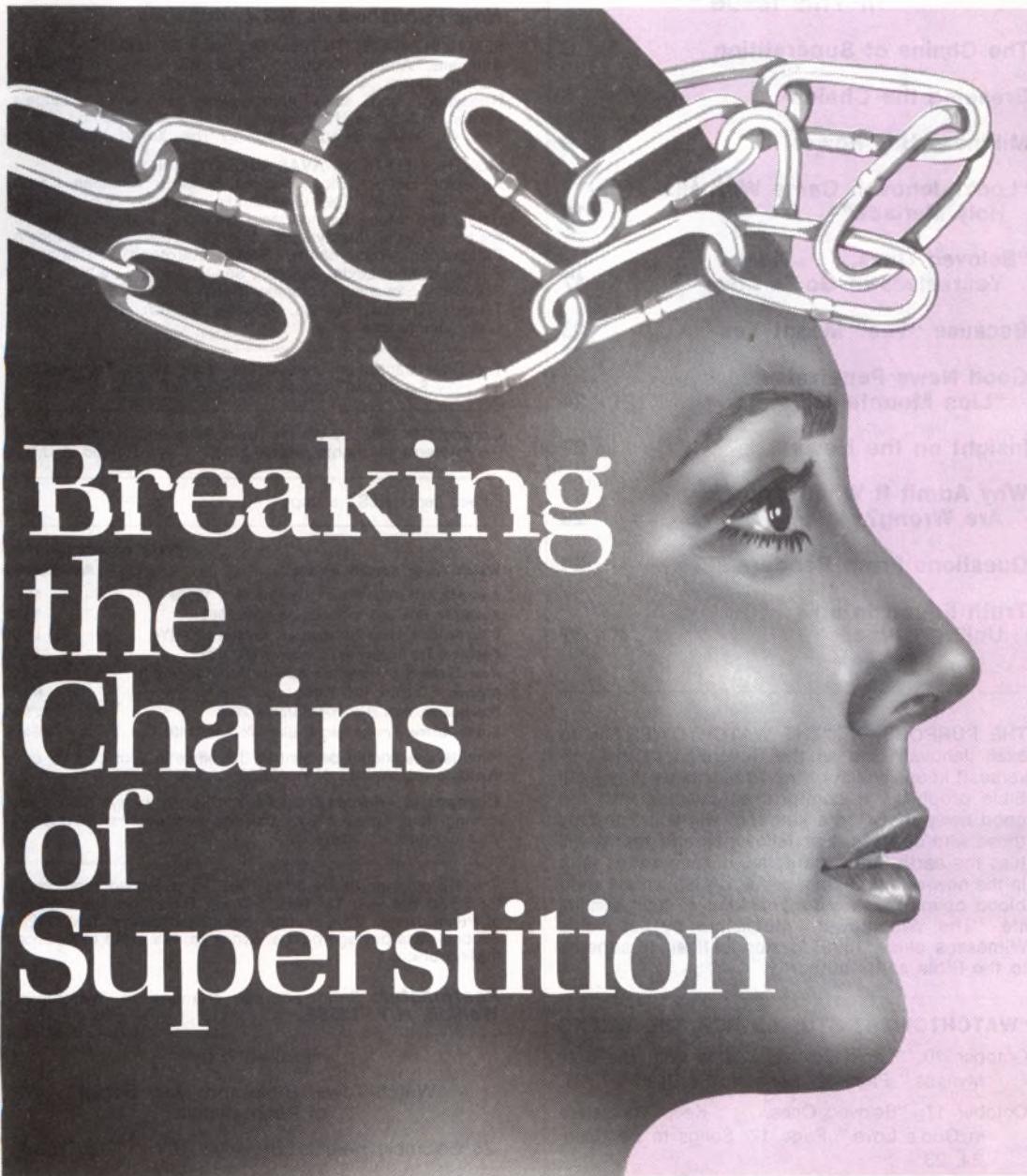


September 1, 1982



The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Breaking the Chains of Superstition



The Watchtower®

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September 1, 1982
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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning king, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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The Chains of Superstition



ARE you superstitious? If you are, you are not alone. One researcher found more than four hundred thousand different superstitions in all parts of the world. The fact that many hotels do not have a thirteenth floor, or that people try to avoid walking under ladders or allowing black cats to pass in front of them, shows the existence of superstition in the Western world. The same unhealthy influence of superstition is evident in Africa, as the following experience illustrates.

About twenty years ago Wawa's husband died after a long illness. For the three days following his death, Wawa lay on the ground next to his deathbed crying and wailing, while dozens of weeping, wailing, dancing and drinking people held a wake around her for the dead. Many of the mourners were so

engrossed that they missed out on sleep and work. Why? They wanted to prove to the dead man's spirit and to his family that they were his friends.

Living in Fear of the Dead

On the third day the body was carried to the cemetery, and everyone went with it. The casket was lowered into the ground and small stones and chunks of dirt were thrown onto it. Why? "To say good-bye to my husband's spirit," says Wawa. Then, before the grave was filled in, Wawa swore before everyone that she had always been faithful to her husband. "If not," she proclaimed, "let his spirit strike me to death." From now on Wawa's life was to be governed by her fear of the spirit of her dead husband.

After Wawa's husband died, his younger brother screamed at her: "You gave him medicine so that he would love you, but you made it too strong and it killed him!"

Her husband's family kept telling her: "If you do anything *kirikiri* ["unreasonable," in the Sango language], his spirit will come back and kill you." To show that she had really loved her husband, she did not fully bathe for three months, wore a simple cloth around her body and slept on a straw mat on the dirt floor. Wawa believed that her dead husband was watching every move she made. The man whom she had loved seemed to have become her worst enemy.

Some tribes require the mourning widow to carry a knife to ward off attack by the dead husband's spirit. She must not look into a fire when she lights it for fear of seeing him. She wakes up at three or four o'clock each morning and cries and wails to show that she still loves him. And she offers him the first serving of every meal by throwing some of it on the ground.

At the end of three months Wawa was taken by the husband's family to the banks of the nearest river and thrown into the water. This was a sign that, insofar as she had carried out the mourning satisfactorily, she was clean of any wicked spirits. Some say that this also indicates that she had no part in the death of her husband.

But Why Did He Die?

In the minds of many people in this part of the world, no one merely dies. A dead man must have been killed because of either human or supernatural malice. Hence, Wawa's in-laws did not help her through her ordeal. Right after her husband's death, his younger brother

screamed at her: "You gave him medicine so that he would love you, but you made it too strong and it killed him!" Others accused her: "You performed witchcraft on him so that he died."

After the third month's "washing clean," their harassment increased. She was constantly forced to give them money, food or alcoholic beverages. Poor Wawa complained to herself: "I am the one in need. Why must I keep bringing these things to my husband's family?" However, she dared not refuse, for fear of her husband's spirit.

Finally, after two fear-filled years, Wawa's mourning period ended. She was given the opportunity to marry her husband's eldest brother, and then his younger brothers. When she refused all offers, she was free to return to her own family. But, even then, Wawa believed that her dead husband was looking for occasions to cause her harm.

The sad thing is that all Wawa's fears were without real foundation. There are no "spirits of the dead" to come back to harm their loved ones. The Bible tells us that the dead 'go down into silence.' In fact, the dead "are conscious of nothing at all . . . Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished."—Psalm 115:17; Ecclesiastes 9:5, 6.

Fortunately, Wawa has since learned this. She knows now that her terrible fear was unreasonable, superstitious and without any foundation. But many millions still have such fears. Why? What is it that enchains people to superstitions? Can those chains be broken?

Breaking the Chains



IN ALMOST every part of the earth, superstition controls the lives of many people. While many Westerners believe that a horseshoe or a rabbit's foot will protect them, many Africans carry a grigris around their neck to protect themselves from wicked spirits. For the same reason, they also tie a protective string around a new baby's wrist. Some tribes believe that tying a small piece of gorilla bone to this string will cause the baby to grow big and strong.

River people believe in mermaids, called *Mami Wata* in the Central African Republic. These are thought to have long blond hair, and it is believed that they entice people to come near the water so that they can grab them and drown them. Some take advantage of this belief. They pour sacrifices into the river to encourage *Mami Wata* to grab

their enemy the next time he comes to the riverbank.

Important in African superstition are the fetishist and the medicine man. The local fetishist throws the *nzeke* (small seashells) to see what the future holds. The medicine man provides a love potion to enliven the fading love of a mate. If lightning strikes close by, it is thought likely that someone you have argued with has hired a witch doctor to help him get revenge. Some believe that the witch doctor can change men into women, and women into men, even humans into animals!

To the superstitious, chance events take on an ominous significance. If a serpent or a chameleon crosses your path, go home quickly before anything bad happens. If a bird happens to fly into your house, someone is going to die there. If

dogs make an unusual racket at night, someone is about to die, or has just died.

To educated people in Africa and other parts of the world, such superstitions may seem unreasonable. But what about educated people who carefully avoid walking under a ladder, cancel an unnecessary journey on Friday the thirteenth, invite a last-minute guest in order to avoid seating thirteen at dinner or check their horoscope in the morning newspaper? Are they not also enmeshed by superstition?

But what is superstition? And what enables it to control people?

Fear of the Unknown

Superstition is defined as "a belief or practice resulting from ignorance, fear of the unknown, trust in magic or chance." It holds people just as long as they remain ignorant and believe it. When a superstitious person gains real knowledge and sees the unreasonableness of his beliefs, the power of superstition over him is gone. And the best source of knowledge to counteract superstition is the Bible.

Wawa found this out. After she learned what the condition of the dead really is, she lost her fear. She stopped doing the things demanded by superstition and suffered no harm. Now she knows that her superstitious fears were needless.

Many Africans have had the same experience. When they read in the Bible that God created each animal "according to its kind," they realize that Mami Wata—half fish, half human—could not exist. (Genesis 1:20-27) Besides, no fisherman has ever caught such a creature in his nets and put it on display. Similarly, they realize that a witch doctor could not turn



a person into a leopard or a crocodile, since these are completely different 'kinds.'

The Bible, too, calls animals "unreasoning." (2 Peter 2:12) So how can a bird or a dog know that someone is going to die? Or how can a serpent or a chameleon (or a black cat, in Europe) bring calamity to someone whose path it happens to cross? In fact, how can a fetishist foretell the future when the Bible says that only God really knows the future. (Isaiah 44:6-8) Reason tells us that they cannot, no more than the stars and planets, billions of miles away, can make any difference in the lives of believers in horoscopes here on planet Earth.

'But,' some may object, 'a snake crossed my path, and two days later my eldest son got sick!' Of course, that could happen. But what about all those whose children get sick and who do not see serpents or chameleons? Or what about those who see these creatures but do not have problems soon thereafter? Describing the experiences of men, the Bible says: "Time and chance happen to them all." (Ecclesiastes 9:11, *Revised Standard Version*) Yes, things can happen just by chance. Because a person is in a certain place at a wrong time, he may get hurt in a storm. Sickness and accidents do not have to be caused by some enemy's evil scheme. Many are finding this out, and now their lives are no longer controlled by superstitious fears.

Belief in Magic

There is, though, an aspect of superstition that cannot be ignored. Sometimes there seems to be an uncanny power involved—some may call it magic—that

goes beyond coincidence and pure accidents. In the West people know that strange things can happen during a spiritistic séance. One young man described an experience with a Ouija board. He said that he and his friends were sitting around the board to see what would happen, when he was violently thrown off his chair and slammed against the wall at the far end of the room.

In Africa uncanny things are reported too. People insist that they have seen a blond fish woman beckoning them into the river. Or reports are heard of animals speaking and claiming they were once humans. Or sicknesses seem to come in response to a witch doctor's spell. How can we explain this?

Some uncanny things really do happen, and the Bible tells us why. Here again, knowledge is the way to break the chains of superstition. According to the Bible, there *are* wicked spirit forces who would like to deceive us. They are not, however, the spirits of the dead. And a person can resist their power.

First of all, who or what are these spirit powers? In the Bible they are called demons, and the chief of them is Satan. We should not scoff at the idea of their existence. Jesus himself knew about them. Where did they originate? The Bible shows they were angelic servants of God that rebelled and became opposers.—Matthew 12:26-28; 2 Peter 2:4.

The Bible also says that Satan "is misleading the entire inhabited earth." (Revelation 12:9) Hence, it is not surprising that he wants to keep people in the chains of superstition. Can he perform uncanny works in order to deceive them? Yes, he can. For instance, the Bible says that a certain "lawless one's presence is according to the operation of Satan with every powerful work and lying signs and portents and with every

unrighteous deception for those who are perishing."—2 Thessalonians 2:9, 10.

Thus, if uncanny things do seem to happen, it must be through the influence of Satan and his demons. Of course, Satan is more powerful than any human. But we are not helpless, because God is even more powerful than Satan and He has offered us help if we want it.

The Bible writer James said: "Subject yourselves, therefore, to God; but oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you." (James 4:7) Wawa and many other Africans have accepted this invitation. Having accepted the truth from God's Word, the Bible, and followed the commands of God as to how they should conduct themselves, they find that Satanic superstition has no power in their lives. They have freedom from former fears.

So it is that they have untied the gris-gris from their necks and the protective strings from their children and have burned these articles. They do not engage in superstitious rituals to placate the spirits of the dead; nor do they fear the spells of witch doctors. They also refrain from wicked things like immorality and violence.

Have these individuals suffered because of this boldness? Quite to the contrary! Jesus promised his disciples: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:31, 32) Sin no longer is the master of these persons. They are protected by God from the possible activity of the demons, and their new knowledge reveals the worthlessness of their former superstitions. Truth has broken their shackles!

Such freedom is available to all who desire it. If you would like to enjoy the freedom from fear that Wawa now has, Jehovah's Witnesses would be delighted to help you as they helped her.

Mildness Has Power

A TRUCK driver stopped a car that had come from the opposite direction. Its operator had blinded him somewhat by neglecting to dim the lights of the car. The trucker took an iron bar in hand and smashed both headlights of his unfortunate fellow road user's auto. Then he continued on his way, leaving the poor car driver behind with a vehicle he could no longer drive. Does such an incident sound familiar to you?

For millions of people violence is the response to anything that goes contrary to their inclination. They resort to either a verbal attack or the use of physical force. Lack of mildness is spreading like a contagious disease. More and more people are concluding that it is useless to be mild, because asserting oneself seems to be much more effective. But is this true?

An Example From History

The man was under heavy pressure. A great crowd with swords and clubs had come to take him into custody. At that, a close companion drew a sword and cut off an ear of a person in the unfriendly crowd. The atmosphere was full of tension. What would the apprehended man do at this crucial time?

The man was Jesus Christ. Notice his reaction. To the one who had tried to come to his rescue, Jesus said: "Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father to supply me at this moment more than twelve legions of angels?" (Matthew 26:47-53) Rather than manifesting a lack of mildness, Je-

sus "touched the ear and healed" the wounded man.—Luke 22:51.

Is Mildness a Sign of Weakness?

Surely, the mildness Jesus displayed could not be attributed to a weak personality. Jesus was a forceful man with the power of his heavenly Father behind him, and he stood firm for what is right. Do you recall what he did at the beginning of his ministry? He entered into the temple at Jerusalem and, on seeing "those selling cattle and sheep and doves and the money brokers in their seats," he made a whip of ropes and "drove all those with the sheep and cattle out of the temple." (John 2:14, 15; see also Matthew 23:13-36.) No sign of weakness there!

By his example Jesus showed that mildness is not just an outward display of calmness but is a reflection of God's strong though mild personality. Jehovah is strong in not tolerating sin. He hates it thoroughly and is very outspoken about it. (Proverbs 6:16-19) Yet, in his mildness, God has provided a way for fallen man to be reconciled to him through the ransom sacrifice and priestly services of Jesus Christ. (Romans 5:10; 1 Timothy 2:5, 6; Hebrews 4:14-16) Jehovah's mildness therefore leads to a full cleansing from sin. (1 John 1:9) So mildness has power, even saving power.

How to Acquire Mildness

Imperfect Christians know that within themselves mildness is not a strong force. Having been born in sin as part of Adam's family, we *all* have fallen flesh-

ly tendencies and were alienated from the life that belongs to God. (Ephesians 2:3; 4:17, 18) We lacked faith and hope, probably also feeling frustrated and insecure. It is easy to see how this state of mind could be a breeding ground for lack of mildness. (Compare Proverbs 25: 28.) But upon learning about God's ways and receiving his forgiveness of sins, what happened? We grew stronger in faith and made progress in cultivating the fruits of God's spirit, which include mildness.—Galatians 5:22, 23.

So it is not due to exercising our own willpower that any of us are able to acquire this fine trait. Rather, mildness results from drawing close to God as our source of strength. Our honest desire to copy Jesus' example further helps us to act with mildness.

As pointed out at 1 Peter 3:3, 4, mildness is associated with the "secret person of the heart," being an inward trait. It is not primarily one that is naturally inherited, but it is acquired as a fruit of God's spirit and through accurate knowledge and application of his Word. Mildness is part of the "new personality" that is patterned after Jehovah God. (Colossians 3: 10) But is godly mildness acquired easily?

Others Have Succeeded

"No, it does not come easy," is the answer of one tall, husky man. "I used to be a prizefighter. But outside the ring, in my own town, I was called 'the terror of the neighborhood.' My physical power gave me feelings of superiority, and I took pleasure in street fighting. Also, at home I greatly lacked self-control. I remember that one time when my wife irritated me I smashed the basement door and the refrigerator with two kicks. Sometimes I was ashamed of myself, especially when I lay drunk in the front garden, in the midst of my own vomit. At those moments I prayed to God for

help. Then my contact with Jehovah's Witnesses intensified. Eight years ago I drank my last glass of beer.

"I had a hard time trying to get the mastery over my temper. But when I now preach from house to house, I can reason with people instead of getting mad at them. Seeing the love among my spiritual brothers has helped me to develop a mild spirit, although I have to keep fighting old tendencies. As a Christian elder, I can understand others who have the same fight, but I know it is possible to succeed."

Or, consider the case of a certain Ambonese woman. She used to be very hot-tempered and carried a knife under her blouse. In her fits of anger she had injured several people. Then Bible truth was introduced into her life. And what does she say now, after being a Christian witness of Jehovah for twenty years? "I realized that I could not worship Jehovah with such a bad temper. So with his help I changed, although I still have to fight with myself to keep calm."

These examples show that a person who wants to develop mildness must stay away from the wrong thinking and acting that are so common in the world around us. It is as the apostle Paul said when writing to the Roman Christians: "Quit being fashioned after this system of things, but be transformed by making your mind over, that you may prove to yourselves the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For through the undeserved kindness given to me I tell everyone there among you not to think more of himself than it is necessary to think." (Romans 12:2, 3) When we do not think more of ourselves than necessary, considering others superior, this helps us to be mild in dealing with them.—Philippians 2:3.



"I forgot, darling. I am so sorry"

Wherein Lies Its Power?

In human relations, mildness is far more powerful than harshness. When someone has to deal with a difficult situation or with an angry, disturbed or deeply grieved person, mildness will achieve results because it is most likely to elicit a response that will open the way to overcome the difficulty. The Bible says: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage." Yes, "a mild tongue itself can break a bone."—Proverbs 15:1; 25:15.

What power mildness has! It really makes the difference between restoring peaceful relations and creating hurt feelings, disunity and damage beyond repair. Now let us see how this is true in various areas of human relations, and how rewarding it is.

In the Family Circle

It is God's purpose that the family circle be a warm, loving arrangement of mutual understanding. But, alas, we

now see that tension and lack of self-control make many families miserable! Doubtless, this is so partly because family members know one another so well, and due to human imperfection everyone in the family is bound to make mistakes. These can either be magnified or be covered by love.

Imagine hardworking John coming home after a nerve-racking day at work. He looks forward to a cheery "welcome home" from his wife. Instead, she remarks: "I specially phoned to ask you to pick up groceries on your way home. Why haven't you done it?" How will John react? He knows that reacting with mildness is God's way, but at such a moment it may be very difficult to give a mild answer. Happily, in this case, he puts his arm around his wife's shoulder and says: "I forgot, darling. I am so sorry. I will go to the store now and will be back in a few minutes." A pleasant evening is his reward.

The same holds true in parents' relations with their children. Mildness will make parents approachable. Remember Jesus. Children loved to approach him. (Matthew 19:14, 15) Why? Because, as he himself said, he was "mild-tempered and lowly in heart." (Matthew 11:29) As a parent, are you mild-tempered, just as Jesus was?

What about the family relationship when the husband is not a Christian and his wife is a disciple of Jesus Christ? It is good for the believing wife to maintain a positive attitude because in time her husband may be won over to the truth. In this, however, notice the importance of mildness on the wife's part. The apostle Peter wrote: "Be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the con-

duct of their wives, . . . let [your adornment] be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the *quiet and mild spirit*, which is of great value in the eyes of God."—1 Peter 3:1-4.

In the Congregation

The Christian congregation is like a large family. (Compare 1 Timothy 3:15.) With a real family spirit prevailing, a spirit of mildness in which mistakes are not magnified but are covered over in love, all in the congregation will do their utmost to be kind to one another. This will work for peace and unity. Especially should those having spiritual oversight have a mild, loving family spirit in dealing with fellow members of the congregation, for the apostle Paul wrote: "Do not severely criticize an older man. To the contrary, entreat him as a father, younger men as brothers, older women as mothers, younger women as sisters with all chasteness."—1 Timothy 5:1, 2.

This splendid counsel emphasizes the need for overseers to display Christlike mildness. If, before being aware of it, a member of the congregation makes a mistake, it would not be proper to give the erring person a harsh reprimand. Why? Because harshness is likely to cause hurt feelings and possibly anger. Moreover, it repels. Therefore, overseers should take heed to the inspired counsel: "Brothers, even though a man takes some false step before he is aware of it, you who have spiritual qualifications try to readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted."—Galatians 6:1.

When we act in a spirit of mildness, we imitate God's own way of dealing with us. Paul counseled the Christian overseer Titus to exhibit "all mildness toward all men." Why? "For even we were once senseless, disobedient, being

misled, being slaves to various desires and pleasures, carrying on in badness and envy, abhorrent, hating one another." However, Jehovah came to our rescue and saved us "according to his mercy." —Titus 3:2-7.

Jesus commanded his followers to 'let their light shine before men.' (Matthew 5:16) By what are people in general attracted most? By harshness, or by kindness and mildness? What has been your own experience? Likely, we will all agree with Jesus' words: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12) Does this not call for mildness on our part?

In Contacts With Our Neighbors

We may meet with opposition from our neighbors, perhaps when calling to share the good news with them. Surely, under such circumstances it is essential that we display mildness, even as Christian overseers need to do so within the congregation. (Compare 2 Timothy 2:23-26.) Because of our mildness, former opposers may eventually respond favorably to the kingdom message.

Hundreds of thousands of people throughout the earth have accepted the good news. In association with anointed Christians, they are now part of a loving worldwide brotherhood. Thus a "great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" today ascribe salvation to Jehovah God and to the Lamb, Jesus Christ. (Revelation 7:9, 10; 14:1) These dedicated Christians are living proof that Jehovah's mildness has saving power. In appreciative response, they endeavor to exhibit Godlike mildness, and they find this to be very rewarding. May you also be found among the mild-tempered ones who enjoy divine blessing.—Compare Matthew 5:5.

"Look! Jehovah Came With His Holy Myriads"

"Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him."—Jude 14, 15.

JEHOVAH, the Supreme Judge, deserves to be respected. (Isaiah 33:22) Yet many treat him with great disrespect. Among such arrogant wrongdoers were the "ungodly men" about whom the disciple Jude wrote in his divinely inspired letter. However, no one can disregard God with impunity, for there is no doubt about 'Jehovah's coming to execute judgment against the ungodly.'—Jude 14, 15; Job 9:1-4.

² Our earlier discussion of Jude's letter emphasized the need to resist false teachers and would-be flesh defilers, but to heed Scriptural warnings and respect divinely constituted authority. (Jude 1-10) Now may Jude's further counsel heighten our respect for the Supreme Judge so that we will stand firmly among his witnesses with eternal life in view.

'Too Bad for Them!'

³ Concerning the "ungodly men" who defied Jehovah, Jude wrote:

"Too bad for them, because they have gone in the path of Cain, and have rushed into the erroneous course of Balaam for reward,

1. As the Supreme Judge, how should Jehovah be viewed?
2. (a) Thus far our consideration of Jude's letter has brought what points to our attention? (b) Jude's further counsel should do what for us?
3. Of what was Cain guilty?

and have perished in the rebellious talk of Korah!" (Jude 11)

In saying "too bad for them," Jude indicated that woe would befall the "ungodly men" who had crept into the congregation of Jehovah's people. (Compare Luke 11:42-47, 52.) Those men had "gone in the path of Cain." Whereas God's approval came upon Abel and his sacrifice of animal flesh and blood, Cain's bloodless offering, made with an improper spirit, was rejected. Cain lacked faith and did not respect the glory or dignity that God bestowed on Abel. In envy and hatred, Cain even disregarded a divine warning and murdered his brother.—Genesis 4:2-8; Hebrews 11:4; 1 John 3:12.

⁴ Primarily, Cain showed disrespect for Jehovah, and his disrespectful course was called "the path of Cain." Just as his defiant action and wicked motive were all wrong, so it is today with any person professing to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses but who seeks to turn God's undeserved kindness into an excuse for loose conduct. Any such person pursues Cain's "path." Like Cain, who hated and killed his brother, such individuals are 'manslayers' because they hate faithful

4. (a) What was "the path of Cain"? (b) Why should you avoid 'Cain's path'?

Christians whom Jehovah has dignified with His service. (1 John 3:15) God cursed Cain, and during the Flood his offspring were wiped out. Similarly, it will be "too bad" for those who follow 'Cain's path,' for it displeases Jehovah and leads to destruction.

⁵ The ungodly flesh defilers also had "rushed into the erroneous course of Balaam for reward." Yielding to Moabite King Balak's repeated offers of reward, Balaam tried to curse the Israelites three times, but Jehovah always turned the curse into a blessing. Therefore, greedy Balaam suggested to Balak that if Israel could be seduced into false religion and indulgence in animalistic passions, God would curse even His own people. This evil counsel was followed, and because of the Israelites' loose conduct, 24,000 of them were killed by a God-sent plague and direct execution. (Numbers 22:1-25:9; Revelation 2:14) Later, Balaam himself died at the hands of those he had tried to curse. (Numbers 31:8) Similarly, disaster will befall any claiming to be Jehovah's Witnesses but who are greedy and seek to corrupt Jehovah's people by false teaching and indulgence in animalistic passions. There have been instances of this in modern times, and faithful dedicated witnesses of Jehovah should beware!

⁶ Another warning example cited by Jude was that of the Levite Korah, who resorted to "rebellious talk." Driven by ambition, he falsely charged Moses with having selfishly arranged for his own brother, Aaron, to become high priest, and accused Aaron of having grabbed

5. (a) What course did Balaam pursue? (b) In Jude's day who 'rushed into Balaam's erroneous course'? (c) What will happen to any who now seek to corrupt Jehovah's people by false teaching and indulgence in animalistic passions?

6, 7. (a) Of what was the Levite Korah guilty? (b) What happened to Korah and those who joined him? (c) How should we view "rebellious talk"?

the honor of the priesthood for himself and his family. Korah did not respect the glory or dignity God conferred upon Aaron and his sons, but rebelled against God's appointments.

⁷ Though Korah and certain Reubenites drawn to his side had been saved out of Egypt, they never entered the Promised Land. Instead, the earth opened up and some of them were buried alive, whereas others were burned to death by fire from Jehovah. Next, 14,700 Israelites that murmured at this judgment from God died by a scourge from Jehovah. (Numbers, chapter 16) So certain was the execution of God's judgment against the rebellious "ungodly men" that Jude said they "have perished." It was as good as done! How all of this should prompt us to avoid "rebellious talk"!

⁸ Yes, woe is sure to befall any pursuing a course of rebellion against Jehovah and his organizational arrangements. Jude showed that it would be "too bad" for those who lacked love and faith (as did Cain), who (like Balaam) were eager to be paid for teachings that promoted loose conduct, and who (like Korah) disrespected divinely conferred authority. And surely Jude's words provided strong warning concerning any who profess to be Jehovah's Witnesses and yet have a critical or disrespectful attitude toward God's theocratic arrangement for our day.

Warnings in Comparison

⁹ Continuing to give warning, Jude said in comparison:

"These are the rocks hidden below water in your love feasts while they feast with you, shepherds that feed themselves without fear; waterless clouds carried this way and that by winds; trees in late autumn, but fruitless,

8. The warning examples of Cain, Balaam and Korah have what import today?

9. What was the significance of likening the ungodly false teachers to "rocks hidden below water"?

having died twice, having been uprooted; wild waves of the sea that foam up their own causes for shame; stars with no set course, for which the blackness of darkness stands reserved forever." (Jude 12, 13)

Among other things, the false teachers were like "rocks hidden below water." Those men made a pretense of love for believers and therefore were like jagged underwater rocks that could rip and kill swimmers or wreck ships. Unless Jehovah's Witnesses continue to "put up a hard fight for the faith," such deceptive teachers could lead unstable individuals to "shipwreck concerning their faith."

—1 Timothy 1:19.

¹⁰ Those "ungodly men" frequented the Christians' "love feasts." Such occasions may have been banquets to which materially prosperous Christians invited poor fellow believers. But the would-be flesh defilers attended with base motives. (Compare 2 Peter 2:13.) Likewise, there are some today who try to turn social events among Jehovah's Witnesses into occasions for excesses in eating, drinking and worldly song and dance. Let faithful Christian witnesses never allow this to occur at their social gatherings.

¹¹ The ungodly false teachers also were like shepherds that fleeced and sacrificed the flock to dress and feed themselves. They tried to lead the unsteady into a wayward course and did not feed them proper spiritual food. (Compare Ezekiel 34:7-10.) How vital that loyal Christians reject the views of any such false teachers today!

¹² The false teachers of Jude's day also were like deceptive clouds promising

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10. (a) The early Christian "love feasts" may have been what, and with what motive did the "ungodly men" attend them? (b) What must be avoided at social gatherings among Jehovah's Witnesses?
 11. (a) The ungodly false teachers were shepherds of what kind? (b) What attitude should loyal Christians have toward such false teachers today?
 12. How were the false teachers of Jude's day like waterless, windblown clouds?

much-needed rain, but that were really waterless and driven by winds. Those men were carried about by winds of error, and because of being like "waterless clouds" they were spiritually empty and unprofitable. Let Jehovah's Witnesses beware of all such presumptuous false teachers.

¹³ Lacking the fruitage of God's holy spirit, those vile men also were as trees without fruit in the fall, at the end of the fruit-bearing season. They were like trees that had "died twice," or were "completely dead." (*Today's English Version*) Those men "slipped" into the congregation by pretending to be alive spiritually after being formally baptized in water. But since they bore no fruit to God's glory, they had to be dealt with as were unproductive fruit trees in ancient Palestine. These were uprooted and destroyed so as to escape the tax on fruit trees. Being "uprooted" clearly indicated that those unrepentant apostate teachers faced destruction.

¹⁴ Because those false teachers were without God's holy spirit, they also were like "wild waves of the sea." They were as wild as turbulent sea waves that stir up mire and seaweed. Comparably, those restless, animalistic men apparently were loud in making professions of faith, but their ungodly acts and teachings identified them as filthy wrongdoers with reason to be ashamed.—Isaiah 57:20, 21.

¹⁵ Since those false teachers did not maintain a steady course in righteousness, they were like "wandering stars." (*Authorized Version*) Of course, navigation by the stars would be impossible if these unpredictably wandered about. Accord-

13. Why were the false teachers like fruitless trees that had "died twice" and were "uprooted"?

14. How were the false teachers like "wild waves of the sea"?

15. The false teachers were like stars of what kind, and what was reserved for them?



Unrepentant apostate teachers faced destruction,
even as unproductive fruit trees were uprooted

ingly, like stars having no "set course," those apostates could not be depended upon for sound spiritual guidance. For those false lights God "reserved" nothing but the "blackness of darkness" eternally, and this signified their everlasting destruction. For many reasons, indeed, faithful Christian witnesses of Jehovah completely reject false teachers and their doctrines.

Jehovah Acts to Execute Judgment

¹⁶ In proof that Jehovah acts against the ungodly, Jude said:

"Yes, the seventh one in line from Adam, Enoch, prophesied also regarding them, when he said: 'Look! Jehovah came with his holy myriads, to execute judgment against all, and to convict all the ungodly concerning all their ungodly deeds that they did in an ungodly way, and concerning all the shocking things that ungodly sinners spoke against him.' " (Jude 14, 15)

Counting Adam, the first human, Enoch was "the seventh one in line." Those in

between were Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel and Jared. (Genesis 5:3-18) 'Enoch walked with God,' pursuing a course in harmony with Jehovah's revealed truth. (Genesis 5:24; Hebrews 11:5) Spiritual corruption surrounded Enoch, but he courageously served as God's prophet.

¹⁷ How Jude learned about the prophecy of Enoch is not revealed. It does not appear earlier in the divinely inspired Scriptures. Perhaps Jesus quoted Enoch's prophecy in a sermon and it was handed down orally. But there is no evidence that Jude quoted a similar statement found in the apocryphal Book of Enoch. Since Jude wrote under divine inspiration, the inclusion of Enoch's prophecy in his letter establishes the genuineness of those words.

¹⁸ Enoch "prophesied also regarding

17. How may Jude have learned about Enoch's prophecy?

18. (a) Why could it be said that Enoch prophesied also regarding the false teachers of Jude's day? (b) According to Enoch's prophecy, how would the Supreme Judge deal with those treating Him with disrespect?

16. Who was Enoch, and what did he prophesy?

[the false teachers of Jude's day]" apparently in that what he foretold concerning early wrongdoers also applied to them. Jehovah, the Supreme Judge, toward whom the ungodly or irreverential men showed disrespect, would execute his adverse judgment upon them. In doing so, Jehovah would come with his "holy myriads," or "holy ten thousands," that is, righteous angels in vast numbers. (Compare Deuteronomy 33:2; Daniel 7:9, 10.) The chief One of those "holy myriads" is the Messiah, by whom Jehovah comes and renders judgment.—Luke 1:35; John 5:27; Acts 17:30, 31.

¹⁹ Jehovah allowed those ungodly or irreverential persons ample opportunity to show their guiltiness, as by their "loose conduct." By their vile deeds and words their ungodliness was made evident and on that basis they were proved guilty, were 'convicted' by God. As the wicked of Enoch's day spoke "shocking things" against God, so those "ungodly men" disregarded lordship and spoke abusively of those upon whom Jehovah had conferred a degree of glory. (Jude 8-10) Thus they were speaking "shocking things" against Jehovah and were condemned. In keeping with Enoch's prophecy, God executed judgment against the ungodly during the flood of Noah's day. Hence, execution of divine judgment against the ungodly defilers of the flesh was certain, and Jehovah's Witnesses can expect to see similar execution of judgment in this day. Surely, then, we should guard our acts and speech so as to please God and escape destruction.

19. (a) Like the wicked of Enoch's day, how did the "ungodly men" speak "shocking things" against Jehovah? (b) What was sure to come upon ungodly defilers of the flesh? (c) So how should Jehovah's Witnesses conduct themselves?

Can you answer these questions?

- What was the "path of Cain," and why must Jehovah's people avoid it?
- Who "rushed into the erroneous course of Balaam," and why would you shun it?
- What warning example do we have in the case of the Levite Korah?
- How were the "ungodly men" Jude discusses comparable to fruitless trees that had "died twice" and were "uprooted"?
- What did Enoch prophesy, and what should his words move us to do?
- On the basis of Jude's counsel, what attitude should we have toward murmuring and 'admiring personalities for our own benefit'?

Shun Murmuring and Swelling Speech

²⁰ Referring to other ungodly traits, Jude wrote:

"These men are murmurers, complainers about their lot in life, proceeding according to their own desires, and their mouths speak swelling things, while they are admiring personalities for the sake of their own benefit." (Jude 16)

Christian witnesses of Jehovah are admonished to "keep doing all things free from murmurings." (Philippians 2:14, 15) But those "ungodly men" were "murmurers" like the Israelites who murmured against Moses and Aaron and consequently had to die in the wilderness because of actually murmuring against God. (Numbers 14:1-38; 1 Corinthians 10:

20. How should Jehovah's servants view the murmuring and complaining of the "ungodly men"?

10) The animalistic men also were "complainers about their lot in life," even as the worldly poor may complain because they are not wealthy, and so forth. Of course, like true Christians of Jude's time, Jehovah's Witnesses today rely on heavenly wisdom and the help of God's spirit in bearing difficult circumstances. May we never be like the ungodly murmurers of Jude's day!

²¹ Those wayward men 'proceeded according to their own desires,' being governed by their immoral sensual cravings but not by the commandments of God or his Son. (Compare James 4:1-3.) And while 'their mouths spoke swelling things,' or were "full of boastful talk" (*Jerusalem Bible*), they singled out some for whom they made an insincere show of admiration. (Compare Psalm 140:11; Titus 1:10, 11; 2 Peter 2:18, 19.) Those

immoral men 'admired personalities for the sake of their own benefit.' They cultivated the favor and support of the rich, the prominent, or others, hoping for material or social gain. But this was grossly selfish and blinded those wrongdoers to the much higher godly aim of cultivating Jehovah's favor. Hence, they failed to respect the Supreme Judge and so came under his sentence of destruction.

²² Jude was forthright in urging fellow believers to "put up a hard fight for the faith." He pointed to Scriptural warnings against immorality, rebelliousness and murmuring, and he left no doubt about the execution of divine judgment. How timely that Jehovah's Witnesses reflect on these matters! As we shall see, Jude's concluding words, which include heartfelt entreaty, also have great meaning for Jehovah's worshipers.

21. (a) In what way did the "ungodly men" 'proceed according to their own desires'? (b) How did those wayward individuals 'admire personalities for their own benefit,' and why was that wrong?

22. As considered so far, what has Jude presented for our benefit, and what do his concluding words include?

"Beloved Ones, . . . Keep Yourselves in God's Love"

"Beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God's love." —Jude 20, 21.

JEHOVAH'S undeserved kindness is evident in his dealings with those who love him. Through his inspired Word he shows what he requires of them. And

1, 2. Besides warnings, what instruction is found in the letter of Jude?

how grateful we can be that a part of God's Word, the letter of Jude, provides warnings that can help us to maintain a proper relationship with Jehovah God!

² Yet, besides giving needed warnings, Jude shows what we must do to be up-

built spiritually and to 'keep ourselves in God's love.' Hence, we will benefit greatly from considering the concluding portion of Jude's letter.

Ridiculers Foretold

³ Providing an important reminder, Jude wrote:

"As for you, beloved ones, call to mind the sayings that have been previously spoken by the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they used to say to you: 'In the last time there will be ridiculers, proceeding according to their own desires for ungodly things.' These are the ones that make separations, animalistic men, not having spirituality." (Jude 17-19)

Jude said much to expose the "ungodly men" who slyly crept into the congregation. Then, entreating fellow believers for whom he had great affection, Jude bid them to recall words previously spoken by Jesus' apostles. Recalling those sayings should have moved all genuine Christians to "put up a hard fight for the faith."

⁴ The apostle Paul warned fellow overseers that from among them men would "rise and speak twisted things to draw away the disciples after themselves." (Acts 20:29, 30) He told Timothy that "in later times some would fall away from the faith." (1 Timothy 4:1, 2) And the apostle Peter specifically warned that "in the last days there would come ridiculers, saying: 'Where is this promised presence of his?'" —2 Peter 3:1-4.

⁵ Hence, recipients of Jude's letter had good reason to expect "ridiculers" to appear during the period that immediately preceded the end of the Jewish system of things. It was not unlikely that the "ungodly men" who had slipped into the

3, 4. To what "sayings" of Jesus' apostles did Jude refer?

5. How may faithful Christians have been treated by the "ungodly men" who had slipped into the congregation, but how should godly persons have reacted to this?

congregation were ridiculing faithful believers who adhered to Jehovah's righteous standards and would not join the "false brothers" in loose conduct. But it was essential that godly persons "put up a hard fight for the faith," even though they might have been derided by false teachers who 'proceeded according to' and were driven by their own immoral "desires for ungodly things."—Compare 2 Corinthians 11:26; Galatians 2:4, 5.

⁶ Whereas God, by his spirit, assured the unity of those loving him, those ungodly ridiculers tried to "make separations," or "distinctions," endeavoring to carry on a separating work among Jehovah's people. (Jude 19, *New World Translation*, 1950 edition, footnote; Psalm 133:1-3; 1 Corinthians 1:10) Although the ridiculers spoke against faithful responsible men in the congregation, the ungodly ones expressed admiration for individuals who could benefit them. (Jude 8, 16) Like the Pharisees, they looked down on the humble, godly members of the congregation. Rather than gathering with the Lord, they tried to scatter. Even today some try to draw the unsteady away into private groups, supposedly for "Bible study." This could never promote love for God, Christ and the Christian congregation.—Luke 11:23.

⁷ Those men were fittingly termed "animalistic," or "soulical," for they were sentient creatures yielding to fleshly sensations, appetites and inclinations. (Compare *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*, verse 19.) Although they considered themselves spiritually enlightened, Jude described them as "not having spirituality," or, literally, not having "the spirit." Actually, those "animalistic men" lacked Jehovah's spirit, could not comprehend

6. Although God assured the unity of those loving him, what did the ungodly ridiculers try to do?

7. Why were the "ungodly men" fittingly termed "animalistic"?

spiritual matters and scarcely rose above the level of unreasoning beasts. If we have Jehovah's spirit and understand "the deep things of God," we should be deeply grateful to our heavenly Father.
—1 Corinthians 2:6-16.

How to Remain in God's Love

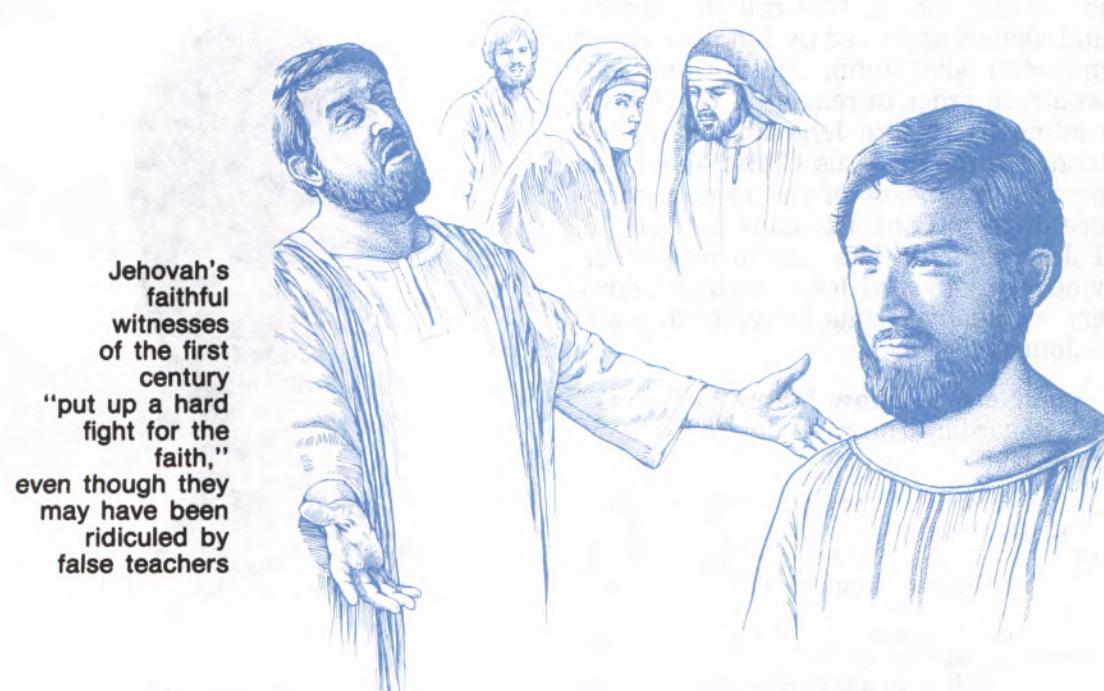
⁸ Jude next turned to earnest entreaty, saying:

"But you, beloved ones, by building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit, keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view." (Jude 20, 21)

Jude lovingly showed how his cherished fellow believers could remain in the love of Jehovah. Following his counsel certainly would include the cultivating of

8. The expression "most holy faith" may have referred to what?

Jehovah's
faithful
witnesses
of the first
century
"put up a hard
fight for the
faith,"
even though they
may have been
ridiculed by
false teachers



faith, a fruit of God's spirit. (Galatians 5: 22, 23) But in view of Jude's earlier reference to fighting for 'the faith delivered to the holy ones' (vs. 3), the expression "most holy faith" may have referred to the whole range of Christian teachings, including the good news of salvation. The foundation of such true faith is Christ, and it was called "most holy" because it looked to the God of holiness and was based exclusively upon his holy Word.
—Acts 20:32; 1 Corinthians 3:10-15.

⁹ For Christians to 'upbuild themselves on their most holy faith,' or to strengthen it, they must diligently study God's Word personally and congregationally. Frequently discussing the Scriptures with fellow Christian witnesses of Jehovah, as well as proclaiming the good news to

9. We must do what to 'upbuild ourselves on our most holy faith'?

others, will deepen the impression the Bible makes on our hearts. But none of this can be accomplished apart from earnest prayer. An individual 'prays with holy spirit' when praying under its influence and in harmony with the things in Jehovah's Word. Moreover, the Scriptures, written under inspiration of God's spirit, show us how to pray and what to request in prayer. For instance, we can confidently pray to be filled with God's holy spirit. If we 'pray with holy spirit,' our prayers will reveal a proper heart condition, one loved by God. We will thus be protected from improper influences, including the views of any "ungodly men" who might slip into the congregation.—Luke 11:13; Romans 8:9, 26, 27.

¹⁰ To 'keep themselves in God's love,' Jude's fellow believers had to observe Jehovah's commandments and those of His Son. (John 15:10; 1 John 5:3) Remaining in the love of God calls for speech and conduct approved by Jehovah. Being imperfect and sinful, the faithful ones would, in order to remain in God's love, continually require Jehovah's mercy extended through Jesus Christ and made possible by means of the ransom sacrifice of their Lord. (Romans 5:8; 9:14-18; 1 John 4:9, 10) The continuance of divine mercy toward Jesus' faithful followers eventually results in everlasting life.
—John 3:16.

The Need to Show Mercy to Others

¹¹ Regarding the need to show mercy, Jude said:

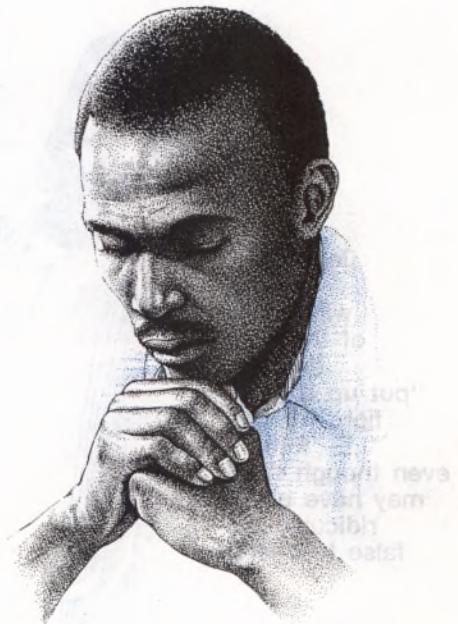
"Also, continue showing mercy to some that have doubts; save them by snatching them out of the fire. But continue showing mercy to others, doing so with fear, while

you hate even the inner garment that has been stained by the flesh." (Jude 22, 23)

If Jude's fellow believers were to continue receiving divine mercy, they had to be merciful to others whose eternal life was at stake. (James 2:13) But for the faithful to 'continue showing mercy to some having doubts,' it was necessary for them to distinguish between those eligible for mercy and the 'dreamers.'

¹² By their false teaching, murmuring, complaining, and so forth, the "ungodly men" were causing spiritually unsteady persons to be filled with doubts. Shaken by the swelling words of the false teachers, the doubting ones may have wondered whether dedicated Christians really were Jehovah's people and may

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12. (a) Because of being influenced by the "ungodly men," some may have had what doubts? (b) How would it be possible to 'snatch some out of the fire'?



'Pray with holy spirit'

10. To 'keep themselves in God's love,' what was required of Jude's fellow believers?

11. What did Jude say about mercy, and in showing it between whom was it necessary to distinguish?

have stopped sharing with them in worship and in preaching the good news. Such unstable ones were in danger of the "fire," or everlasting destruction. (Compare Matthew 18:8, 9; 25:31-33, 41-46.) But by quickly coming to their aid with spiritual exhortation and prayer, stable Christians, especially congregation overseers, would be able to save them, "snatching them out of the fire."—Galatians 6:1; James 5:13-20.

¹³ Some may have yielded to the flesh defilers and fallen with them into immorality, or else into spiritual adultery. (James 4:4) By giving way to animalistic practices, they had, as it were, 'stained the inner garment.' They had stained their inward personality as genuine Christians, like a garment worn next to the skin. (Compare Revelation 3:4, 5.) Faithful witnesses of Jehovah guarded against spotting up their own garment of Christian personality in this way because this displeased Jehovah God and might lead to destruction. Yet, godly persons, particularly the appointed elders, compassionately tried to help the unstable wearers of 'stained garments' back to the way of salvation. If true repentance was shown by the wayward, it would be possible to "save them" from the death in divine disfavor to which an unclean course would lead them.—Proverbs 28:13.

Ascribe Glory, Majesty, Might and Authority to God

¹⁴ In conclusion, Jude committed his readers to God, saying:

"Now to the one who is able to guard you from stumbling and to set you unblemished

13. (a) In what way had some 'stained their inner garment'? (b) How might wearers of 'stained garments' be 'saved'?

14, 15. (a) Who was able to guard Jude's anointed fellow worshipers from stumbling, and into what could a person stumble? (b) How could faithful anointed witnesses of Jehovah be 'set unblemished' before God? (c) To what do the "great crowd" look forward?

In Our Next Issue

- God Wants His Name Known
- When the Plowboy Delights in God's Word
- The Kingdom and "a Holy Place"
- "Cast Your Anxieties Upon Jehovah"

in the sight of his glory with great joy, to the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, might and authority for all past eternity and now and into all eternity. Amen." (Jude 24, 25)

Having provided inspired warning and sound counsel, Jude had to place spiritually endangered fellow believers in God's care. Jehovah alone could make them successful in resisting the "ungodly men" in their midst. So Jude appropriately concluded his letter with an ascription of praise to the Most High.

¹⁵ Jude's anointed fellow worshipers could have confidence in Jehovah as 'the one able to guard them from stumbling.' God could protect them from falling into transgression and from yielding to the temptation to engage in the immorality being encouraged by the ungodly flesh defilers. Indeed, Jehovah could guard the godly from "stumbling" into gross sin and the destruction awaiting unrepentant animalistic false Christians. Moreover, Jehovah was able "to set [his faithful witnesses] unblemished in the sight of his glory," or, "before his glorious person." (NW, 1950 edition) They would be able to stand unspotted spiritually because of God's undeserved kindness. (Ephesians 2:1-7; Colossians 1:21-23) Faithful anointed witnesses of Jehovah want Jesus Christ to resurrect them and present them in

spiritual perfection before the "glorious person" of God. (John 5:25; 11:24, 25) Surely, this will result in "great joy" for them. Similarly, the "great crowd" look forward to being shepherded through "the great tribulation" and enjoying further privileges of "sacred service" as they advance to human perfection here on earth.—Revelation 7:9, 10, 14-17.

¹⁶ Jehovah is, as Jude said, "the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord." Frequently in the Scriptures Jehovah is identified as a Savior. (Psalm 106:21; Isaiah 43:3; Jeremiah 14:8; Luke 1:46, 47) He is the One providing for salvation through the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 20:28; John 3:16; Romans 5:8; 1 John 4:9, 14) Fittingly, to Jehovah Jude ascribed "glory" (Greek, *doxa*), denoting splendor. (Compare Psalm 29:1, 2.) To God he also ascribed "majesty" (Greek, *megalōsynē*), signifying "greatness" of a kingly nature. (*Int*) This is an appropriate acknowledgment of Jehovah's supreme regal authority as "King of eternity." (1 Timothy 1:17) *Kratos*, or "might," too, was ascribed to Jehovah, apparently signifying his dominion, or rulership, whether in heaven or over the earth. (Compare Daniel 4:25; Revelation 11:16-18.) Jude further ascribed to God "authority" (Greek, *exousia*), for Jehovah has the authority and ability to act as He pleases.—Daniel 4:34, 35.

¹⁷ Jude appropriately ascribed glory, majesty, might and authority to Jehovah "for all past eternity," or "before all time," as men might know it, because Jehovah is God "from time indefinite to time indefinite." (Jude 25, NW, 1950 edition, footnote; Psalm 90:2) Jehovah's worshipers would properly ascribe

16. (a) Why can Jehovah be called "the only God our Savior through Jesus Christ our Lord"? (b) Jude ascribed what to God, and why fittingly so?

17. Why would Jude's ascription to God be appropriate (a) "for all past eternity"? (b) "now"? (c) "into all eternity"?

Do you remember these points?

- Who warned that 'in the last time there would be ridiculers,' and why did Jude direct attention to this?
- What was the "most holy faith," and how can we upbuild ourselves on it?
- How could Jude's fellow believers 'keep themselves in God's love'?
- For what reason did some professing Christians need mercy, and what was meant by "snatching them out of the fire"?
- Why was it fitting for Jude to ascribe glory, majesty, might and authority to Jehovah God?
- We should take Jude's message to heart because it helps us to deal successfully with what problems?

these things to Him "now," that is, when Jude wrote as well as today. Moreover, Jehovah merits this ascription "into all eternity," for he will never die and will always have faithful praisers. (Habakkuk 1:12; Psalm 148) To Jude's virtual prayer in closing, he added "Amen," or "So be it." And with his expression of praise all faithful Christian witnesses of Jehovah heartily agree.

Take Jude's Message to Heart!

¹⁸ Jude's letter has real meaning for Jehovah's Witnesses today. We must cling to God's Word and thoroughly shun false teachers. (Job 13:16; 27:8, 9; Jeremiah 17:

18. From Jude's letter, what have we learned about (a) false teachers? (b) "loose conduct"? (c) lack of faith? (d) respect for authority? (e) murmuring and complaining? (f) admiring others for selfish advantage?

13; Jude 4, 19) The faithful must resist any inducement to engage in "loose conduct." (Jude 3, 4; Genesis 39:7-12) Nor may we succumb to lack of faith, for this could cost us eternal life. (Hebrews 3:12; Jude 5) Jude's message should also move us to respect divinely constituted authority and to resist any temptation to speak against those faithfully shouldering congregational responsibility. (Hebrews 13:17; Jude 8, 9) Rather than murmuring and complaining, we should be moved by Jude's letter to display love for Jehovah God and our fellow believers. (Matthew 22:37-40; John 13:34, 35; Romans 13:8-10; Jude 16) Jude's words also help us to avoid admiring others for selfish advantage, this being among the devious

ways that would make us detestable to Jehovah.—Proverbs 3:32; Jude 16.

¹⁹ Therefore, as dedicated Christian witnesses of Jehovah and his dear Son, may we all take to heart the weighty and loving message of the disciple Jude. (Compare Isaiah 43:10-12; Acts 1:8.) His words will make us even more surefooted as we tread the "path of life." (Psalm 16:11) May we 'keep on guard according to Jehovah's word,' including the letter of Jude. (Psalm 119:9-16) In that way, we will succeed in 'putting up a hard fight for the faith' and will, with divine aid, 'keep ourselves in God's love.'

19. Why should we take Jude's divinely inspired message to heart?

Because "Yes" Meant Yes

In urging truthfulness, Jesus Christ once said, "Let your word Yes mean Yes." (Matthew 5:37) By following this counsel, and also by being alert to opportunities to share the Bible's message with others, Christians may have very rewarding experiences. This is illustrated by the following report from an eastern European land:

While painting some rooms for a certain woman, one of Jehovah's Witnesses spoke about Jehovah God, His wonderful future purpose for mankind and other Scriptural subjects. But the Witness was unable to arrange for a return visit and wondered what was hindering the woman, since he knew her to be a good-natured and modest person.

The Witness reports: "When I finished my job, she paid me and asked whether I would help her to put the furniture back into the rooms, since she did not have anybody to help her. I promised to return about 9 p.m. to help her." He returned that night, bringing along a helper, another man who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. It took the two men only ten minutes to put the furniture in place. They then talked briefly to the woman about God's kingdom and its blessings, and left.

Two years later, this woman again asked the Witness to paint her rooms. In writing down her name and address, he asked whether she had thought about the Biblical things he had told her. She answered: "Yes, and in the meantime I have been baptized." Asked how this had come about, she replied:

"You really told me many nice things from the Bible and I liked what you said. I did not, however, take it seriously. But when you promised to put the furniture back in place, I thought: If this man keeps his word, then he is truly a servant of God. When you returned, even with a helper, and did not take any money for it, I resolved to occupy myself seriously with the Bible. After two or three days I went to the market. There I met a witness of Jehovah who already had talked to me about the Bible several times. . . . A short time later that woman started a Bible study with me, and eight months thereafter I was baptized."

So this is how it came about that this woman got baptized in symbol of her dedication to God. Now she, too, was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. This came about because a Christian had kept his word. His "Yes" meant Yes.



Good News Penetrates “Lion Mountains”

A Thrilling Story of Kingdom Progress
in Sierra Leone

“I WAS quite amazed to see a modern city much cleaner than many cities in most parts of the world. Paved streets, busy shops, new cars and an endless stream of people passing by. There was the big cotton tree to which slaves were chained in those earlier days when chiefs sold into slavery captives or people of their own tribes whom they did not like.” This was the expression of a tourist visiting Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone.

The name Sierra Leone, meaning “Lion Mountains,” goes back to the time when the Portuguese adventurer Pedro de Sintra first came to the region in 1462. This country is located on the southwest coast of West Africa and has a population of more than 3,000,000.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are not new to Sierra Leone. Publications of the Watch Tower Society were being read by persons there from at least 1915 onward. These publications were brought by per-

sons from the West Indies who came to Sierra Leone for employment. One of these was Alfred Joseph of Barbados. He began sharing Bible truth with others. Seeing the interest among the local people, he wrote to the Watch Tower Society requesting help in developing the interest. Within a few months W. R. (Bible) Brown and his wife arrived from Trinidad, West Indies.

Brown's first lecture was on the thought-provoking subject "Where Are the Dead?" and was advertised by word of mouth. Did the people of Freetown respond to the invitation? This is Alfred Joseph's answer: "We were overjoyed with the result. Most clergy of Freetown, about twenty, turned out for the talk, but many of them left off their regular religious garb so as to be less conspicuous. Among the large audience of 500 that packed the Wilberforce Memorial Hall was a young ecclesiastical student, M. A. Garber. He and the entire crowd listened attentively to the hour-long discourse that was punctuated with scripture citations made visible to the audience by means of lantern slides. Forceful talks brought out such crowds that, as one old-time resident in Freetown put it, 'The local churches had to close their evening services, for all the members were down attending "Bible" Brown's lectures.'"

By the end of 1923, fourteen persons had been baptized, including Garber. The little group became very active in evangelizing. Up till 1927 most of the preaching work seems to have been confined to the capital. Then, from 1928 onward, these Bible students made trips to the provinces. Those in Freetown who could not go along helped to finance the trips to the interior. Every year, before the rains set in, house-to-house witnessing was done and lectures were given in the outlying villages. The first Sunday

of each month was devoted to returning to the villages to build up the interest. With the coming of World War II, the publications of the Watch Tower Society were banned and some were even burned at the customs wharf. Nevertheless, the witness work continued.

In the years that passed, there were no spectacular increases in the number of persons who embraced the Bible's message. But, among those who did, there were men who showed remarkable zeal and determination. One of these was Zacheus Martyn. Before his death at the age of ninety-seven, he related: "I never had anyone to study the Bible with me. But in 1941 I was determined to attend one of the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. After attending the third Sunday, I knew where I should be. Upon my return to my home on the mountain, Gloucester, I notified the local Anglican Church to take my name off the membership roll. One close friend who had been a fellow church member started to chide me by saying: 'Old man, if you continue to walk those five miles up and down this mountain to go to the hall of those people, you will be dead within a year.' I let him watch me walk up and down the mountain twice a week for five years, and then he dropped dead. That was thirty years ago, and I'm still feeling fit."

The Good News Reaches the Kisi-speaking Tribe

From 1957 onward many persons from the Kisi-speaking tribe accepted the teachings of the Bible. This tribe is found in the three-cornered section of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Guinea. The people are mainly animists and have long resisted Muslim influence. Although entrenched in polygamous practices and faced with the problem of illiteracy, many abandoned their former ways and began

harmonizing their lives with Bible standards. Through the Kisi-speaking people in Sierra Leone and Liberia, the good news reached their fellow tribesmen in Guinea. As a result, in Guinea there are now over 150 Witnesses from this tribe.

Just how did the Kisi-speaking people in Sierra Leone respond? A traveling overseer arrived at Koindu about 4 p.m. and was told by the Witness who had invited him that there would be a lecture at 6 p.m. The traveling overseer states: "I objected, as no one knew that there would be a lecture. However, he insisted, saying that the town crier would do the advertising. We ate and bathed. Before I could get dressed for the lecture, people started coming. Soon over ninety persons had arrived, mostly men. After speaking for one hour I stopped and told them that the lecture was over. But not even one person left. They wanted to ask questions. This continued until about 9 p.m., when a storm sent most of them to their homes. However, twenty men stayed until 2 a.m."

There was quick response among these people. Soon five persons began having a share in spreading the Bible's message to others, then ten, then fifteen and twenty. On learning about this, the traveling overseer had doubts as to whether these people really had the kind of faith required of true Christians. Happily, they did. Some of the first ones are still active in proclaiming the good news.

On accepting the Bible's message, the humble people of the Kisi-speaking tribe faced serious problems and great opposition. A traveling overseer reports: "Many had to undergo bitter persecution due to their strict neutrality on political issues and because they no longer would support pagan religious rites and ceremonies. Some were sentenced to death by fellow tribesmen. In view of the circumstances, it appears that angelic inter-

vention prevented the executions. Many Witnesses fled into the bush to escape with their lives until civil authorities were able to investigate the cases. In most instances the police protected the brothers. When two male Witnesses had their houses burned down and were tied and beaten, justice was rendered in their behalf. The magistrate court deprived the paramount chief of his ruling staff for nearly a year. Later, this paramount chief showed great interest in Jehovah's Witnesses. In 1968, when they held a circuit assembly in his town, he provided some sleeping accommodations for visiting delegates and donated a big cow."

The Work Continues

From 1959 onward, in particular, more and more persons began spreading the good news in Sierra Leone. August 19, 1967, was an especially memorable day, for then a new branch office of the Watch Tower Society was dedicated in Freetown. Surrounded by a tropical garden, this building is located in one of the finest residential areas and is equipped with an attractive Kingdom Hall. The structure has served to elevate the work of Jehovah's Witnesses in the minds of many people. It has also silenced some religious critics who had been saying that Jehovah's Witnesses did not come to Sierra Leone to stay.

Today over 550 Witnesses regularly share in calling at the homes of their neighbors to help them to learn about God's purposes. Included among these are former polygamists and a onetime priestess and prophetess of a spiritist church.

Jehovah's Witnesses in Sierra Leone are looking forward to helping many more persons to learn about true worship. It is their determination always to have "plenty to do in the work of the Lord."—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Insight on the News

Obscenities Go Public

Obscene speech has become part of the "normal" way of life, says the magazine *U.S. News & World Report*. In an article entitled "The Cussword Comes Out of the Closet," it states: "The four-letter word has emerged from the barrooms and barracks and can be heard and seen almost everywhere—in conversation at restaurants, on bumper stickers, in cheers bellowed at sports events, on television and in movies. Many experts see the trend as irreversible."

Why the skyrocketing profanity? The article quotes Reinhold Aman, language scholar, who points to the 1960's and 1970's when social standards broke down and respect for traditional institutions collapsed. He says: "What first was suppressed suddenly exploded. Then every idiot started to swear for no reason. Little kids swear. High-class people suddenly find it very chic."

Some experts blame obscenity's rapid rise on the self-centered me generation. "People are finding their lives phony, unsatisfying, and they are angry," observes Thomas Cottle, a Harvard psychiatry lecturer. "Lurking behind this anger is aggressiveness," which he sees as dangerous for society.

The article continues: "Experts explain that swearing is a way to release emotions built up by frustration." But is it the right way? "Be wrathful, and yet do

not sin," counsels the Bible, by avoiding "abusive speech" and "obscene jesting" and by replacing such conduct with "whatever saying is good for building up as the need may be, that it may impart what is favorable to the hearers."—Ephesians 4:26, 31; 5:4; 4:29.

Hotheads Risk Heart Attacks

"The rage we expend on others seems to lash back and strike us in the heart muscle," said a recent issue of *American Health*. "In the routine of our lives, the anger we waste upon trivia, in traffic jams and ticket lines, and the 'urge to kill' that boils up so commonly and inanely, are most likely to act upon the victims we least intend—ourselves." This boomerang effect that uncontrolled anger and hostility has on a person is seen as the key factor leading to coronary heart disease, according to San Francisco cardiologist, Ray H. Rosenman, MD. He and three other researchers find anger as the one common denominator threading through all the deadly characteristics related to heart trouble.

Also, the article states that controlling one's emotions could be just as important in preventing heart attacks as exercising and dieting. Therefore, more and more evidence from the medical community is stacking up in support of the proverbial saying: "The life of the body is a tranquil heart."—Proverbs 14:30, *Jerusalem Bible*.

What about the idea that venting anger is healthy? "There's no more reason to say that venting rage reduces its ill effects than to claim that concealing it dilutes the rage," the article noted. Moreover, 'anger, wrath and screaming,' the characteristics of hotheads, not only are bad for a person's health but, more importantly, have no place among true Christians.—Ephesians 4:31.

Witnesses Preach in Russia

In their following his command to 'preach the good news of God's kingdom in all the earth,' Christ warned his followers that some would 'persecute you and deliver you up to prison.' Yet, the kingdom message would go forward even in countries like the Soviet Union where its newspaper *Sovietskaya Kirghizia* complained that since the 1940's Jehovah's Witnesses have been preaching under the "strictest secrecy."—Matthew 24:14; Luke 21:12.

Witnesses found preaching in Russia are arrested. For example, *Sovietskaya Kirghizia* reported that one of Jehovah's Witnesses was sentenced for distributing religious tracts in the Soviet republic of Kirghizia. According to the report, the Witness was found driving a car carrying printing plates and hundreds of religious booklets published by the Witnesses. Yet, regardless of the reception received, the "good news has to be preached."—Mark 13:10.

Why Admit It When You Are Wrong?

The only people who make no mistakes are dead people." This has been said of imperfect humans. And when you think about matters, who is not wrong at times? Who does not make mistakes?

God's Word, the Holy Bible, makes it clear that we all err, for it says: "There is no man righteous in the earth that keeps doing good and does not sin." In the Bible, the Hebrew and the Greek words translated "sin" literally mean "missing the mark"—being wrong as far as God's requirements are concerned.—Ecclesiastes 7:20.

Yet, common as it is to make a mistake, to be wrong—yes, to sin—how difficult it is to admit it! If you are a husband and father, do you not find yourself wanting to hedge when it comes to admitting to your wife or children that you are wrong? If you have a position of oversight, do you not find yourself reluctant to admit to your subordinates that you are wrong? Well, it is the same way with wives, children, employees and those in other circumstances.

Why We May Not Admit It

It seems to be human nature to try to justify ourselves. When we were youngsters, how hard it was for our parents to make us admit that we did wrong and should apologize for it! Having grown up, we may manifest a similar attitude. Thus a person may try to rationalize that what he did was not actually wrong, that

someone else really was at fault, or that unusual circumstances were to blame.

Especially does it seem difficult for those in positions of responsibility to admit being wrong. Why? No doubt in many instances this is due to pride. They are concerned with what others may think; they want to "save face," as the saying goes. But, then again, failure to admit being wrong may well be due to feelings of insecurity. A person may feel that his position is threatened if he admits a mistake.

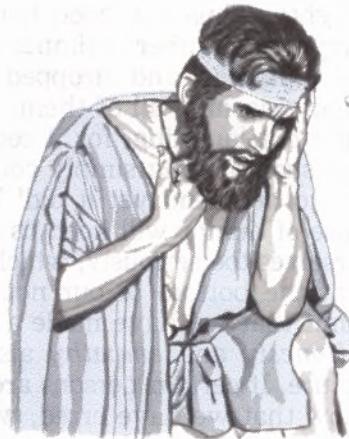
No doubt some individuals are reluctant to admit that they are or have been wrong because of the price they might have to pay for their mistake. Thus a railway employee may have caused a serious accident due to negligence. But if he admits that he made a mistake, he may lose his job or even go to prison. Or, in the case of a physician, a costly malpractice suit might be involved, and admitting wrong may cost him or his insurance company a great deal of money.

Then, too, a person may have difficulty actually seeing things in their right light. As the Bible puts it, "Mistakes—who can discern?" Moreover, the heart may harbor emotions that prevent us from admitting our error. Yes, "the heart is more treacherous than anything else . . . Who can know it?"—Psalm 19:12; Jeremiah 17:9.

Unfavorable Consequences

Shortsighted self-interest may prompt us to justify ourselves rather than ad-

**David confessed:
"I have sinned against Jehovah"**



mitting that we are wrong. But regardless of our reasoning, refusing to admit it when we are wrong has unfavorable consequences. For instance, it can cause strained relations with members of our families or with those with whom we work or worship. By refusing to admit it when we are wrong, either we try the patience of others or we lose their respect. And most likely we create a barrier that interferes with free communication.

Still more serious is the fact that refusing to admit it when we are wrong burdens us with a guilty conscience, especially if someone else gets the blame for what we have done. And if we shrink back from admitting one wrong, this may get to be a habit. Having refused to admit small mistakes, we may soon refuse to admit making large ones, all to our undoing. As a result, even in a case of grave sin our conscience may get seared as with a branding iron. (1 Timothy 4:1, 2) Above all, such a course is bound to

harm our relationship with our Creator, Jehovah God.

Examples From the Past

Failing to admit that we are wrong by trying to shift the blame to others puts us in some rather poor company. For his disobedience, the first man, Adam, blamed 'the woman God gave him.' In turn, Eve blamed the serpent. However, God did not accept these excuses but held the original human pair accountable. Then there was King Saul, who failed to execute completely God's judgment upon the wicked Amalekites. When Saul was asked why, he blamed his people. But God did not accept that excuse either.

—Genesis 3:12-19; 1 Samuel 15:15-23.

On the other hand, the Bible gives us examples to show that we should admit it when we are wrong. Among these was that of Judah. He was wrong in his dealings with his widowed daughter-in-law Tamar. When brought face to face

with his responsibility for her pregnancy, Judah admitted: "She is more righteous than I am." (Genesis 38:26) But at least he admitted that he was wrong.

Then there was King David. He did various things to conceal his sin with Bath-sheba. When confronted by the prophet Nathan, David confessed: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (2 Samuel 12:13) Yes, David did thus admit that he had been guilty of wrongdoing.

Good Results

We do well to recall these ancient examples and admit it when we are wrong. Among other things, doing so results in better relations with our families. We will also get along better with our superiors by not trying their patience so much. Significantly, we are told in the Scriptures: "If the spirit of a ruler should mount up against you, do not leave your own place, for calmness itself allays great sins"—yes, even very serious wrongs.—Ecclesiastes 10:4.

What if we have a position of responsibility? Well, willingness to admit that we are wrong will earn the respect of our subordinates. Furthermore, with such an attitude we will be in a position to make progress in overcoming our weaknesses.

Especially is it vital that we maintain a clear conscience and good relationship with our God. Hence, if we have erred seriously, let us, first of all, admit that we have sinned. In earnest prayer, may we seek our heavenly Father's merciful forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Psalm 103:10-14; 1 John 2:1, 2) And may we also take full advantage of spiritual assistance available to us. (James 5:13-16) This is the course of wisdom, for God's Word tells us: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy."—Proverbs 28:13.

Aids in Overcoming the Tendency

Clearly, we need help if we are to overcome this tendency not to admit it when we are wrong. Often a sense of humor will be of help, especially if the wrong or mistake is not too serious or weighty. Thus one good housewife was carrying a number of dinner plates when she stumbled and dropped the whole stack, smashing all of them. At that, she burst out laughing, for it seemed to her that such a thing simply could not happen to her. And yet it did! Yes, often a sense of humor will keep us from taking ourselves too seriously, which frequently is at the bottom of our not wanting to admit that we have made a mistake.

Honesty and empathy also enter the picture. If certain persons are entitled to know that we have erred, we should be willing to admit the wrong. Especially should empathy move us to admit it if another person would otherwise be blamed and would suffer for our mistake. Here Jesus' words apply: "Just as you want men to do to you, do the same way to them."—Luke 6:31.

Humility also will help us to admit a wrong. When we think it through, failure to admit a wrong borders on hypocrisy, does it not? Neither the haughty person nor the hypocrite has God's approval.—Proverbs 21:4; James 3:17.

Maintaining a close relationship with Jehovah will be of greatest help in our being willing to admit it when we are wrong. Why? Because we will be inclined to take all our concerns and errors to him in humble prayer. Then, confident in his aid and mercy, we will possess the unequalled "peace of God."—Philippians 4:6, 7.

So, since we all err, let us acknowledge our mistakes. When we are in the wrong, may we humbly admit it. Then let us work on our errors constructively, to our own benefit and to that of others.

Questions from Readers

■ If a faithful Christian wife has been divorced by her husband, though neither of them is guilty of adultery, would it be Scripturally proper for her to share the marital bed with him when he visits the family?

God's Word clearly indicates that sex relations are proper between a husband and a wife, not between unmarried persons. Hence, a divorced couple should not have sex relations with each other, for that would amount to fornication, but not freeing them for remarriage.

Christians, understandably, are concerned primarily about God's views and directions. His Word specifically advises: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4) Let us consider what bearing that has on the situation raised in the question.

In many parts of the earth it is common for a man and a woman to engage in sexual relations without being married. Some claim that this is both morally fitting and acceptable to God as long as the two are in "love" or have made a commitment to each other. That, however, is not the Christian view. Appreciating that "God will judge fornicators and adulterers," Christians want to avoid both adultery and fornication.

When a man and a woman get married they establish before all that they are united as husband and wife. In the sight of the law, society and God, they have a right to share in the privileges of marriage, including marital relations.

The Scriptures, in fact, urge mates not to withhold from each other the sexual due: "The husband should satisfy his wife sexually. In the same way, the wife should satisfy her husband's sexual needs." —1 Corinthians 7:3, *Simple English Bible*.

What, though, if a couple gets a mere separation, which is legally possible in some lands? Since they are still husband and wife legally and Scripturally, they must not share in marital relations with anyone else, for to do so would be adultery that would 'defile their marital bed.' But a separated couple have the option of making up again and of living together as the married couple that they are, after legally canceling their separation.

—1 Corinthians 7:10, 11.

Consider next the situation of when one mate, for example the husband, takes matters farther than a separation and gets a divorce. A faithful Christian wife who later learned that (before or after divorcing her) he had been morally unfaithful could remarry, considering her former marriage ended both legally and in the eyes of Jehovah God. On the other hand, if there was a legal divorce but no adultery, the divorce would not of itself end the marriage in God's view, for the Bible shows that immorality by one's mate is the only valid basis for a divorce.—Matthew 19:6, 9.

That is the situation with the case in question, for it is definitely stated that no immorality has occurred. The husband left his wife and got an unscriptural divorce. As a consequence of that divorce they are no longer man and wife in the full sense, for he terminated the marriage legally. So what if he visited his family and wanted to satisfy his or her sexual needs? For them to have sex relations would, legally and in the view of the community, be essentially the same as two unmarried persons having sexual relations; it would be tantamount to fornication.

In that situation no third party is involved, as would be needed to give Scriptural substance to the legal divorce; so in God's sight neither the man nor the woman would be free to marry other individuals. (1 Corinthians 6:16-18) Yet their having sex relations with each other certainly would be in disregard of God's advice; to a degree they would be defiling the marriage bed since their legal marriage ended with the divorce. This conduct would bring reproach on them and on the Christian congregation of which the wife was a part. So, for her to remain in the congregation, she should avoid sex relations unless the marriage is made legal again. She should hold to the Scriptural and morally upright stand that sex relations should be limited only to legal marriage mates. She thus would add to the dignity that the Bible shows marriage deserves.

Truth Found in an Unlikely Place

The following letter from a man in Hartford, Connecticut, was received at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses:

To Whom It May Concern:

I want to know if the little book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* is printed by Jehovah's Witnesses. Please write and tell me to what religion that book belongs. I am interested in finding out because one morning as I was walking down the main street in Hartford, I found this little book thrown in the garbage. It was the title that attracted my attention. . . .

I am a Catholic because that is the religion my parents made known to me, but not because my conscience tells me so. From what I can see in this book, I believe that I have found what I have been searching for for many years—The Truth. And I found it in a pile of garbage—one Friday at 9 o'clock in the morning, on December 4, 1981. Please send me the Hartford address of the church of the religion to which this book belongs.

Wishing you a happy new year,

Yours Truly,
A. C. G.

