9, 14; 21:3, 4; Matthew 6:19, 20.

How can we gain this secure future? Jesus answers: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) Millions have found this knowledge in God's Word, the Bible. Not only do such ones have a wonderful hope for the future but they also experience a measure of peace and security now. It is just as the psalmist expressed: "In peace I will both lie down and sleep, for you yourself alone, O Jehovah, make me dwell in security."—Psalm 4:8.

Can you think of any other source of information that can help reduce risks to your health and life to the extent that the Bible does? No other book has the Bible's authority, and no other book can help you find true security in today's risk-filled world. Why not examine it further?

Latvia Responds to the Good News

THE Bible clearly shows that it is God's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) Those who for many years were denied the opportunity to hear the good news are now hearing it! In Latvia, as in other parts of the world, people of all ages and various backgrounds are responding to the message, as the following experiences show.

- In Rēzekne, a town in eastern Latvia, a mother and her teenage daughter asked a woman on the street for directions. After giving them the information, the woman, who happened to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses, offered them an invitation to the meetings of the Witnesses.

Since both mother and daughter were religiously inclined, they decided to go to the meeting. On the way, they made an agreement that if they should find anything improper there, they would leave immediately. However, the meeting was so interesting that the thought of leaving never entered their mind. They accepted an offer to study the Bible and began attending meetings regularly. In just three months, they expressed the desire to join in the preaching work and looked forward to being baptized.

- In a city in western Latvia, a Witness met 85-year-old Anna, who showed real interest and accepted a Bible study. Her daughter and other family members strongly opposed her. But Anna did not allow that or her advanced age and poor health to prevent her from continuing her Bible study.



One day, Anna told her daughter that she was going to get baptized. "If you get baptized, I will send you to a nursing home," responded Anna's daughter. This threat, however, did not deter Anna. Because of her physical condition, she was baptized in her own home.

How did Anna's daughter react to this? There was a change of heart, and she prepared a special meal for her mother after the baptism. Then she asked her mother, "Now that you are baptized, how do you feel?" Anna's reply? "Like a newborn!"

- In December 1998, two Witnesses met a retired army officer of the former Soviet Union. Since he believed in a Creator, he accepted a Bible study, and his wife joined in later. They made rapid progress and soon became unbaptized publishers. By the following summer, the former officer was baptized. This couple's great love for spiritual things has been an encouragement to all in the congregation. In addition, they expended themselves in the work of remodeling a local residence into a fine Kingdom Hall.

HAVE YOU MADE THE TRUTH YOUR OWN?

"Be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God."—ROMANS 12:2.

TO BE a true Christian in these last days —these “critical times hard to deal with”—is not easy. (2 Timothy 3:1) The fact is that to follow Christ’s example, one must conquer the world. (1 John 5:4) Recall what Jesus said about the Christian way: “Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading off into life, and few are the ones finding it.” He also said: “If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually.”—Matthew 7:13, 14; Luke 9:23.

² Having found the cramped road to life, a Christian’s next challenge is to stay on it. Why is that a challenge? It is because our dedication and baptism make us a target of Satan’s crafty acts, or subtle machinations. (Ephesians 6:11; footnote) He takes note of our weaknesses and seeks to exploit them in an effort to subvert our spirituality. After all, he attempted to break down Jesus, so why should he leave us alone?—Matthew 4:1-11.

Satan’s Crafty Tactics

³ One ploy that Satan uses is to plant doubts in our mind. He looks for weaknesses in our spiritual armor. In the very beginning, he used that tactic with Eve, asking: “Is it really

1, 2. Why is it not easy to be a true Christian today?

3. How did Satan plant doubts in Eve’s mind?

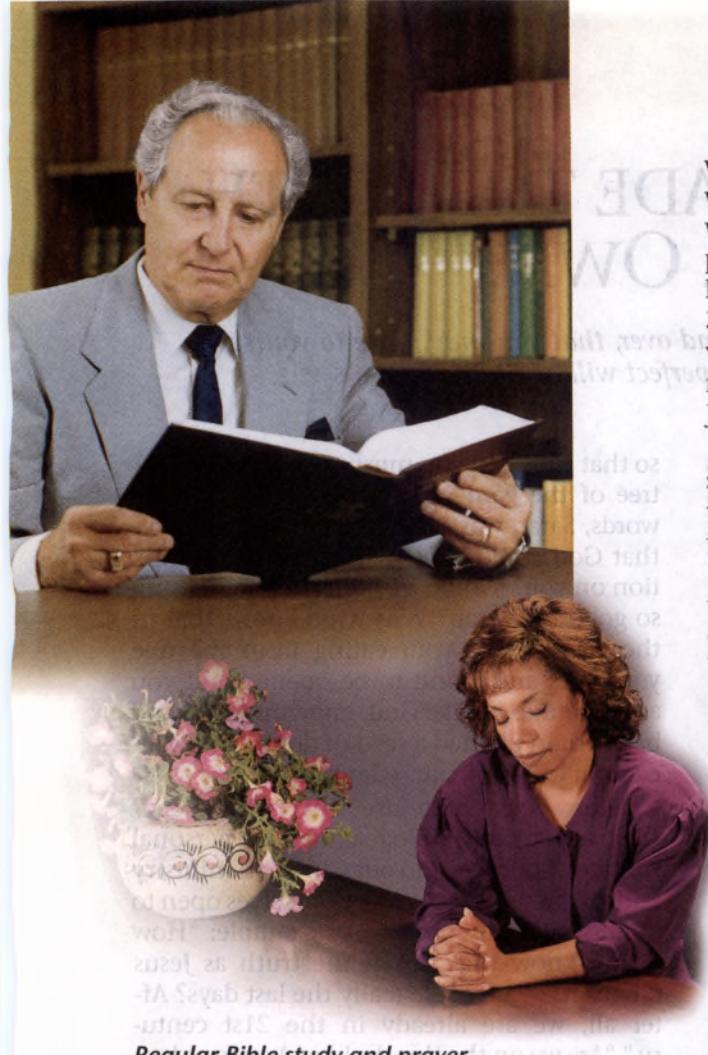
so that God said you must not eat from every tree of the garden?” (Genesis 3:1) In other words, Satan was saying, ‘Is it really possible that God could have placed such a prohibition on you? Would he hold back something so good from you? Why, God knows that in the very day of your eating from the tree your eyes are bound to be opened and you are bound to be like God, knowing good and bad!’ Satan planted a seed of doubt and waited for it to germinate.—Genesis 3:5.

⁴ How does Satan use this tactic today? If we neglect our Bible reading, our personal study, our prayers, and our Christian ministry and meetings, we may leave ourselves open to doubts raised by others. For example: “How do we know that this is the truth as Jesus taught it?” “Are these really the last days? After all, we are already in the 21st century.” “Are we on the threshold of Armageddon, or is it a long way off?” If such doubts should arise, what can we do to remove them?

⁵ James gave practical counsel when he wrote: “If any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him keep on asking in faith, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about. In fact, let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from Jehovah; he is an indecisive man, unsteady in all his ways.”—James 1:5-8.

4. What doubts might affect some today?

5, 6. What must we do if doubts should arise?



Regular Bible study and prayer can help us dispel doubts

⁶ What, then, must we do? We should "keep on asking God" in prayer for faith and understanding and bolster our efforts in personal study regarding any questions or doubts. We can also ask for help from those who are strong in the faith, never doubting that Jehovah will give us the support we need. James also said: "Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you." Yes, our doubts will dissipate as we draw close to God through study and prayer.—James 4:7, 8.

⁷ Take, for example, the question: How do we know that we are practicing the form of worship that Jesus taught? To answer this, what criteria must be considered? The Bible points out that authentic Christians must have true love among themselves. (John 13:34, 35) They must sanctify God's name, Jehovah. (Isaiah 12:4, 5; Matthew 6:9) And they must make known that name.—Exodus 3:15; John 17:26.

⁸ Another identifying feature of true worship is respect for God's Word, the Bible. It is the unique book that reveals God's personality and his purposes. (John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17) Additionally, true Christians proclaim the Kingdom of God as man's only hope for everlasting life on a paradise earth. (Mark 13:10; Revelation 21:1-4) They keep separate from this world's corrupt politics and its defiling way of life. (John 15:19; James 1:27; 4:4)

Who today have really met these criteria? The facts establish that there is only one answer—Jehovah's Witnesses.

What if Doubts Linger?

⁹ What if we do find ourselves in a tunnel of doubts? What should we do then? Wise King Solomon provides the answer: "My son, if you will receive my sayings and treasure up my own commandments with yourself, so as to pay attention to wisdom with your ear, that you may incline your heart to discernment; if, moreover, you call out for understanding itself and you give forth your voice for discernment itself, if you keep seeking for it as for silver, and as for hid treasures you keep searching for it, in that case you will understand the fear of Jehovah, and you will *find the very knowledge of God.*"—Proverbs 2:1-5.

¹⁰ Is that not a staggering thought? If we are willing to pay earnest attention to God's wis-

7, 8. What are some basic criteria for determining the form of worship that was taught by Jesus, and who meet these criteria?

9, 10. What can we do to overcome lingering doubts?



Elisha's attendant had his doubts resolved by a vision

dom, we will "find the very knowledge of God." Yes, the knowledge of the Sovereign Lord of the universe is within our reach if we are willing to receive and treasure his sayings. That means turning to Jehovah in prayer and through personal study. The hidden treasures of his Word can dispel any doubts and help us see the light of truth.

¹¹ A clear example of how prayer helped a fearful and doubting servant of God is found at 2 Kings 6:11-18. Elisha's attendant lacked spiritual perception. He could not perceive that heavenly hosts were there to support God's prophet, who was under siege by the Syrian army. In fear the attendant cried out: "Alas, my master! What shall we do?" How did Elisha respond? "Do not be afraid, for there are more who are with us than those who are with them." But how was the attendant to be convinced? He could not see the heavenly hosts.

¹² "Elisha began to pray and say: 'O Jehovah, open his eyes, please, that he may see.'

11. How was Elisha's attendant affected by doubt?
12. (a) How were the attendant's doubts resolved?
(b) How can we resolve any doubts that we might have?

Immediately Jehovah opened the attendant's eyes, so that he saw; and, look! the mountainous region was full of horses and war chariots of fire all around Elisha." In that case Jehovah caused the attendant to see the heavenly armies that were protecting Elisha. We should not expect the same kind of divine help today, however. Remember, that attendant of the prophet did not have the complete Bible to study in order to strengthen his faith. We do have the Bible. If we put it to good use, our faith can similarly be strengthened. For example, we might ponder the several accounts that describe Jehovah in his heavenly court. These leave no room for doubt that Jehovah does have a heavenly organization supporting his servants in the worldwide educational work today.—Isaiah 6:1-4; Ezekiel 1:4-28; Daniel 7:9, 10; Revelation 4:1-11; 14:6, 7.

Beware of Satan's Machinations!

¹³ What are some of Satan's other ways of weakening our spirituality and our hold on the truth? One of them is immorality, in all of its diverse manifestations. In today's

13. By what means does Satan try to weaken our hold on the truth?

sex-mad world, what is called an affair (a euphemism for infidelity) or a one-night stand (casual fornication) has become the daily fare for a hedonistic generation bent on having a good time at all costs. Movies, TV, and videos promote this life-style. Pornography pervades the media, especially the Internet. Temptation awaits the curious.—1 Thessalonians 4:3-5; James 1:13-15.

¹⁴ Some Christians have allowed their curiosity to get the better of them and have polluted their minds and hearts by viewing soft-core or even hard-core pornographic images. They have allowed themselves to fall into Satan's alluring trap. Doing so has often led to spiritual shipwreck. Such ones have failed to remain "babes as to badness." They have not become "full-grown in powers of understanding." (1 Corinthians 14:20) Each year, thousands pay the price for not abiding by the principles and standards of God's Word. They have neglected to put on and maintain their "complete suit of armor from God."—Ephesians 6:10-13; Colossians 3:5-10; 1 Timothy 1:18, 19.

Treasure What We Have

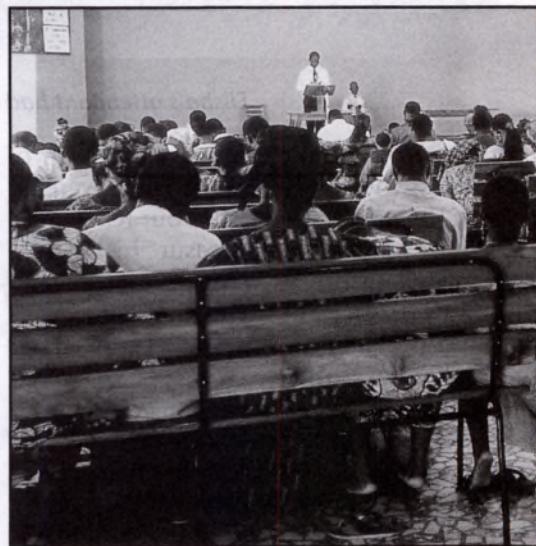
¹⁵ "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free," said Jesus. (John 8:32) Most Witnesses have had to break away from their former life-style and religious associations. Therefore, they may more readily appreciate the freedom that the truth brings. On the other hand, some young people who have been brought up by parents who are in the truth may find it difficult to appreciate their spiritual heritage. They have never been a part of false religion or a part of this world with its emphasis on pleasure-seeking, its drug addiction, and its immorality. As a consequence, they may fail to see the stark con-

14. Why have some Christians fallen victim to Satan's machinations?

15. Why might some find it difficult to appreciate their spiritual heritage?

trast between our spiritual paradise and Satan's corrupt world. Some may even give in to the temptation to taste the world's poison to see what they have missed!—1 John 2:15-17; Revelation 18:1-5.

¹⁶ Do we really need to burn our fingers in order to know pain and suffering? Can we not learn from the negative experiences of others? Do we need to turn to "the mire" of this world to see if we have missed out on something? (2 Peter 2:20-22) Peter reminded Christians of the first century who had formerly been a part of Satan's world: "The time



We are taught Jehovah's high moral standards at Kingdom Halls like this one in Benin

that has passed by is sufficient for you to have worked out the will of the nations when you proceeded in deeds of loose conduct, lusts, excesses with wine, revelries, drinking matches, and illegal idolatries." Certainly, we do not need to experience the world's "low sink of debauchery" to see how debased life can be. (1 Peter 4:3, 4) On the contrary, we are taught

16. (a) What questions might we ask ourselves? (b) What are we taught and encouraged to do?

Jehovah's high moral standards at our Kingdom Halls, which are centers for Bible education. And we are encouraged to use our power of reason to prove to ourselves that we have the truth and thus make the truth our own.
—Joshua 1:8; Romans 12:1, 2; 2 Timothy 3:14-17.

Our Name Not Merely a Label

¹⁷ If we make the truth our own, we will seek to share it with others on every suitable occasion. This does not mean that we will try to force it on those who show no interest. (Matthew 7:6) Rather, we will not be timid about identifying ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses. If a person shows a glimmer of interest by raising a sincere question or by accepting a Bible publication, we will be ready and prepared to share our hope. Of course, this would recommend that we always have some form of literature with us no matter where we may be—at home, at work, in school, at the store, or at places of recreation.—1 Peter 3:15.

¹⁸ When we clearly identify ourselves as Christians, we strengthen our defense against Satan's insidious attacks. If there is a birthday or Christmas party or an office lottery, fellow workers will often say, "Don't bother with her. She is one of Jehovah's Witnesses." For the same reason, people may be less inclined to recount lewd jokes in our presence. Thus, our making known our Christian stand is a positive force in our life, even as the apostle Peter pointed out: "Indeed, who is the man that will harm you if you become zealous for what is good? But even if you should suffer for the sake of righteousness, you are happy."—1 Peter 3:13, 14.

¹⁹ Another benefit of making the truth our own is that we will be convinced that these

17. How can we be effective Witnesses of Jehovah?
18. How may clearly identifying ourselves as Christians be a positive force in our life?
19. How do we know that we are deep in the last days?

are indeed the last days of this system of things. We will know that many of the Bible's prophecies are reaching their culmination in our time.* Paul's warning that "in the last days critical times hard to deal with will be here" is amply confirmed by the horrifying events of the past century. (2 Timothy 3:1-5; Mark 13:3-37) A recent newspaper article regarding the 20th century was entitled "It Will Be Remembered as the Age of Barbarism." The article stated: "1999 turned out to be the most murderous year in the second half of the most murderous century."

²⁰ Now is not the time to vacillate. Jehovah's blessing is clearly evident on the greatest Bible educational work that has ever been done in all the world as a witness to the nations. (Matthew 24:14) Make the truth your own, and share it with others. Your everlasting future depends on what you do now. Slacking the hand will not merit Jehovah's blessing. (Luke 9:62) Rather, it is the time to "become steadfast, unmovable, always having plenty to do in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in connection with the Lord."—1 Corinthians 15:58.

* See *The Watchtower*, January 15, 2000, pages 12-14. Paragraphs 13-18 give a review of six lines of powerful evidence showing that since 1914 we have been living in the last days.

20. Now is the time for what action?

Do You Recall?

- How can we dispel doubts?
- What can we learn from the example of Elisha's attendant?
- Against what moral temptations must we be on guard constantly?
- Why should we clearly identify ourselves as Jehovah's Witnesses?

ARE YOU LIVING UP TO YOUR DEDICATION?

"Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men."

—COLOSSIANS 3:23

HOW do athletes reach their peak performance? In tennis, soccer, basketball, baseball, track, golf, or any other sport, the best reach the top only by unwavering dedication. Physical and mental conditioning are priorities. This fits well with one of the definitions of the word “dedicated,” which is “wholly committed to a particular course of thought or action.”

² However, what does “dedication” mean in the Biblical sense? “Dedicate” translates a Hebrew verb that has the meaning “keep separate; be separated; withdraw.”* In ancient Israel, High Priest Aaron wore on his turban “the holy sign of dedication,” which was a shining plate of pure gold engraved with the Hebrew words for “Holiness belongs to Jehovah.” That served as a reminder to the high priest that he must avoid doing anything that would profane the sanctuary “because the sign of dedication, the anointing oil of his God, [was] upon him.”—Exodus 29:6; 39:30; Leviticus 21:12.

³ We can see in this context that dedication is a serious matter. It implies voluntary identification as a servant of God, and it requires clean conduct. Therefore, we can appreciate why the apostle Peter quoted Je-

hovah as saying: “You must be holy, because I am holy.” (1 Peter 1:15, 16) As dedicated Christians, we bear a heavy responsibility to live up to our dedication, being faithful to the end. But what is involved in Christian dedication?—Leviticus 19:2; Matthew 24:13.

⁴ After we gained accurate knowledge of Jehovah God and his purposes and of Jesus Christ and his role in those purposes, we made the personal decision to serve God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. (Mark 8:34; 12:30; John 17:3) That might even be viewed as a personal vow, an unreserved dedication to God. Our dedication was not made as the result of an emotional caprice. It was carefully and prayerfully thought through, using the power of reason. Thus, it was not a temporary decision. We cannot be like someone who starts to plow a field and then gives up partway through because it is too much hard work or because the harvest seems to be too far off or by no means certain. Consider the examples of some who have ‘put their hands to the plow’ of theocratic responsibility through thick and thin.—Luke 9:62; Romans 12:1, 2.

They Did Not Renounce Their Dedication

⁵ Jeremiah’s prophetic ministry in Jerusalem spanned more than 40 years

4. How do we reach the step of dedication, and to what can it be likened?
5. How was Jeremiah an outstanding example of a dedicated servant of God?

* See *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1987, page 31.

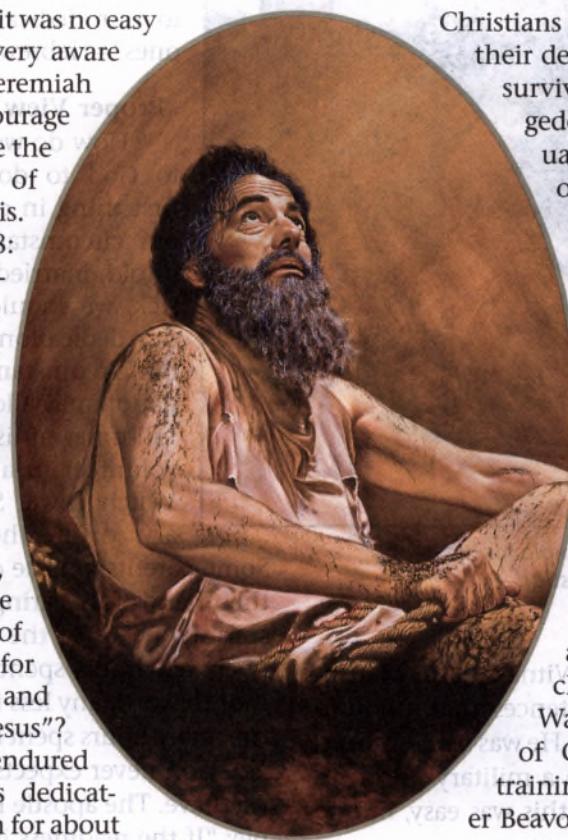
1. In the secular context, what is implied by the word “dedication”?
2. What does “dedication” mean in the Bible? Illustrate.
3. How should dedication affect our conduct?

(647-607 B.C.E.), and it was no easy assignment. He was very aware of his limitations. (Jeremiah 1:2-6) He needed courage and endurance to face the hardheaded people of Judah on a daily basis. (Jeremiah 18:18; 38:4-6) However, Jeremiah trusted in Jehovah God, who strengthened him so that he proved to be a truly dedicated servant of God.—Jeremiah 1:18, 19.

⁶ What about the faithful apostle John, who was exiled to the inhospitable island of Patmos in his old age for "speaking about God and bearing witness to Jesus"? (Revelation 1:9) He endured and kept true to his dedicated status as a Christian for about 60 years. He lived beyond the destruction of Jerusalem at the hands of the Roman armies. He was privileged to write a Gospel, three inspired letters, and the book of Revelation, in which he foresaw the war of Armageddon. Did he quit when he learned that Armageddon would not come in his lifetime? Did he slump into apathy? No, John remained faithful to his death, knowing that although 'the appointed time was near,' the fulfillment of his visions was for a later date. —Revelation 1:3; Daniel 12:4.

Modern Examples of Dedication

⁷ In modern times, thousands of faithful



*Jeremiah stayed faithful
in spite of
atrocious treatment*

Christians have zealously stuck to their dedication in spite of not surviving to witness Armageddon. One such individual was Ernest E. Beavor of England. He became a Witness in 1939 at the beginning of World War II, and he gave up a flourishing press photography business in order to take up the full-time ministry. Because of maintaining his Christian neutrality, he went to prison for two years. His family stood by him, and in 1950 his three children attended the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead for missionary training, in New York. Brother Beavor was so zealous in his preaching activity that friends called him Armageddon Ernie. He loyally lived up to his dedication, and right down to his death in 1986, he proclaimed the imminence of God's war of Armageddon. He did not view his dedication as a limited-time contract with God!*—1 Corinthians 15:58.

⁸ Another example of undiminished zeal comes from Spain. During the Franco regime (1939-75), hundreds of dedicated young Witnesses took a stand as Christian neutrals. Many of them spent ten years or more in

* See *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1980, pages 8-11, for a detailed account of Ernest Beavor's life.

6. What example did the apostle John set for us?
7. How was one brother a fine example of Christian dedication?

- 8, 9. (a) What example was set by many young men in Spain during the Franco regime? (b) What questions are appropriate?



Ernest Beavor set the example for his children as a zealous Christian

military prisons. One Witness, Jesús Martín, even accumulated sentences that amounted to 22 years in prison. He was severely beaten while being held in a military prison in North Africa. None of this was easy, but he refused to compromise.

⁹ Most of the time, these young men had no idea when, if ever, they would be released, for they were subject to multiple, consecutive sentences. Yet, they kept their integrity and maintained their zeal for the ministry while in captivity. When the situation finally began to improve in 1973, many of these Witnesses, then in their early 30's, were released from prison and went straight into the full-time ministry, some becoming special pioneers and traveling overseers. They lived up to their dedication in prison, and most have continued to do so since their release.* What about us today? Are we being faithful

to our dedication like these loyal ones?—Hebrews 10:32-34; 13:3.

Proper View of Our Dedication

¹⁰ How do we view our dedication to God to do his will? Is it the first thing in our life? Regardless of our circumstances, whether young or old, married or single, healthy or sick, we should strive to live up to our dedication, in accordance with our circumstances. One person's situation may allow him to serve in the full-time ministry as a pioneer, as a volunteer in a branch office of the Watch Tower Society, as a missionary, or in the traveling ministry.

Some parents, on the other hand, may have their hands full, caring for the physical and spiritual needs of the family. Are their relatively few hours spent in the ministry each month worth any less in Jehovah's eyes than the many hours spent by a full-time servant? No. God never expects from us what we do not have. The apostle Paul stated this principle: "If the readiness is there first, it is especially acceptable according to what a person has, not according to what a person does not have."—2 Corinthians 8:12.

¹¹ In any case, our salvation depends, not on anything we might do, but on Jehovah's undeserved kindness through Christ Jesus, our Lord. Paul clearly explained: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." However, our works are proof of our active faith in God's promises.—Romans 3:23, 24; James 2:17, 18, 24.

* See the 1978 *Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 156-8, 201-18, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

10. (a) How should we view our dedication?
(b) How does Jehovah view our service to him?
11. On what does our salvation depend?



Hundreds of young Witnesses in Spanish prisons kept their integrity

¹² There is no need for us to make comparisons with others in regard to our time in God's service, our placements of Bible literature, or the number of Bible studies we conduct. (Galatians 6:3, 4) Regardless of what we accomplish in the Christian ministry, all of us have to remember Jesus' humbling words: "So you, also, when you have done all the things assigned to you, say, 'We are good-for-nothing slaves. What we have done is what we ought to have done.'" (Luke 17:10) How often can we really say that we have done "all the things assigned" to us? So the question is, What should be the quality of our service to God?—2 Corinthians 10:17, 18.

Making Each Day Count

¹³ After giving counsel to wives, husbands,

12. Why should we not make comparisons?
13. What attitude do we need as we carry out our dedication?

children, parents, and slaves, Paul writes: "Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men, for you know that it is from Jehovah you will receive the due reward of the inheritance. Slave for the Master, Christ." (Colossians 3:23, 24) We are not serving to impress men by what we accomplish in Jehovah's service. We are trying to serve God by following the example of Jesus Christ. He carried out his relatively short ministry with a sense of urgency. —1 Peter 2:21.

¹⁴ The apostle Peter too demonstrated a sense of urgency. In his second letter, he warned that in the last days, there would be ridiculers—apostates and doubters—who, according to their own wishes, would raise questions about Christ's presence. However,

14. What warning did Peter give regarding the last days?

Peter said: "Jehovah is not slow respecting his promise, as some people consider slowness, but he is patient with you because he does not desire any to be destroyed but desires all to attain to repentance. Yet Jehovah's day will come as a thief." Yes, Jehovah's day is certain to come. Therefore, we should make it our daily concern as to how certain and solid our faith in God's promise really is.—2 Peter 3:3, 4, 9, 10.

¹⁵ To live up to our dedication in a conscientious manner, we should use each day to Jehovah's praise. At the end of each day, can we look back on it and see how we contributed in some way to the sanctification of God's name and the proclamation of the Kingdom good news? Perhaps it was by our clean conduct, our upbuilding con-

15. How should we look at each day in our life?

versation, or our loving concern for family and friends. Did we use available opportunities to share our Christian hope with others? Have we helped someone to think seriously about God's promises? Let us accrue something positive in a spiritual sense each day, building, as it were, a healthy, spiritual bank account.—Matthew 6:20; 1 Peter 2:12; 3:15; James 3:13.

Keep Your Vision Clear

¹⁶ We are living in times that are becoming more difficult for Christians. Satan and his agents try to blur the distinction between good and bad, clean and unclean, moral and immoral, ethical and unethical. (Romans 1:24-28; 16:17-19) He has made it so easy for us

16. In what ways does Satan try to weaken our dedication to God?



to pollute our hearts and minds by means of a TV remote control or a computer keyboard. Our spiritual vision can become blurred, or out of focus, so that we fail to discern his crafty acts. Our resolve to live up to our dedication can be weakened and our grip on the "plow" loosened if we compromise our spiritual values.—Luke 9:62; Philippians 4:8.

¹⁷ Paul's words to the congregation in Thessalonica are therefore most timely: "This is what God wills, the sanctifying of you, that you abstain from fornication; that each one of you should know how to get possession of his own vessel in sanctification and honor, not in covetous sexual appetite such as also those nations have which do not know God." (1 Thessalonians 4:3-5) Immorality has led to some being disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation—those who neglected their dedication to God. They allowed their relationship with God to weaken, so that he no longer counted in their lives. Yet, Paul said: "God called us, not with allowance for uncleanness, but in connection with sanctification. So, then, the man that shows disregard is disregarding, not man, but God, who puts his holy spirit in you."

—1 Thessalonians 4:7, 8.

What Is Your Determination?

¹⁸ If we appreciate the seriousness of our dedication to Jehovah God, what should we be determined to do? Our firm determination should be to hold a good conscience with regard to both our conduct and our ministry. Peter exhorted: "Hold a good conscience, so that in the particular in which you are spoken against they may get ashamed who are speaking slightlying of

17. How can Paul's counsel help us to maintain our relationship with God?

18. What should be our determination?

your good conduct in connection with Christ." (1 Peter 3:16) We may have to suffer and face abuse because of our Christian conduct, but so did Christ because of his faith and loyalty to God. "Therefore," Peter said, "since Christ suffered in the flesh, you too arm yourselves with the same mental disposition; because the person that has suffered in the flesh has desisted from sins."—1 Peter 4:1.

¹⁹ Indeed, our firm determination to live up to our dedication will protect us from the trappings of Satan's world that is sick spiritually, morally, and physically. But more than that, we will gain confidence that we have God's approval, which is far better than anything Satan and his agents can offer. Thus, never let it be said that we have left the love that we had when we first knew the truth. Rather, let it be said of us as it was of those in the first-century congregation in Thyatira: "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and ministry and endurance, and that your deeds of late are more than those formerly." (Revelation 2:4, 18, 19) Yes, let us not be lukewarm regarding our dedication, but let us be "aglow with the spirit," zealous down to the end—and the end is near.—Romans 12:11; Revelation 3:15, 16.

19. What do we want to have said about us?

Do You Recall?

- What does dedication involve?
- What ancient and modern examples of dedicated servants of God are worthy of our imitation?
- How should we view our service to God?
- What should be our determination regarding our dedication to God?

YOU CAN COPE With Discouragement!

A WISE man once wrote: "Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty." (Proverbs 24:10) If you have ever been discouraged, you will likely agree with that statement.

No one is immune to the effects of discouragement. A mild bout of discouragement may last for a day or two and then subside. But when hurt feelings or resentment are involved, the problem may persist much longer. Some Christians who have been faithful for years have become so disheartened that they have even stopped attending congregation meetings and sharing in the field ministry.

If you feel discouraged, take heart! Faithful servants in times past successfully coped with discouragement, and with God's help, so can you.

When Others Hurt Your Feelings

You cannot expect to be protected from every careless word or thoughtless deed. You can, however, refuse to permit the imperfections of others to interfere with your service to Jehovah. If someone has hurt your feelings, you may find it helpful to consider how Hannah, the mother of Samuel, handled a discouraging situation.

Hannah desperately wanted children, but she was barren. Her husband's second wife, Peninnah, had already borne him sons and daughters. Instead of being sensitive to Hannah's plight, Peninnah viewed her as a rival and displayed such an attitude toward her that Hannah "would weep and not eat." —1 Samuel 1:2, 4-7.

One day Hannah went up to the tabernacle to pray. Eli, the high priest of Israel, observed

her lips moving. Not realizing that Hannah was praying, Eli concluded that she must be drunk. "How long will you behave drunk?" he demanded. "Put away your wine from upon you." (1 Samuel 1:12-14) Can you imagine how Hannah must have felt? She had come to the tabernacle to find encouragement. She certainly did not expect to be wrongly accused by one of the most influential men in Israel!

The stage was set for Hannah to become very discouraged. She could have left the tabernacle abruptly, vowing never to return as long as Eli was serving there as high priest. However, Hannah clearly valued her relationship with Jehovah. She knew that he would not be pleased if she took such a course. The tabernacle was the center of pure worship. Jehovah had placed his name there. And imperfect as he was, Eli was Jehovah's chosen representative.

Hannah's godly response to Eli's accusation provides a sterling example for us today. She did not allow herself to be wrongly accused, but she responded in a very respectful manner. "No, my lord!" she replied. "A woman hard pressed in spirit I am; and wine and intoxicating liquor I have not drunk, but I pour out my soul before Jehovah. Do not make your slave girl like a good-for-nothing woman, for it is out of the abundance of my concern and my vexation that I have spoken until now." —1 Samuel 1:15, 16.

Did Hannah make her point? Definitely. Yet, she spoke tactfully to Eli, not presuming to criticize him for his false accusation. He, in turn, responded kindly to her, saying: "Go in

peace, and may the God of Israel grant your petition that you have asked of him." Once the matter was settled, Hannah "proceeded to go on her way and to eat, and her face became self-concerned no more."—1 Samuel 1:17, 18.

What do we learn from this account? Hannah acted quickly to correct a misunderstanding, but she did so with deep respect. As a result, she preserved a fine relationship with Jehovah and with Eli. How often good communication and a little tact can prevent small problems from growing into larger ones!

It must be recognized that settling differences with others requires humility and flexibility on both sides. If a fellow believer fails to respond to your efforts to resolve a difference, you may have to leave the matter in Jehovah's hands, trusting that he will handle it in his own time and in his own way.

Have You Lost a Service Privilege?

Some have become depressed because of having had to relinquish a cherished privilege in God's service. They enjoyed serving their brothers, and when the privilege was lost, they felt that they were no longer useful to Jehovah or to his organization. If that is how you feel, you may gain insight by considering the example of the Bible writer Mark, also called John Mark.—Acts 12:12.

Mark accompanied Paul and Barnabas on their first missionary tour, but partway through the journey, he abandoned them and returned to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13) Later, Barnabas wanted to take Mark with them on another trip. However, the Bible says: "Paul did not think it proper to be taking this one along with them, seeing that he had departed from them from Pamphylia and had not gone with them to the work." Barnabas disagreed. "At this," the account continues, "there occurred a sharp burst of anger, so that [Paul and Barnabas] separated from each other; and Barnabas took Mark along and sailed away to

Cyprus. Paul selected Silas and went off."—Acts 15:36-40.

Mark must have been devastated to learn that the respected apostle Paul did not want to work with him and that a dispute over his qualifications had led to a rift between Paul and Barnabas. But there is more to the story.

Paul and Silas still needed a traveling companion. When they arrived at Lystra, they found someone to replace Mark, a young man named Timothy. Now Timothy may have been baptized for only two or three years at the time he was chosen. On the other hand, Mark had been associated with the Christian congregation since its inception—longer, in fact, than Paul himself. Yet, it was Timothy who received the privileged assignment.—Acts 16:1-3.

How did Mark react when he learned that he had been replaced by a younger, less experienced man? The Bible does not say. Nevertheless, it does indicate that Mark remained active in Jehovah's service. He took advantage of the privileges that were available to him. Although unable to serve with Paul and Silas, he was able to travel with Barnabas to Cyprus, which was Barnabas' home territory. Mark also served with Peter in Babylon. Eventually, he did have an opportunity to work with Paul—and Timothy—in Rome. (Colossians 1:1; 4:10; 1 Peter 5:13) Later Mark was even inspired to write one of the four Gospels!

There is a valuable lesson in all of this. Mark did not become so concerned about a lost privilege that he failed to appreciate the privileges that were still within his reach. Mark kept busy in Jehovah's service, and Jehovah blessed him.

So if you have lost a privilege, do not be discouraged. If you maintain a positive attitude and keep busy, other privileges may come your way. There is plenty to do in the work of the Lord.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

A Faithful Servant Gets Discouraged

It is not easy to put up a hard fight for the faith. At times, you may get discouraged. Then you may even feel guilty about being discouraged, concluding that a faithful servant of God should never feel that way. Think of Elijah, one of Israel's outstanding prophets.

When Israel's Queen Jezebel, a fanatic promoter of Baal worship, learned that the prophets of Baal had been killed by Elijah, she swore to put him to death. Elijah had faced enemies greater than Jezebel, but suddenly he became so discouraged that he wanted to die. (1 Kings 19:1-4) How could that have happened? He had forgotten something.

Elijah had forgotten to look to Jehovah as the Source of his strength. Who had given Elijah the power to raise the dead and to face the prophets of Baal? Jehovah. Certainly, Jehovah could give him the strength to face the wrath of Queen Jezebel.—1 Kings 17:17-24; 18:21-40; 2 Corinthians 4:7.

Anyone can momentarily waver in his trust in Jehovah. Like Elijah, you may at times take a human view of a certain problem rather than use "the wisdom from above" to deal with it. (James 3:17) However, Jehovah did not forsake Elijah for this temporary lapse.

Elijah had fled to Beer-sheba and then on into the wilderness, where he thought no one could find him. But Jehovah found him. He sent an angel to comfort him. The angel saw to it that Elijah had freshly baked bread to eat and refreshing water to drink. After Elijah had rested, the angel directed him to travel almost 200 miles to Mount Horeb, where he was to be further strengthened by Jehovah.—1 Kings 19:5-8.

At Mount Horeb, Elijah witnessed a faith-strengthening demonstration of Jehovah's power. Then, in a calm, low voice, Jehovah assured him that he was not alone. Jehovah was

with him, and 7,000 of his brothers were also with him, although unknown to Elijah. Finally, Jehovah assigned him work to do. He had not cast Elijah off as his prophet!—1 Kings 19:11-18.

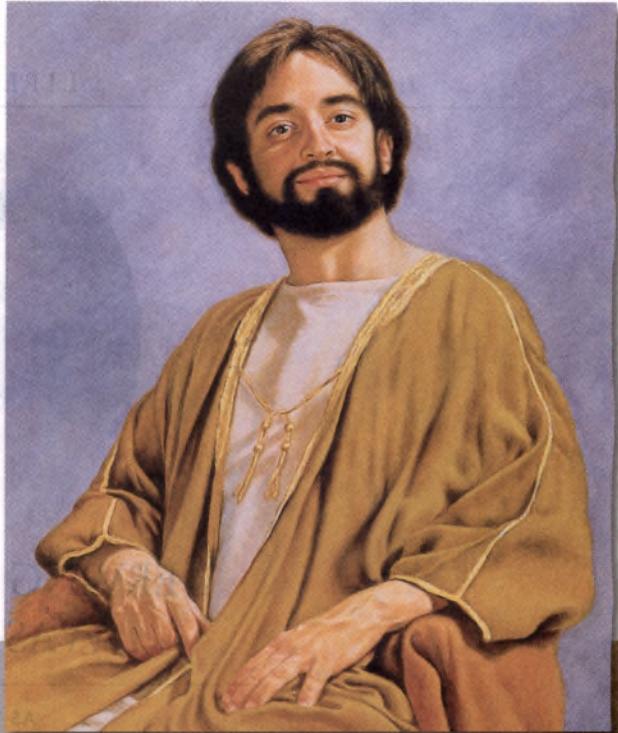
Help Is Available

If you occasionally suffer a mild bout of discouragement, you may find that you will feel better if you get some extra rest or a nourishing meal. Nathan H. Knorr, who served as a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses until his death in 1977, once observed that big problems often appear much smaller after a good night's sleep. When the problem is more persistent, however, such a remedy may not be adequate—you will need help to battle discouragement.

Jehovah sent an angel to strengthen Elijah. Today, God provides encouragement through the elders and other mature Christians. The elders really can "prove to be like a hiding place from the wind." (Isaiah 32:1, 2) But to get encouragement from them, you may need to take the initiative. As discouraged as Elijah was, he traveled to Mount Horeb to receive instruction from Jehovah. We receive strengthening instruction through the Christian congregation.

When we accept help and courageously face up to tests, such as hurt feelings or the loss of privileges, we uphold Jehovah's side of an important issue. What issue? Satan contended that humans serve Jehovah only out of self-interest. Satan does not deny that we will serve God when everything in our life is running smoothly, but he contends that we will stop serving God when we run into problems. (Job, chapters 1 and 2) By unwaveringly carrying on in Jehovah's service despite discouragement, we can help give an answer to the Devil's slanderous accusation.—Proverbs 27:11.

Hannah, Mark, and Elijah all had problems that briefly robbed them of their joy. However, they coped with their problems and led productive lives. With Jehovah's help, you too can cope with discouragement!





SERVING WHEREVER I WAS NEEDED

AS TOLD BY
JAMES B. BERRY

It was 1939. The Great Depression was making life hard in the United States, and war was looming across Europe. My younger brother Bennett and I had traveled from our home in Mississippi to Houston, Texas, in search of work.

ONE day near the end of summer, we heard a dramatic announcement crackling over the radio: Hitler's armies had marched into Poland. "Armageddon has started!" exclaimed my brother. Immediately, we quit our jobs. We went to the nearest Kingdom Hall and attended our first meeting. Why a Kingdom Hall? Let me start at the beginning.

I was born in Hebron, Mississippi, in 1915. We lived in farm country. The Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called, came through the area about once a year and arranged for a talk at someone's home. As a re-

sult, my parents had many Bible publications. Bennett and I came to believe what these books taught: Hell is not hot, the soul dies, the righteous will live on earth forever. Still, there was a lot we had yet to learn. Sometime after I finished school, my brother and I headed to Texas in search of work.

When we finally contacted the Witnesses at the Kingdom Hall, they asked if we were pioneers. We had no idea that a pioneer was a full-time minister of Jehovah's Witnesses. They then asked us if we would like to preach. "Sure!" we responded. We assumed that they would send someone with us to show us how

to go about it. Instead, they just handed us a map and told us, "Work there!" Well, Bennett and I did not know the first thing about how to preach, and we hated the thought of being embarrassed. Finally, we just dropped the territory card in a mailbox and went back to Mississippi!

Making Bible Truth Our Own

After returning home, we read the publications of the Witnesses every day for almost a year. There was no electricity in our home, so at night we read by firelight. In those days zone servants, or traveling overseers, visited congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses and isolated Witnesses to strengthen them spiritually. One of these servants, Ted Klein, visited our congregation and accompanied Bennett and me in the door-to-door preaching work, often taking both of us with him at once. He explained to us what the pioneer work was all about.

Being in his company really got us thinking about doing more to serve God. So it was that on April 18, 1940, Brother Klein baptized Bennett, our sister Velva, and me. Our parents were present at our baptism, and they were happy with our decision. About two years later, they were baptized as well. Both of them remained faithful to God until their deaths—Dad in 1956 and Mama in 1975.

When Brother Klein asked me if I could pioneer, I told him I would like to, but I had no money, no clothes, nothing. "That's all right," he said, "I'll fix that." And he did. First he sent in my application for pioneering. Then he took me with him to New Orleans, about 200 miles away, and showed me some nice apartments above a Kingdom Hall. They were for pioneers. Soon I moved there and began my career as a pioneer. The Witnesses in New Orleans assisted by giving the pioneers clothes, money, and food. During the day, brothers would bring food and leave it at the



Velva, Bennett, and me being baptized by Ted Klein on April 18, 1940

door or even put it in the refrigerator for us. A brother who owned a restaurant nearby invited us to come regularly at closing time to get fresh food—such as meat, bread, chili, and pies—left over from the day.

Facing Mob Violence

After a time, I was assigned to Jackson, Mississippi, to pioneer. My young partner and I met with some mob violence there, and it seemed that the local law-enforcement agents were backing the mobs! It was similar in our next assignment—Columbus, Mississippi. Since we preached to people of all races and nationalities, certain white people hated us. Many believed that we were guilty of sedition. The post commander of the American Legion, a very patriotic organization, held that view. Several times he incited angry mobs to attack us.

The first time that we were attacked in Columbus, a mob came after us while we were offering magazines on the street. They backed us against a plate-glass store window. A crowd gathered to see what was happening. Soon the police arrived and took us down to the courthouse. The mob, having followed us to the courthouse, announced in front of all the officials there that if we left town by a certain

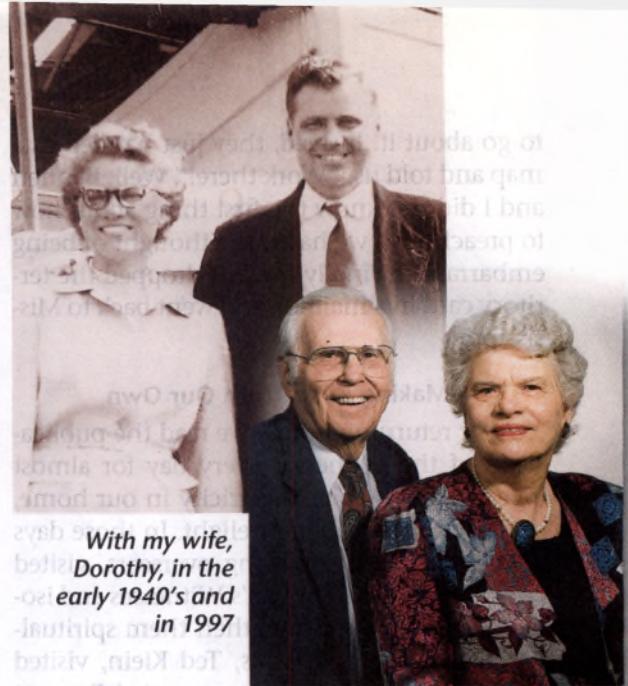
date, we could leave *with* our skin. If we left after that date, it would be *without* our skin! We thought it best to leave town for a time. But a few weeks later, we returned and resumed preaching.

Not long afterward, a gang of eight men came upon us and forced us into their two cars. They drove us into the woods, stripped us of our clothes, and gave us each 30 lashes with my belt! They had guns and even ropes, and I must say that we were scared. I thought that they were going to tie us up and throw us into the river. They tore up our literature and scattered it and even smashed our phonograph to pieces over a tree stump.

After whipping us, they told us to put on our clothes and walk down a path in the woods without looking back. As we walked, we really thought that if we dared to turn around, they would shoot us to death—and get away with it! But after a few minutes, we heard them drive away.

On another occasion, an angry mob chased us, and we had to tie our clothes around our necks and swim a river in order to escape. Not long after that, we were arrested on charges of sedition. We spent three weeks in jail before the trial took place. The event was well advertised in Columbus. The students of a nearby college were even allowed to leave class early in order to attend. When the day came, the courthouse was packed—standing room only! Those testifying for the State included two preachers, the mayor, and the police.

A Witness lawyer named G. C. Clarke and his companion were sent to represent us. They asked that the charges of sedition be dismissed for lack of evidence. The lawyer working with Brother Clarke, although not one of Jehovah's Witnesses, made powerful statements on our behalf. At one point he told the judge, "People say that Jehovah's Witnesses are crazy. Crazy? Thomas Edison was crazy!"



*With my wife,
Dorothy, in the
early 1940's and
in 1997*

Then he pointed to a light fixture and said, "But look at that light bulb!" Edison, who invented the light bulb, may have been considered crazy by some, but no one could argue with his achievements.

After hearing the testimony, the presiding circuit court judge announced to the prosecutor: "You don't have a shred of evidence of sedition, and they have a right to do this work. Do not bring them back into this courtroom and waste the State's time and money as well as my time until you have evidence!" Victory for us!

Afterward, though, the judge called us into his chambers. He knew that the whole town was against his decision. So he warned us: "What I said was according to the law, but my personal advice to both of you is: Get out of here, or they will kill you!" We knew he was right, so we left town.

From there I joined Bennett and Velva, who were serving in Clarksville, Tennessee, as special pioneers. After a few months, we were assigned to Paris, Kentucky. A year and a half later, we were just about ready to form a con-



Two members of the congregation there when Bennett and I received a very special invitation.

To Missionary Service

When we saw the invitation to attend the second class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, we thought, 'They made a mistake! Why would they invite two simple, young Mississippi boys to that school?' We had imagined that they wanted educated people, but we went anyway. There were 100 students in the class, and the course lasted five months. Graduation was on January 31, 1944, and we were eager to serve in a foreign field. But in those days, passport and visa documentation took much time, so students were temporarily assigned to the United States. After serving for a while as pioneers in Alabama and Georgia, Bennett and I finally received our assignment—Barbados, West Indies.

World War II was still in progress, and the work and literature of Jehovah's Witnesses were banned in many places, including Barbados. At customs there, the officials opened and inspected our luggage and found the literature we had hidden in it. We thought, 'We are finished.' Instead, one official simply told us: "We're sorry we had to go through your luggage; some of this literature is banned in Barbados." Still, he let us through with every

The public address, "The Prince of Peace," being advertised on a city bus in Barbados

piece of literature we had packed! Later, when we witnessed to government officials, they said that they did not know why the literature had been banned. After some months, the ban was lifted.

We had much success in the ministry in Barbados. We conducted at least 15 Bible studies each, and most of the students progressed spiritually. We were happy to see some coming to congregation meetings. However, because the literature had been banned for some time, the brothers there lacked current understanding of how meetings were to be conducted. Soon, though, we were able to train a number of capable brothers. We had the pleasure of helping many of our students start out in the Christian ministry and of seeing the congregation grow.

Raising a Family

After about 18 months in Barbados, I needed surgery and had to return to the United States. While there, I married a Witness named Dorothy with whom I had been corresponding. My wife and I then pioneered in Tallahassee, Florida, but after six months we moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where a Witness had offered me a job. My brother Bennett continued his service in Barbados for many years. He later married a fellow missionary and served in the traveling work in the islands. Eventually, they had to return to the

My brother Bennett in front of the missionary home



United States for health reasons. They continued serving Spanish-speaking congregations in the traveling work until Bennett's death in 1990 at the age of 73.

In 1950, Dorothy gave birth to our first child, a baby girl we named Daryl. We eventually had five children. Our second, Derrick, died at just two and a half years of age from spinal meningitis. But Leslie came along in 1956, and Everett followed in 1958. Dorothy and I endeavored to raise our children in the way of Bible truth. We always tried to have a weekly family Bible study program and to make it interesting for all the children. When Daryl, Leslie, and Everett were still young, we gave them questions each week to research and answer the following week. They also acted out preaching from house to house. One went in the closet and pretended to be a householder. The other stood outside and knocked. They used comical lines to intimidate each other, but this helped them to develop a love for the preaching work. We also preached with them regularly.

When our youngest son, Elton, came along in 1973, Dorothy was almost 50 and I was near 60. In the congregation, they called us Abraham and Sarah! (Genesis 17:15-17) The older boys often took Elton out in the ministry with them. We felt that it was a powerful witness for people to see families—brothers and sisters, parents and children—working together, sharing Bible truths with others. Elton's older brothers took turns carrying him on their shoulders and put a Bible tract in his hand. People almost always listened when they opened the door and saw this cute little lad on his big brother's shoulders. The boys taught Elton to hand the tract to the person when the conversation was over and to say a few words. That was how he started preaching.

Over the years, we have been able to help others to come to know Jehovah. In the late

1970's, we moved from Louisville to Shelbyville, Kentucky, to serve in a congregation where there was a need. While there, we not only saw growth in the congregation but also assisted in finding land and building a Kingdom Hall. Later we were asked to serve in another congregation not far away.

Uncertainties of Family Life

I would like to say that all our children stayed in Jehovah's way, but that was not the case. After they grew up and moved away from home, three of our four surviving children left the way of the truth. However, our son Everett followed my example and entered the full-time ministry. He later served at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses in New York and in 1984 was invited to attend the 77th class of Gilead. After graduating, he went to his assignment in Sierra Leone, West Africa. In 1988 he married Marianne, a pioneer from Belgium. They have served together as missionaries since then.

As any parent can imagine, it was disheartening for us to see three of our children give up a way of life that is satisfying now and holds the beautiful hope of everlasting life on a paradise earth in the future. At times I blamed myself. But I found comfort in knowing that even some of Jehovah's own spirit offspring, or angels, left off serving him—although Jehovah disciplines in love and kindness and never makes mistakes. (Deuteronomy 32:4; John 8:44; Revelation 12:4, 9) This has impressed upon me that as hard as parents may try to rear their children in the way of Jehovah, some may nonetheless refuse to accept the truth.

Like a tree that gets blown by strong winds, we have to bend to the different hardships and problems that come our way. Over the years, I have found that regular Bible study and meeting attendance give me that strength to bend and to survive spiritually. As I grow

older and see the mistakes I made in the past, I try to look on the bright side. After all, if we just stay faithful, such experiences only add to our spiritual development. If we learn from them, the negative aspects of life can have certain positive aspects.—James 1:2, 3.

Now Dorothy and I no longer have the health or strength to do what we would like to do in Jehovah's service. But we are grateful for the support of our dear Christian brothers and sisters. At nearly every meeting, the brothers tell us how much they appreciate our being there. And they extend themselves to

What do the efforts of an optician in Lviv, Ukraine, have to do with the formation of a Russian-language congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in Haifa, Israel, some 1,200 miles and several countries away? This is a story that demonstrates the validity of the Bible's statement at Ecclesiastes 11:6: "In the morning sow your seed and until the evening do not let your hand rest; for you are not knowing where this will have success."

OUR story begins in 1990 when Ella, a young woman of Jewish background, was living in Lviv. Ella and her family were preparing to immigrate to Israel. Shortly before their departure, Ella had an appointment with an optician who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. At the time, the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Ukraine. Nevertheless, the optician took the initiative to share his Bible-based beliefs with

help us in any way possible—even with repairs on the house and car.

Once in a while, we are able to engage in the auxiliary pioneer service, and we conduct studies with interested ones. A special treat that we always enjoy is receiving news from our son serving in Africa. We still have our family Bible study, even though it is just for the two of us now. We are happy to have devoted so many years to Jehovah's service. He assures us that he will not 'forget our work and the love we showed for his name.'—Hebrews 6:10.

AN OPTICIAN SOWS A SEED

UKRAINE

ISRAEL



*Ella and her daughter,
Eina*

Ella. He surprised her by saying that God has a personal name. That aroused Ella's curiosity, and a fine Bible discussion ensued.

Ella enjoyed the discussion so much that she asked for another the following week and still another after that. Her interest was growing, but there was a problem. The time was fast approaching for the family to leave for Israel. Ella still had so much to learn! In order to make the most of the remaining time, she requested a Bible study every day until her departure. Though Ella did not resume her study when she first arrived in Israel, the seed of truth had taken root in her heart. By the end of the year, she was once again studying the Bible in earnest.

War broke out in the Persian Gulf, and Israel came under missile attack by Iraq. This was a frequent topic of conversation. One day in a supermarket, Ella overheard a Russian-speaking family of new immigrants conversing. Although she was still studying the Bible herself, Ella approached the family and shared with them the Bible's promise of a peaceful world. As a result, the grandmother, Galina; the mother, Natasha; the son, Sasha (Ariel); and the daughter, Ilana, all joined in Ella's Bible study.

Sasha was the first member of the family to reach the point of baptism—despite many trials. Although an honor student, he was expelled from school because his Christian conscience would not permit him to engage in premilitary training, a required part of the school curriculum. (Isaiah 2:2-4) Sasha's case went to the Israeli High Court in Jerusalem, which commendably ordered Sasha reinstated so that he could finish the school term.

The case received nationwide publicity. Consequently, many Israelis became aware of the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses.*

Following his graduation from high school, Sasha entered the full-time ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses. Today he serves as a special pioneer and a congregation elder. His sister, Ilana, has joined him in the full-time ministry. Their mother and their grandmother are both baptized Witnesses. The seed that the optician sowed was still bearing fruit!

Meanwhile, Ella continued making spiritual progress and was soon preaching from house to house. At her very first door, Ella met Faina, who had recently arrived from Ukraine. Faina was suffering from depression. Ella later learned that shortly before she had knocked on Faina's door, the distressed woman had prayed to God: "I don't know who you are, but if you hear me, help me." She and Ella had a stimulating discussion. Faina asked many questions and carefully considered the answers she was given. In time, she became convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses teach the truth from the Bible. She adjusted her program of university studies so that she could spend more time with the congregation and in the preaching work. In

* For additional details, see the November 8, 1994, issue of *Awake!*, pages 12-15.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

**What Is the Truth About
the Dead Sea Scrolls?**

**Searching for
Deserving Ones in Kenya**

Jehovah's Day of Judgment Is Near!



*A happy group of Russian-speaking Witnesses in Haifa. Left to right:
Sasha, Ilana, Natasha, Galina, Faina, Ella, Eina, and Karl*

May 1994, Faina was baptized. She too took up the pioneer service, supporting herself by part-time work in the computer field.

In November 1994, while engaging in the preaching work, Ella suddenly felt very weak. She went to the hospital where tests revealed a bleeding intestinal ulcer. By evening Ella's hemoglobin count had fallen to 7.2. An elder in Ella's congregation, the chairman of the local Hospital Liaison Committee (HLC), provided the doctors with information on numerous medical procedures that did not require the use of blood.* Surgery was successfully performed without blood, and Ella made a full recovery.—Acts 15:28, 29.

Ella's gynecologist, Karl, a German-born Jew, was very impressed. Then he recalled that his parents, who were Holocaust survivors, had known Jehovah's Witnesses in the

* HLCs represent Jehovah's Witnesses worldwide, assisting with communication between patient and hospital staff. They also provide information on alternative medical care based on the latest medical research.

concentration camps. Karl asked many questions. Although extremely busy with his medical practice, Karl made time for a regular Bible study. By the following year, he was attending the weekly Christian meetings.

What has resulted from the seed sown by the optician? We have already seen what happened to Sasha and his family. As for Ella, she is a special pioneer minister. Her daughter, Eina, just out of high school, is embarking on her own career as a pioneer. Faina also serves as a special pioneer. As for Karl, Ella's gynecologist, he is now a baptized Witness and a ministerial servant, sharing the healing power of Bible truth with his patients and others.

The small group of Russian-speaking immigrants that began as part of the Haifa Hebrew Congregation has now become a zealous Russian congregation with over 120 Kingdom publishers. This increase is due, in part, to the fact that an optician in Lviv took advantage of an opportunity to sow a seed!

IT IS believed that a large number of mankind's illnesses are triggered by such emotional stresses as fear, sorrow, envy, resentment, hatred, and guilt. In view of this, how comforting the Bible's statement that the 'fear of Jehovah' is "a healing to your navel and a refreshment to your bones"!—Proverbs 3:7, 8.

The bones are the supporting framework of the body. Thus, the Bible uses the word "bones" metaphorically, to represent one's being—especially as affected by deep feelings and emotions. But how is the fear of Jehovah "a healing to your navel"?

Bible scholars differ in their opinions regarding the mention of the "navel" in this passage. One expositor says that because it is at "the central region of the body," the "navel" may be representative of all the vital organs. Another scholar suggests that the word "navel" may mean the umbilical cord, as it is used at Ezekiel 16:4. If this is so, Proverbs 3:8 may be emphasizing our need for utter dependence upon God—much as a helpless fetus is completely dependent upon its mother for nourishment. Still another idea is that "navel" may here refer to the muscles and tendons of the body. In the context of this verse, it may be that these parts are being contrasted with the "bones"—the body's more solid components.

Whatever the specific meaning, one thing is certain: Displaying a reverential fear of Jehovah is the course of wisdom. Conforming to God's standards can contribute to our physical well-being now. More than that, it can bring Jehovah's favor upon us, which will lead to endless life in perfect health—physically and emotionally—in his coming new world.—Isaiah 33:24; Revelation 21:4; 22:2.

"A Healing to Your Navel"



Dr. G. Moscoso/SPL/Photo Researchers