

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES

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**Creation Reveals
the Living God**

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"Slave for Jehovah"

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GUATEMALA

COVER: A publisher preaching in Panajachel, a small town by Lake Atitlan. In addition to Spanish, Jehovah's Witnesses in Guatemala preach the good news in 11 indigenous languages

POPULATION:

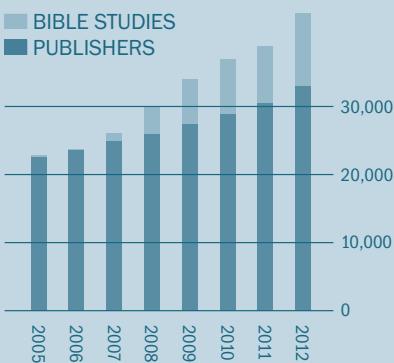
15,169,000

PUBLISHERS:

34,693

BIBLE STUDIES:

47,606



STUDY ARTICLES

■ Creation Reveals the Living God

An invisible God created the visible universe. Do you believe that with all your heart? Not all people do. How can we help others to understand the truth about the Creator and at the same time strengthen our own faith in him? Find out in this article.

■ “Slave for Jehovah”

Christians are exhorted to slave for Jehovah. This article teaches us what provision the Mosaic Law made for slaves, how we can avoid becoming enslaved to Satan and the lures of his world, and how faithful slavery to our God is richly rewarded.

■ Lessons From a Well-Prepared Prayer

■ Act in Harmony With Jesus' Loving Prayer

If we daily meditate on God's Word, our prayers will be enriched. The first article shows how this proved true of a prayer the Levites offered in behalf of God's people. The second article shows how we can act in harmony with one of Jesus' loving prayers. Both prayers are examples of putting Jehovah's interests ahead of our personal requests.

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17 Leaning on Jehovah Has Been Rewarding

31 Can You Do More to Warn Others?

THEY OFFERED
THEMSELVES
WILLINGLY



in the Philippines

 ABOUT ten years ago, **Gregorio** and **Marilou**, a married couple in their 30's, were serving as pioneers in Manila while at the same time holding full-time jobs. It was a challenge, but they succeeded. Then Marilou was promoted to manager in the bank where she was working. "Our good jobs allowed us to enjoy a very comfortable lifestyle," she says. In fact, things were going so well financially that the couple decided to build their dream house in a prime location some 12 miles (19 km) east of Manila. They entered a contract with a developer and ar-

ranged to pay for the project in monthly installments within ten years.

"I FELT THAT I WAS ROBBING JEHOVAH"

Relates Marilou: "My new job demanded so much of my time and energy that my appetite for spiritual activities diminished. I felt that I was robbing Jehovah." She explains: "I could no longer give Jehovah the time I had dedicated to his service." Unhappy about that situation, Gregorio and Marilou sat down one day to talk about the direction their lives were heading. Says Gregorio: "We

"Nothing compares to the joy that comes from seeing spiritual growth. We feel more than ever that our life is meaningful."

—Gregorio and Marilou





HOW SOME SUPPORT THEMSELVES



About 70 brothers and sisters—mostly between the ages of 18 and 50—from foreign countries serve in the Philippines. **Robert** and **Mirjam**, a married couple in their mid-40's from Germany, relate that they moved abroad to serve for one year. That was 14 years ago, and they are still serving in the Philippines! How do they support themselves financially? Robert explains: “Since it’s very difficult to find work here, we travel back to Germany once a year to work for three months. The money we earn enables us to live a simple life and serve for the rest of the year in the Philippines.” Of course, living abroad has its challenges, but says Mirjam, “I feel inner peace and Jehovah’s guidance.” Robert agrees, saying, “Serving here has strengthened our faith.”

wanted to make a change but didn’t exactly know what to do. We discussed how we could use our lives more fully in Jehovah’s service, especially since we have no children. We prayed to Jehovah for guidance.”

At that time, they heard several talks about serving where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers. “We felt that these talks were Jehovah’s answer to our prayers,” says Gregorio. The couple prayed for more faith so as to have the courage to make the right decisions. One great obstacle was their ongoing house project. They had already made three years’ worth of payments. What were they to do? Says Marilou: “If we ended the contract, we would lose all we had paid so far—a significant amount. But we viewed it as a choice between putting first Jehovah’s will or our own desires.” Having in mind the apostle Paul’s words about ‘taking a loss,’ they canceled the house project, quit their jobs, sold most of their belongings, and moved to a remote village on the island of Palawan, some 300 miles (480 km) south of Manila.—Phil. 3:8.

THEY “LEARNED THE SECRET”

Before moving, Gregorio and Marilou had tried to prepare themselves for living a simple life, but

they did not realize how basic their new life would be until they arrived at their destination. “It was a shock,” says Marilou. “No electricity, no conveniences. Instead of switching on the rice cooker, we had to chop wood and cook over a fire. I missed going to the mall, eating out, and other things city life offers.” Still, the couple kept reminding themselves why they moved, and before long they adjusted. Says Marilou: “Now I enjoy observing the beauty of nature, including the bright stars at night. Most of all, it’s a joy to see people’s happy faces when we preach to them. By serving here, we have ‘learned the secret’ of how to be content.”—Phil. 4:12.

Relates Gregorio: “When we arrived here, there were only four Witnesses. They were so happy when I started giving a public talk each week and accompanied the singing of Kingdom songs on my guitar.” Within a year, the couple witnessed how that tiny group became a thriving congregation of 24 publishers. Gregorio says: “The expressions of love we receive from this congregation touch us deeply.” Today, looking back over six years of serving in that isolated region, they say: “Nothing compares to the joy that comes from seeing spiritual growth. We feel more than ever that our life is meaningful.”

"I'VE 'TASTED AND SEEN THAT JEHOVAH IS GOOD'!"

In the Philippines, nearly 3,000 brothers and sisters have moved to regions where there is a great need for Kingdom publishers. Some 500 of them are single sisters. Take **Karen** as an example.

Karen, now in her mid-20's, grew up in Baggao, Cagayan. While still a teenager, she often thought about expanding her ministry. She relates: "Knowing that the time left is reduced and that all sorts of people need to hear the Kingdom message, I wanted to serve where there is a greater need for preachers." Though a few of her family members urged her to pursue higher education instead of moving to some remote place to preach, Karen prayed to Jehovah for guidance. She also spoke with those who serve in an isolated area. At age 18, she moved to a remote region some 40 miles (64 km) away from her hometown.

The small congregation that Karen went to support cares for a mountainous area along the Pacific Coast. Karen recalls: "Just to get to the new congregation from Baggao, we walked for three days, going up and down mountains and crossing rivers over 30 times." She adds: "To reach some

Bible students, I walk for six hours, stay overnight at the student's house, and the next day I walk another six hours to go home." Is it worth all the effort? "At times, my legs are aching, but," Karen adds with a big smile, "I've conducted as many as 18 Bible studies. I've 'tasted and seen that Jehovah is good'!"—Ps. 34:8.

"I LEARNED TO RELY ON JEHOVAH"

What motivated **Sukhi**, a single sister in her early 40's living in the United States, to move to the Philippines? In 2011 she attended a circuit assembly where a married couple were interviewed. They related how they sold most of their belongings to move to Mexico to help with the preaching work there. "That interview," says Sukhi, "started me thinking about goals I had not thought of before." When Sukhi, who is of Indian descent, learned that much help was needed to reach Punjabi people living in the Philippines, she decided to go and help. Did she face obstacles?

"Deciding on which items to keep and which to sell was harder than I expected," says Sukhi. "Also, after having lived comfortably for 13 years in my own apartment, I moved in with family and lived out of boxes. It wasn't easy, but it was a good way to prepare myself for living a simple life." What challenges did she face after moving to



(Left photo) Karen
(Right photo) Sukhi

the Philippines? “Having phobias of creepy, crawly things and feeling homesick were my greatest challenges. I learned to rely on Jehovah on a whole new level!” Has it been worth it? Sukhi smiles and says: “Jehovah tells us, ‘Test me out, whether I shall not empty out upon you a blessing.’ These words come alive in a very personal way when a householder asks me, ‘When will you come back? I have many more questions.’ It gives me much joy and satisfaction to be able to help spiritually hungry people!” (Mal. 3:10) Sukhi adds: “Really, the hardest part was making the decision to move. After I’d done that, it was just amazing to see how Jehovah put things into place for me.”

“I OVERCAME MY FEAR”

Sime, a married brother now in his late 30’s, left the Philippines to take on a lucrative job in a Middle Eastern country. While there, the encouragement he received from a circuit overseer and from a talk given by a member of the Governing Body motivated Sime to put Jehovah first in his life. “But thinking of quitting my job gave me nightmares,” says Sime. Even so, he gave up his employment and returned to the Philippines. Today, Sime and his wife, **Haidee**, serve in Davao del Sur, in the southern part of the country,

where Kingdom preachers are needed to cover the vast territory. “Looking back,” says Sime, “I’m so grateful that I overcame my fear of losing my job and that I put Jehovah first. There is nothing more satisfying in life than giving the best of what you have to Jehovah!”

“IT GIVES US DEEP SATISFACTION!”

When **Ramilo** and **Juliet**, a pioneer couple in their early 30’s, learned that a congregation only some 20 miles (30 km) away from their home needed help, they volunteered to support it. So each week, rain or shine, Ramilo and Juliet make several trips on their motorcycle to attend the meetings and share in the preaching work. Though traveling over bumpy roads and hanging bridges has its challenges, they are happy that they expanded their ministry. Says Ramilo: “My wife and I together conduct 11 Bible studies! Serving where there is a greater need involves making sacrifices, but it gives us deep satisfaction!”—1 Cor. 15:58.

Would you like to learn more about serving where there is a greater need for Kingdom publishers in your own country or abroad? If so, speak with your circuit overseer, and read the article “Can You ‘Step Over Into Macedonia’?” in the August 2011 issue of *Our Kingdom Ministry*.



(Left photo) Sime and Haidee
(Right photo) Juliet and Ramilo





*"You are worthy,
Jehovah, even our
God, to receive the
glory . . . because you
created all things."*

—REV. 4:11.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What must we do if we are to overturn “strongly entrenched” false doctrines?

How does creation reveal God’s power and wisdom?

How can parents help their children build faith in Jehovah?

CREATION REVEALS THE LIVING GOD

MANY say that they believe only in things that they can see with their eyes. How can we help such individuals to build faith in Jehovah? After all, the Bible says that “no man has seen God at any time.” (John 1:18) For that matter, how can we make sure that our own faith in “the invisible God,” Jehovah, remains strong? (Col. 1:15) An initial step is to identify teachings that obscure the truth about Jehovah. Then we must skillfully use the Bible to overturn any reasonings that are “raised up against the knowledge of God.”—2 Cor. 10:4, 5.

2 One widespread false teaching that blinds people to the truth about God is the doctrine of evolution. This human reasoning contradicts the Bible and robs people of hope. In its basic form, the teaching of evolution asserts that all life came into existence spontaneously; it thus implies that human life has no purpose.

3 On the other hand, fundamentalists of Christendom teach that the universe, including our earth and all life on it, is only a few thousand years old. Those who teach this doctrine—known as creationism—may have high regard for the Bible, but they contend that God created all things in six 24-hour days just a few thousand years ago. They reject credible scientific evidence that contradicts their view. As a result, the teaching of creationism actually discredits the Bible, making it appear unreasonable and inaccurate. Individuals who promote such views might remind us of some in the first century who had a zeal for God “but not according to accurate knowledge.” (Rom. 10:2) How can we use God’s Word to overturn the “strongly entrenched” doctrines of

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- 1.** What must we do to make sure that our faith remains strong?
 - 2, 3.** What are two teachings that blind people to the truth about God?

evolution and creationism?* We can do so only if we personally work hard to gain an accurate knowledge of what the Bible teaches.

FAITH IS BUILT ON EVIDENCE AND SOUND REASONING

4 The Bible teaches us to treasure knowledge. (Prov. 10:14) Jehovah wants our faith in him to be built on evidence and sound reasoning, not on human philosophy or religious traditions. (*Read Hebrews 11:1*) To build strong faith in God, we must first be *convinced* that Jehovah exists. (*Read Hebrews 11:6*) We arrive at that conclusion, not by wishful thinking, but by examining the facts and by using our “power of reason.”—Rom. 12:1.

5 The apostle Paul provides one reason why we can be convinced that God exists, even though we cannot see him. Regarding Jehovah, Paul wrote: “His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship.” (Rom. 1:20) How might you help someone who doubts the existence of God to see the truthfulness of Paul’s inspired words? You could consider some of the following evidence from creation that reveals our Creator’s power and wisdom.

GOD’S POWER EVIDENT IN CREATION

6 Jehovah’s power is revealed in two shields that keep us safe—the earth’s atmosphere and its magnetic field. The

* For information on how to reason with those who promote creationism, see pages 24 to 28 of the brochure *Was Life Created?*

4. On what should our faith be based?
5. What is one reason why we can be convinced that God exists?
- 6, 7. How is Jehovah’s power revealed in two shields that protect us?

atmosphere, for example, does more than provide us with air to breathe. It also shields us from the majority of the debris that hurtles through space. Chunks of rock that could cause massive damage usually burn up on entering the earth’s atmosphere, creating beautiful bright streaks of light in the night sky.

7 The earth’s magnetic field also protects us from harm. This shield originates deep inside the earth. The earth’s outer core, mostly made of molten iron, generates a powerful magnetic field that envelops us and stretches far into space. This field safeguards us from the radiation emanating from solar flares and explosions in the outer regions of the sun. Thanks to the earth’s magnetic field, these bursts of energy do not scorch all life on the surface of our globe. Instead, they are absorbed and deflected. We see evidence of our magnetic shield at work in the gorgeous multicolored light displays that dance in the sky near the North and South poles. Without a doubt, Jehovah is “vigorous in power.”—*Read Isaiah 40:26*.

GOD’S WISDOM REVEALED IN NATURE

8 Jehovah’s wisdom is revealed in the cycles that sustain life on earth. To illustrate: Imagine living in a densely populated walled city that had no way of importing fresh water or exporting waste products. Such a city would soon become filthy and uninhabitable. In some respects, our earth is like that walled city. It contains a finite amount of fresh water, and we can hardly export waste products into outer space. This “walled city,” however, is able to support billions of creatures, generation after genera-

- 8, 9. How is Jehovah’s wisdom revealed in the cycles that sustain life?

tion. Why? Because of its amazing ability to recycle or exchange the products vital for life.

9 Consider the oxygen cycle. Billions of creatures take in oxygen and give off carbon dioxide. Even so, the supply of oxygen never runs out, and the atmosphere never becomes choked with the “waste” gas, carbon dioxide. Why not? The answer is found in an amazing process known as photosynthesis. Using this process, green vegetation takes in carbon dioxide, water, sunlight, and nutrients and produces carbohydrates and oxygen. When we take in oxygen, we complete the cycle. In a literal way, Jehovah uses the vegetation that he designed to give “to all persons life and breath.” (Acts 17:25) What remarkable wisdom!

10 Jehovah’s brilliance is also revealed in the multitude of creatures that inhabit our remarkable planet. Estimates of the number of species on earth vary from 2 million to 100 million. (*Read Psalm 104:24.*) Note the wisdom evident in the design of just some of these creatures.

11 The monarch butterfly, for example, has a brain that is only about the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen. Yet, that butterfly has the ability and skill to migrate some 1,800 miles (nearly 3,000 km) from Canada to a particular forest in Mexico, using the sun to help it navigate. How does it manage when the sun shifts across the sky? Jehovah designed its minute brain with the ability to compensate for the sun’s movement. Or consider the eye of the dragonfly. This creature sees by means of two compound eyes. Each eye has some 30,000 individual lenses. Even so, the dragonfly’s tiny brain is able to decipher the signals

10, 11. How do the monarch butterfly and the dragonfly reveal Jehovah’s brilliance?



Inset: Boris Krylov, www.macrophoto.org

God’s wisdom is seen in the design of the dragonfly’s eye; inset shows a magnified view
(See paragraph 11)

transmitted from all those lenses and detect the slightest movement in its environment.

12 Even more impressive is the way that Jehovah designed the cells that make up all living creatures. Your body, for instance, is made up of about 100 trillion cells. Inside each of those cells is a tiny ropelike structure known as DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid). It stores most of the information needed to build your entire body.

13 How much information does DNA contain? Compare the storage capacity of one gram of DNA with that of a compact disc (CD). A CD can store all the information contained in a dictionary, which is impressive considering that a CD is merely a thin disc of plastic. However, just one gram of DNA can store as

12, 13. What impresses you about the way Jehovah has designed the cells that make up your body?

much information as one trillion CDs! To put it another way, a single teaspoonful of dried DNA can store enough information to build 350 times as many humans as are alive today!

14 King David described the information needed to build a human body as being written in a figurative book. Speaking of Jehovah God, he said: "Your eyes saw even the embryo of me, and in your book all its parts were down in writing, as regards the days when they were formed and there was not yet one among them." (Ps. 139:16) Understandably, David was moved to praise Jehovah when he considered the way his own body was created. The discoveries made by scientists in recent years have only added to the awe we feel when we contemplate the way that Jehovah made us. These discoveries give us added reason for agreeing with the psalmist who wrote of Jehovah: "I shall laud you because in a fear-inspiring way I am wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful, as my soul is very well aware." (Ps. 139:14) Really, how could people *not* see that creation reveals the existence of a living God?

HELP OTHERS TO GIVE GLORY TO THE LIVING GOD

15 For decades, *Awake!* magazine has helped millions to appreciate what creation reveals about our living God. In 2006, for example, the September issue was entitled "Is There a Creator?" It was devoted entirely to opening the eyes of those blinded by the doctrines of evo-

14. How do the discoveries made by scientists make you feel about Jehovah?

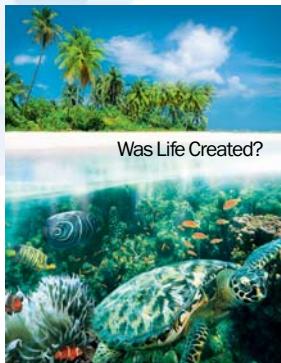
15, 16. (a) How have our publications built appreciation for Jehovah's creative ability? (b) What is one of the "Was It Designed?" articles that especially impressed you?

lution and creationism. Regarding that special issue, one sister wrote the United States branch office: "The campaign to offer this special issue went extremely well. One woman asked for 20 copies. She is a biology teacher and wanted her students to have a copy." A brother wrote: "I have been active in the field service since the late 1940's and am nearing 75 years of age, but I have never enjoyed my field service as much as I have this month offering the special issue of *Awake!*"

16 In recent years, most issues of *Awake!* have carried the feature "Was It Designed?" These brief articles highlight the awe-inspiring engineering evident in creation and identify ways that man has tried to copy the Master Designer. We received additional material to help bring glory to God with the release in 2010 of the brochure *Was Life Created?* The beautiful pictures and teaching diagrams in that publication are designed to stimulate our appreciation for Jehovah's creative ability. The questions at the end of each section help the reader to reason on the information he just considered. Have you enjoyed using this brochure when witnessing from house to house, publicly, or in an informal setting?

17 Parents, have you considered this colorful brochure with your children as part of your family worship? If you do, you will help to build their appreciation for our living God. Perhaps you have teenage children who are attending high school. They are a particular target of those who teach the false doctrine of evolution. Scientists, schoolteachers, nature documentaries, and even the enter-

17, 18. (a) Parents, how can you boost your children's confidence in their ability to defend their faith? (b) How have you used the brochures about creation in your family worship?



Parents, prepare your children to defend their faith
(See paragraph 17)

ainment world, with its TV shows and movies, promote the idea that evolution is a fact. You can help your teens to combat such propaganda by using another brochure, *The Origin of Life—Five Questions Worth Asking*, which was also released in 2010. Like the brochure *Was Life Created?*, this publication encourages young ones to develop their “thinking ability.” (Prov. 2:10, 11) It teaches them how to test the logic of what they are taught in school.

18 The *Origin of Life* brochure is designed to help students evaluate sensational news reports that claim that scientists have found fossilized “missing links.” It encourages them to judge for themselves whether such reports really prove that man evolved from lower creatures. It also teaches them how to an-

swer claims that scientists have proved in their laboratories that life could originate spontaneously. Parents, if you use these brochures, you can do much to boost your children’s confidence in their ability to give an answer to those who demand a reason for their belief in a Creator.—**Read 1 Peter 3:15.**

19 The well-researched material that we receive through Jehovah’s organization helps us discern his beautiful qualities in the world around us. This is sound evidence that causes us to bubble over with praise for our God. (Ps. 19:1, 2) What a privilege we have to give Jehovah, the Creator of all things, the honor and glory he so richly deserves!—1 Tim. 1:17.

19. What privilege do all of us have?



*"Do not loiter
at your business. . . .
Slave for Jehovah."*

—ROM. 12:11.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is involved in the kind of slavery mentioned at Romans 12:11?

How can we avoid becoming enslaved to Satan and his world?

What rewards does Jehovah offer his slaves?

"SLAVE FOR JEHOVAH"

CHRISTIAN slavery differs greatly from what many people think about the subject of slavery. In their minds, being a slave conjures up thoughts of being cruelly dominated, oppressed, and unjustly treated. But God's inspired Word speaks of slavery that involves willing service to a loving Master. In fact, when the apostle Paul admonished first-century Christians to "slave for Jehovah," he was encouraging sacred service prompted by love of God. (Rom. 12:11) What does this kind of slavery involve? How can we avoid becoming enslaved to Satan and his world? And what are the rewards for faithful service as a slave of Jehovah?

"I REALLY LOVE MY MASTER"

² From the Law that God gave to Israel, we learn about the sort of slavery that Jehovah requires of us. A Hebrew slave was to be granted his freedom in the seventh year of his servitude. (Ex. 21:2) However, for a slave who really loved his master and who wished to remain in his service, Jehovah made a remarkable provision. The master was to bring his slave up against the door or the doorpost and pierce his ear through with an awl. (Ex. 21:5, 6) It is of significance that this procedure involved the ear. In the Hebrew language, the basic idea of obedience is expressed by a word that relates to hearing and listening. The willing slave desired to continue giving obedient service to his master. This helps us appreciate what is involved in our dedication to Jehovah—willing obedience motivated by love of God.

³ When we presented ourselves for Christian baptism, we had already decided to serve Jehovah,

1. Contrast the common view of slavery with that encouraged at Romans 12:11.
2. (a) What would prompt an Israelite slave to forfeit his opportunity to become free? (b) What was significant about piercing the ear of a willing slave?
3. What is the basis for our dedication to God?

to be his slave. Our dedication sprang from our desire to obey Jehovah and to do his will. Nobody forced us to do this. Indeed, even young ones who get baptized do so only after they make their own personal dedication to Jehovah, not simply to please their parents. The basis for Christian dedication is love of our heavenly Master, Jehovah. "This is what the love of God means," wrote the apostle John, "that we observe his commandments."—1 John 5:3.

FREE YET SLAVES

4 How thankful we are to Jehovah for making it possible for us to be his slaves! Our faith in the ransom sacrifice of Christ permits us to come out from under the yoke of sin. Though still imperfect, we have willingly come under the authority of Jehovah and Jesus. Paul explained this clearly in one of his inspired letters: "Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed with reference to sin but living with reference to God by Christ Jesus." Then he warned: "Do you not know that if you keep presenting yourselves to anyone as slaves to obey him, you are slaves of him because you obey him, either of sin with death in view or of obedience with righteousness in view? But thanks to God that you were the slaves of sin but you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were handed over. Yes, since you were set free from sin, you became slaves to righteousness." (Rom. 6:11, 16-18) Notice that the apostle refers to 'obedience from the heart.' Indeed, our dedication to Jehovah makes us "slaves to righteousness."

4. What is needed to become "slaves to righteousness"?

5 Nevertheless, there are obstacles to overcome in living up to our dedication. We face a twofold fight. First, there is the conflict Paul faced. "I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within," he wrote, "but I behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members." (Rom. 7:22, 23) Inherited imperfection persists for us too. Consequently, we have an ongoing struggle against our fleshly tendencies. The apostle Peter exhorted us: "Be as free people, and yet holding your freedom, not as a blind for badness, but as slaves of God." —1 Pet. 2:16.

6 We have a second battle to wage, our fight against this world under demon influence. Satan, the ruler of the world, aims his missiles at us in an attempt to break our loyalty to Jehovah and Jesus. He seeks to enslave us by tempting us to give in to his corrupting influence. (*Read Ephesians 6:11, 12.*) One way Satan does this is by making his world seem attractive, alluring. "If anyone loves the world," the apostle John warned, "the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world."—1 John 2:15, 16.

7 The desire to be materially prosperous pervades the world. Satan encourages the belief that money equals happiness. Superstores abound. Advertising promotes a lifestyle focused on possessions and leisure. Travel agencies offer

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- 5.** What internal fight do we all face, and why?
6, 7. How does Satan make this world appear attractive?



trips to exotic destinations, often in the company of people with a worldly outlook. Yes, all around us the appeal is to “better” ourselves—but always according to the world’s standards.

8 Referring to those in the first-century Christian congregation who had adopted a worldly viewpoint, Peter warned: “They consider luxurious living in the daytime a pleasure. They are spots and blemishes, indulging with unrestrained delight in their deceptive teachings while feasting together with you. For they utter swelling expressions of no profit, and by the desires of the flesh and by loose habits they entice those who are just escaping from people who conduct themselves in error. While they are promising them freedom, they themselves are existing as slaves of corruption. For whoever is overcome by another is enslaved by this one.”—2 Pet. 2:13, 18, 19.

9 Satisfying “the desire of the eyes” does not set a person free. Rather, he becomes enslaved to this world’s invisible master, Satan the Devil. (1 John 5:19) There is a very real danger of becoming

8, 9. What real danger exists, and why?

enslaved by materialism—a slavery from which it is difficult to escape.

A SATISFYING CAREER

10 As he did in Eden, Satan also today targets the inexperienced. Young people are a particular favorite for attack. Satan is not happy when a young person, or indeed anyone, volunteers to slave for Jehovah. God’s enemy wants all who dedicate their lives to Jehovah to fail in their devotion and loyalty.

11 Let us return to the example of the slave who accepted having his ear pierced. This slave must have felt temporary pain; but it soon passed, leaving a permanent sign of his servitude. Choosing a course that differs from that of one’s peers can likewise be difficult, even painful, for a young person. Satan promotes the idea that a career in his world will satisfy a person, but Christians should take into account the importance of satisfying their spiritual need. “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need,” taught Jesus. (Matt. 5:3) Dedicated Christians live for

10, 11. Who today are special targets of Satan, and how can the world’s education cause them difficulty?



God's will, not Satan's. Their delight is in the law of Jehovah, and they meditate on it day and night. (*Read Psalm 1: 1-3.*) However, many of today's educational courses allow little time for a servant of Jehovah to meditate and to satisfy his spiritual need.

12 A worldly master could make life difficult for a Christian slave. In his first letter to the Corinthians, Paul asked: "Were you called when a slave?" He then advised them: "Do not let it worry you; but if you can also become free, rather seize the opportunity." (1 Cor. 7:21) Freedom from slavery was to be preferred. Today, in many lands, schooling is mandatory up to a certain age. Then students are offered a choice. Continuing one's education to promote a career in this world could curtail one's freedom to pursue full-time service.—*Read 1 Corinthians 7:23.*

EDUCATION—HIGHER OR HIGHEST?

13 Paul warned the Colossian Christians: "Look out: perhaps there may be

12. What choice do many young people face today?

13. What sort of education will benefit Jehovah's servants the most?

someone who will carry you off as his prey through the philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary things of the world and not according to Christ." (Col. 2:8) "The philosophy and empty deception according to the tradition of men" surfaces today in the worldly thinking promoted by many intellectuals. Higher education, with its emphasis on academic study, often produces graduates who have few or no practical skills, leaving them unprepared to deal with the realities of life. By contrast, Jehovah's servants choose education that helps them to develop the necessary skills so that they can maintain a simple life of service to God. They take to heart the counsel Paul offered Timothy: "To be sure, it is a means of great gain, this godly devotion along with self-sufficiency. So, having sustenance and covering, we shall be content with these things." (1 Tim. 6:6, 8) Rather than acquiring secular degrees and titles after their names, true Christians focus on obtaining "letters of recommendation" by engaging as fully as possible in the field ministry.—*Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-3.*

14 Consider the case of the apostle Paul. He was educated at the feet of the Jewish Law teacher Gamaliel. The education Paul received can be compared with that of a university education today. But how did Paul view this when compared with his privilege of slaving for God and Christ? He wrote: "I . . . consider all things to be loss on account of the excelling value of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Then he added: "On account of him I have taken the loss of all things and I consider them as a lot of refuse, that I may gain Christ." (Phil. 3:8) That assessment helps young Christians and their God-fearing parents to make a wise choice when it comes to education. (See pictures.)

BENEFIT FROM THE HIGHEST EDUCATION

15 What is the atmosphere in many of this world's institutions of higher education? Are they not at times hotbeds of political and social unrest? (Eph. 2:2) By contrast, Jehovah's organization provides the highest form of education in the peaceful setting of the Christian congregation. Each of us has the opportunity to benefit from the weekly Theocratic Ministry School. Then there are specialized courses for single pioneer brothers (Bible School for Single Brothers) and married pioneer couples (Bible School for Christian Couples). Such theocratic education helps us obey Jehovah, our heavenly Master.

16 We can dig for rich spiritual treasures in the *Watch Tower Publications In-*

14. According to Philippians 3:8, how did Paul view his privilege of slaving for God and Christ?

15, 16. What education does Jehovah's organization provide, and what is its focus?

dex or the *Watchtower Library* on CD-ROM. The worship of Jehovah is the focus of this educational endeavor. It teaches us how we can help others become reconciled to God. (2 Cor. 5:20) This, in turn, will help them to teach yet others.—2 Tim. 2:2.

THE SLAVE'S REWARD

17 In Jesus' parable of the talents, the two faithful slaves earned commendation and shared the joy of their master by being entrusted with more work. (*Read Matthew 25:21, 23.*) Choosing the highest education today brings joy and rewards. Consider the example of Michael. He did so well in school that his teachers invited him to a meeting to discuss his prospects of going to a university. To their surprise, Michael opted instead to take a short vocational course that soon enabled him to support himself as a regular pioneer. Does he feel that he has somehow missed out? "The theocratic education I have received as a pioneer—and now as an elder in the congregation—has been invaluable," he relates. "The blessings and privileges I enjoy far outweigh any money I might have earned. I am really glad that I chose not to pursue higher education."

18 The highest education teaches us God's will and helps us slave for Jehovah. It puts before us the prospect of being "set free from enslavement to corruption" and eventually gaining "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Rom. 8:21) Above all, we learn how best to show that we really love our heavenly Master, Jehovah.—Ex. 21:5.

17. Choosing the highest education brings what rewards?

18. What prompts you to choose the highest education?



Leaning on Jehovah Has Been Rewarding

AS TOLD BY MALCOLM ALLEN

Life is unpredictable at times, uncertain, and even hard to deal with. But Jehovah blesses those who lean on him, not on their own understanding. This is what my wife and I have experienced over our long and rewarding life. Here is a little of our history.

MY FATHER and mother met in 1919 at the convention of the International Bible Students in Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. They got married later that same year. I was born in 1922, and my brother, Paul, was born two years later. My wife, Grace, was born in 1930. Her parents, Roy and Ruth Howell, were raised as Bible Students, and her grandparents were also Bible Students and friends of Brother Charles Taze Russell.

I met Grace in 1947, and we got married on July 16, 1949. Before we got married, we had frank discussions about our future. We made it our decision to share in the full-time ministry and not take on the responsibility of raising children. On October 1, 1950, we began our pioneer service together. Then in 1952, we were invited to do circuit work.

TRAVELING WORK AND GILEAD TRAINING

Both of us felt that we needed much help to carry out this new assignment. While I learned from experienced brothers, I also sought help for Grace. I approached Marvin Holien, a longtime family friend who had experience in serving as a traveling overseer, and I asked him: "Grace is young and lacks experience. Can you recommend someone she can work with for a while to get some training?" "Yes," he answered. "Edna Winkle is a seasoned pioneer who can help her a lot." Later, Grace said about Edna: "She made me feel at ease at the doors, knew how to handle objections well, and taught me to listen to the householder so that I could zero in on what was appropriate to say. She was just what I needed!"

Grace and I served in two circuits in the state of Iowa, including portions of the states of Minnesota and South Dakota. Then we were transferred to New York Circuit 1, which included the boroughs of Brooklyn and Queens. We will never forget how inexperienced we felt in that assignment. The circuit included the Brooklyn Heights Congregation, which met at the Kingdom Hall at



"If you don't help us by giving us kindly counsel, you are of little value to the organization. Keep up the good work"

From left: Nathan Knorr, Malcolm Allen, Fred Rusk, Lyle Reusch, Andrew Wagner

Bethel and had many experienced Bethel family members. After I gave my first service talk to that congregation, Brother Nathan Knorr came up to me and said words to this effect: "Malcolm, you gave us some counsel to work on, and it was appropriate. Don't forget, if you don't help us by giving us kindly counsel, you are of little value to the organization. Keep up the good work." After the meeting, I told this to Grace. Later, we went upstairs to our Bethel room. Worn out from anxiety, we wept.

After a few months, we received a letter inviting us to attend the 24th class of Gilead School, which would graduate in February 1955. We were informed before going to school that our training was not necessarily to prepare us to become missionaries. Rather, it would serve to equip us to become more effective in the traveling work. Attending the school was a marvelous yet humbling experience.

When we finished the course, we were assigned to serve in the district work. Our district included the states of Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Then, to our surprise, in December 1955 we received a letter from Brother Knorr that stated: "Be perfectly frank in expressing yourself,

and be honest with me now. If you say you are willing to come to Bethel and remain here . . . or if you are willing to take a foreign assignment after you are at Bethel for a while, let me know. If you prefer the district and the circuit work, I would like to know that." We replied that we would be pleased to do whatever we were assigned to do. Almost immediately, we were directed to report to Bethel!

THRILLING YEARS AT BETHEL

My thrilling years of Bethel service included caring for speaking and teaching assignments all over the United States. I shared in training and helping many young men who later took on greater responsibilities in Jehovah's organization. Eventually, I worked as a secretary for Brother Knorr in the office that organized the worldwide preaching work.

I found the years that I spent in the Service Department especially enjoyable. There I was able to work with T. J. (Bud) Sullivan. He had for many years been overseer of that department. But there were others whom I learned much from. Fred Rusk, who was assigned to train me, was one of them. With fondness, I recall asking

him, "Fred, why do you make a number of adjustments in some of my letters?" He laughed, but added this sobering thought, "Malcolm, when you say something verbally, it can be explained with further words, but when you write something, especially when it comes from here, it has to be as sound and as accurate as possible." Then he said kindly, "Be of good courage—you are doing well, and in time, you will be fine."

Over the years at Bethel, Grace received a variety of work assignments, including serving as a housekeeper, caring for the upkeep of residential rooms. She enjoyed the work. Up to this day, when we at times meet some of the brothers who were young men at Bethel during those years, they tell Grace with a smile, "You really taught me how to make a bed, and I can tell you my mother liked what you did." Grace also enjoyed working in the Magazine, Correspondence, and Tape Duplicating departments. Caring for those different assignments helped her to appreciate that whatever we do or wherever we serve in Jehovah's organization is a privilege and a blessing. To this day, she feels that way.

ADJUSTMENTS WE HAVE MADE

In the mid-1970's, we began to realize that our aging parents needed more attention. Eventually, we had to make a difficult decision. We did not want to leave Bethel and our fellow servants of Jehovah whom we had come to love dearly. Still, I felt that it was my responsibility to care for our parents. Therefore, in time we left Bethel, but with the hope that when our situation changed, we might return.

To support ourselves financially, I began selling insurance. I will always remember what one manager told me while I was in training: "This business is built on making evening calls. That's when you can see the people. *Nothing is more important than to be there every evening, making calls.*" I replied, "I'm sure you speak from experience, and I respect that. But I also have responsibilities of a spiritual nature that I have never

neglected, and I don't intend to begin now. I'll make some evening calls, but on Tuesday and Thursday evenings, I need to attend very important meetings." Jehovah truly blessed me for not missing meetings to do secular work.

We were at my mother's bedside when she died in a nursing home in July 1987. The head nurse came to Grace and said: "Mrs. Allen, go home and get some rest. Everyone knows you were here all the time for your mother-in-law. Have peace of mind and self-respect."

In December 1987, we filled out applications to serve again at Bethel, the place we loved. But



Top: Fern and George Couch with Grace and me at Gilead, 1954

Bottom: Working in the Service Department, 1956

only days later, Grace was diagnosed with colon cancer. After surgery and a successful recovery, she was pronounced cancer free. In the meantime, though, we received a letter from Bethel that recommended we continue our ministry with the local congregation. We were determined to press on in our Kingdom activity.

In time, a job opportunity opened up for me in Texas. We decided that the warmer climate there would be good for us, and it has been. Here in Texas, we have for some 25 years been surrounded by caring brothers and sisters to whom we have become closely attached.

LESSONS WE HAVE LEARNED

Grace has had bouts with cancer of the colon and the thyroid, and recently breast cancer. But

“Always lean on Jehovah and accept what he permits”



she has never complained about her lot in life or challenged the principles of headship and co-operation. She has often been asked, “What is the secret to your success as a couple and the happiness you both radiate?” She gives four reasons: “We are best friends. We communicate regularly every day. We love to visit with each other every day. And we never go to sleep at the end of the day while we are angry with each other.” Of course, once in a while we rub each other the wrong way, but we forgive and forget—and that approach truly works.

Through all the trials that have come our way, there are several good lessons that we have learned:

- (1) Always lean on Jehovah and accept what he permits. Never lean on your own understanding.—Prov. 3:5, 6; Jer. 17:7.
- (2) Depend on Jehovah’s Word for direction, no matter what the issue is. Obedience to Jehovah and his laws is vital. There is no middle ground—either you are obedient or you are not.—Rom. 6:16; Heb. 4:12.
- (3) There is one thing in life that matters most—gaining a good name with Jehovah. Put his interests first, not the seeking of material riches.—Prov. 28:20; Eccl. 7:1; Matt. 6:33, 34.
- (4) Pray to be as productive and as active in Jehovah’s service as you can be. Focus on what you can do, not on what you cannot do.—Matt. 22:37; 2 Tim. 4:2.
- (5) Know that there is no other organization that has Jehovah’s blessing and favor.—John 6:68.

Grace and I have each served Jehovah for more than 75 years, and as a married couple, we have served him for nearly 65 years. We truly have had a wonderful time serving Jehovah together for all these decades. We hope and pray that all our brothers and sisters may likewise experience how rewarding life is when you lean on Jehovah.



"Let them bless your glorious name."

—NEH. 9:5.

CAN YOU ANSWER?

What good things did the Israelites do when the Levites gathered them together?

What historic example shows that God lives up to the meaning of his name?

What lessons do we learn from the prayer of the Levites?

LESSONS FROM A WELL-PREPARED PRAYER

"RISE, bless Jehovah your God from time indefinite to time indefinite." With these stirring words, God's ancient people were assembled to unite in a prayer that is one of the longest in the Bible record. (Neh. 9:4, 5) The gathering took place in Jerusalem on the 24th day of the seventh Jewish month, Tishri, 455 B.C.E. As we consider events that led up to that special day, ask yourself: 'What good habit contributed to the success of the occasion? What other lessons can I learn from this well-prepared prayer?' —Ps. 141:2.

A SPECIAL MONTH

² A month prior to the above assembly, the Jews had completed the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls. (Neh. 6:15) God's people accomplished the work in just 52 days, and they then proceeded to give particular attention to their spiritual needs. So on the first day of the new month, Tishri, they gathered together at the public square to hear Ezra, along with other Levites, read aloud and explain God's Law. (Illustration 1) Whole families, including "all intelligent enough to listen," stood and listened "from day-break till midday." What a fine example for those of us who today attend meetings in comfortable Kingdom Halls! Yet, on such occasions do you sometimes find that your mind wanders and you start thinking about less important matters? If so, consider again the example of those ancient Israelites who not only listened but took to heart what they heard to the extent that they began weeping over their failure

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1. What assembly of God's people will we consider, raising what questions?
 2. What fine example did the Israelites set for us at their gathering after the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls?



as a nation to obey God's Law.—Neh. 8: 1-9.

³ However, this was not the time for public confession of sins. Being a festival day, it was meant to be a joyous time in the worship of Jehovah. (Illustration 2) (Num. 29:1) So Nehemiah told the people: "Go, eat the fatty things and drink the sweet things, and send portions to the one for whom nothing has been prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord, and do not feel hurt, for the joy of Jehovah is your stronghold." Commendably, the people obeyed, and the day turned into one of "great rejoicing."—Neh. 8:10-12.

⁴ On the very next day, the family heads gathered together to see how the nation could conform more closely to God's Law. (Illustration 3) In their study of the Scriptures, they found that the seventh month was to include the Festival of Booths with its concluding solemn assembly from the 15th through the 22nd day of Tishri, so they began to make preparations. (Illustration 4) It turned out to be the most successful Festival of Booths since the days of Joshua and resulted in "very great rejoicing." An important feature of this festival was

3. The Israelites obediently followed what direction?

4. What did the Israelite family heads do, and what did they discover was a noteworthy feature of this Festival of Booths?

the public reading of God's Law, "day by day, from the first day until the last day."—Neh. 8:13-18.

A DAY OF CONFESSION

⁵ Two days later, the time was right for a public confession on the part of Israel for their failure to keep God's Law. This was not a festival day of feasting. Instead, God's people fasted and were dressed in sackcloth as a sign of mourning. Again, God's Law was read to the people for about three hours in the morning. In the afternoon, "they were making confession and bowing down to Jehovah their God." (Illustration 5) Then the Levites represented the people with their well-prepared prayer. (Illustration 6)—Neh. 9:1-4.

⁶ No doubt, their frequent reading of God's Law helped the Levites to prepare this meaningful prayer. The first ten verses focus exclusively on Jehovah's works and qualities. In the remaining part of the prayer, God's "abundant mercy" is repeatedly highlighted along with a clear admission that the Israelites were not worthy of such kind treatment. (Neh. 9: 19, 27, 28, 31) Our prayers to Jehovah

5. What did God's people do just before the Levites represented them in prayer to Jehovah?

6. What contributed to the Levites' offering a meaningful prayer, and what lesson does this teach us?



will also be fresh and meaningful if, like those Levites, we daily meditate on God's Word, allowing Jehovah to speak to us before we pray at length to him.

—Ps. 1:1, 2.

7 The prayer contains only one modest request. It is found in the latter part of verse 32, which reads: "Now, O our God, the God great, mighty and fear-inspiring, keeping the covenant and loving-kindness, do not let all the hardship that has found us, our kings, our princes and our priests and our prophets and our forefathers and all your people from the days of the kings of Assyria down to this day, seem little before you." Thus, the Levites set a good example for us to praise and thank Jehovah first before making personal requests in our prayers.

PRAISING GOD'S GLORIOUS NAME

8 Even though their prayer was well-prepared, those Levites were humble and felt that the quality of their words could not fully express the praise Jehovah really deserves. Thus, the prayer starts with this modest appeal respecting God's people: "Let them bless your

7. What did the Levites ask of God, and what do we learn from this?

8, 9. (a) In what humble way did the Levites begin their prayer? (b) To what two heavenly armies do the Levites evidently refer?

glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise."—Neh. 9:5.

9 "You are Jehovah alone," the prayer continues, "you yourself have made the heavens, even the heaven of the heavens, and all their army, the earth and all that is upon it, the seas and all that is in them; and you are preserving all of them alive; and the army of the heavens are bowing down to you." (Neh. 9:6) Yes, Jehovah God created the entire universe, made up of countless galaxies of stars. Equally marvelous, he created everything on our beautiful planet with its amazing ability to sustain an astonishing variety of life—life that keeps reproducing according to its kind. Witnessing all of this were the holy angels of God, who can also be described as "the army of the heavens." (1 Ki. 22:19; Job 38:4, 7) Moreover, the angels humbly do God's will by ministering to sinful humans "who are going to inherit salvation." (Heb. 1:14) What a splendid example the angels set for us as we serve Jehovah unitedly like a well-trained army!—1 Cor. 14:33, 40.

10 Next, the Levites focused on God's dealings with Abram, who by his 99th year had not fathered a single child from his barren wife, Sarai. It was then that Jehovah changed his name to Abraham, meaning "father of a crowd."

10. What do we learn from God's dealings with Abraham?

(Gen. 17:1-6, 15, 16) God also promised Abraham that his seed would inherit the land of Canaan. Humans often forget what they promise; not so Jehovah. As the Levites' prayer recounts: "You are Jehovah the true God, who chose Abram and brought him out of Ur of the Chaldeans and constituted his name Abraham. And you found his heart faithful before you; so there was a contracting of the covenant with him to give him the land of the Canaanites, . . . to give it to his seed; and you proceeded to carry out your words, because you are righteous." (Neh. 9:7, 8) May we too imitate our righteous God by always striving to be true to our word.—Matt. 5:37.

RECOUNTING JEHOVAH'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS

11 The name Jehovah means "He Causes to Become," signifying that God, through progressive action, causes his promises to come true. This is beautifully demonstrated in God's dealings with the descendants of Abraham when they were slaves to the Egyptians. At that time, it seemed impossible that the entire nation could be set free and settled in the Promised Land. However, by a series of progressive actions, God caused his promise to come true, thereby proving himself worthy of the unique and illustrious name Jehovah.

12 The prayer recorded by Nehemiah says of Jehovah: "You saw the affliction of our forefathers in Egypt, and their outcry at the Red Sea you heard. Then you gave signs and miracles against Pharaoh and all his servants and all the people of his land, for you knew that they acted presumptuously against them; and

11, 12. Explain the meaning of Jehovah's name and how this was demonstrated in his dealings with Abraham's descendants.

you proceeded to make a name for yourself as at this day. And the sea you split before them, so that they crossed over through the midst of the sea on the dry land; and their pursuers you hurled into the depths like a stone in the strong waters." Then, the prayer continues about what else Jehovah had done for his people: "You proceeded to subdue before them the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites . . . And they went capturing fortified cities and a fat soil and taking in possession houses full of all good things, cisterns hewn out, vineyards and olive groves and trees for food in abundance, and they began to eat and to be satisfied and to grow fat and to luxuriate in your great goodness."—Neh. 9:9-11, 24, 25.

13 There were many other progressive actions that God took to accomplish his purpose. For example, soon after Israel left Egypt, Jehovah provided for their spiritual needs. "Upon Mount Sinai," recall the Levites in their prayer to God, he "came down and spoke with them out of heaven and went on to give them upright judicial decisions and laws of truth, good regulations and commandments." (Neh. 9:13) Jehovah tried to teach his people so that they could be fit bearers of his holy name as the inheritors of the Promised Land, but they forsook the good things they learned.—*Read Nehemiah 9:16-18.*

THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE

14 The Levites' prayer refers to two specific sins committed by Israel soon after they had promised to keep God's Law at Mount Sinai. For these, they rightly deserved to be left alone to die. But the prayer praises Jehovah: "In your

13. How did Jehovah provide for Israel's spiritual needs, but how did the people respond?

14, 15. (a) How did Jehovah mercifully care for his sinful people? (b) What do we learn from God's dealings with his chosen nation?

abundant mercy [you] did not leave them in the wilderness. . . . For forty years you provided them with food . . . They lacked nothing. Their very garments did not wear out, and their feet themselves did not become swollen." (Neh. 9:19, 21) Today, Jehovah also provides us with everything we need to serve him faithfully. May we never be like the thousands of Israelites who died in the wilderness because of their disobedience and lack of faith. In fact, those things "were written for a warning to us upon whom the ends of the systems of things have arrived."—1 Cor. 10:1-11.

15 Sadly, after inheriting the Promised Land, the Israelites adopted the sensuous, murderous worship of Canaanite gods. So Jehovah allowed neighboring nations to oppress his chosen nation. When they repented, Jehovah mercifully forgave them and saved them from their enemies. "Time and again" this happened. (*Read Nehemiah 9:26-28, 31*) "You," confessed the Levites, "were indulgent with them for many years and kept bearing witness against them by your spirit by means of your prophets, and they did not give ear. Finally you gave them into the hand of the peoples of the lands."—Neh. 9:30.

16 Even after their return from exile, the Israelites fell back into a pattern of disobedience. With what difference? The Levites continued praying: "Look! We are today slaves; and as for the land that you gave to our forefathers to eat its fruitage and its good things, look! we are slaves upon it, and its produce is

16, 17. (a) After the exile, how did the situation of the Israelites differ from when their forefathers first inherited the Promised Land? (b) What did the Israelites confess, and what did they promise to do?

abounding for the kings that you have put over us because of our sins, and . . . we are in great distress."—Neh. 9:36, 37.

17 Were the Levites suggesting that God was unjust in allowing this distress? Certainly not! "You are righteous," they confessed, "as regards all that has come upon us, for faithfully is how you have acted, but we are the ones that have done wickedly." (Neh. 9:33) Then, this unselfish prayer concludes with a solemn promise that the nation will henceforth obey God's Law. (*Read Nehemiah 9:38; 10:29*) To this end, a written document is signed with the seals of 84 Jewish leaders.—Neh. 10:1-27.

18 We need discipline from Jehovah in order to be fit to survive into his righteous new world. "What son is he that a father does not discipline?" asked the apostle Paul. (Heb. 12:7) We show that we accept God's direction in our lives by faithfully enduring in his service and allowing his spirit to refine us. And if we commit a serious sin, we can be sure that Jehovah will forgive us if we are truly repentant and humbly accept discipline.

19 Soon, Jehovah will make an even grander name for himself than he did when he delivered the Israelites from Egypt. (Ezek. 38:23) And just as surely as his ancient people inherited the Promised Land, so all Christians who endure as faithful worshippers of Jehovah will inherit life in God's righteous new world. (2 Pet. 3:13) With such wonderful prospects ahead of us, may we not stop praying for the sanctification of God's glorious name. The next article will discuss another prayer that we must act in harmony with to enjoy God's blessing now and forever.

18, 19. (a) What do we need in order to survive into God's new world? (b) What should we not stop praying for, and why?



“Father, . . . glorify your son, that your son may glorify you.”

—JOHN 17:1.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

What is involved in truly “knowing” God?

How was Jesus’ prayer recorded in John chapter 17 answered in the first century?

How can we act in harmony with Jesus’ prayer today?

ACT IN HARMONY WITH JESUS’ LOVING PRAYER

IT IS late in the evening of Nisan 14 in the year 33 C.E. Jesus and his companions have enjoyed celebrating the Passover, which reminds them of how God delivered their forefathers from slavery in Egypt. But his faithful disciples are to experience a far grander “everlasting deliverance.” The next day, their sinless Leader will be put to death by his enemies. But this hateful act will be turned into a blessing. Jesus’ shed blood will provide the basis for mankind’s deliverance from sin and death.—Heb. 9:12-14.

² To make sure that we do not forget this loving provision, Jesus instituted a new annual observance that replaced the Passover. He did this by breaking a loaf of unleavened bread, and passing it to each of his 11 faithful apostles, he said: “This means my body which is to be given in your behalf. Keep doing this in remembrance of me.” He did likewise with a cup of red wine, telling them: “This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf.”—Luke 22:19, 20.

³ The end was soon coming to the old Law covenant between God and natural-born Israelites. It would be replaced by a new covenant between Jehovah and Jesus’ anointed followers. Jesus was deeply concerned about the welfare of this new spiritual nation. Natural Israel was hopelessly divided religiously and socially, bringing great reproach on God’s holy name. (John 7:45-49; Acts 23:6-9) In contrast, Jesus desired that his followers remain perfect-

1, 2. Explain what Jesus did for his faithful apostles after they celebrated the Passover in 33 C.E.

3. (a) What big change followed Jesus’ death? (b) What questions should we consider respecting Jesus’ prayer recorded in John chapter 17?

ly united so that they could work harmoniously together to bring glory to God's name. So, what does Jesus do? He offers the most beautiful prayer that any human will ever be privileged to read. (John 17:1-26; see opening illustration.) We are in a position to look back and ask, "Has God answered Jesus' prayer?" We should also examine ourselves and ask, "Am I acting in harmony with it?"

JESUS' PRIORITIES

⁴ Jesus talks late into the night, imparting to his disciples precious knowledge from God. Then he raises his eyes to heaven and prays: "Father, the hour has come; glorify your son, that your son may glorify you, according as you have given him authority over all flesh, that, as regards the whole number whom you have given him, he may give them everlasting life. . . . I have glorified you on the earth, having finished the work you have given me to do. So now you, Father, glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you before the world was."—John 17:1-5.

⁵ Notice Jesus' priorities in the introduction to his prayer. His main concern is the glorification of his heavenly Father, and this harmonizes with the first request in Jesus' model prayer: "Father, let your name be sanctified." (Luke 11:2) Jesus' next concern is for the needs of his disciples, that "he may give them everlasting life." After that, Jesus makes a personal request, saying: "Father, glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you before the world was." Jehovah rewards his faithful Son with even more than he asks by giv-

4, 5. (a) What do we learn from the introduction to Jesus' prayer? (b) How did Jehovah answer Jesus' personal request about his future?

ing Jesus "a name more excellent than" that of all the angels.—Heb. 1:4.

'KNOWING THE ONLY TRUE GOD'

⁶ Jesus also prays about what we as sinners must do to qualify for the undeserved gift of everlasting life. (*Read John 17:3.*) He says that we must keep "taking in knowledge" of God and Christ. One way of doing this involves using our eyes and ears to learn more about Jehovah and his Son. Another important way of taking in knowledge of God is by experiencing the joyful feeling that comes from applying what we learn about him. The apostles had followed this life-giving process, for Jesus went on to pray: "The sayings that you gave me I have given to them, and they have received them." (John 17:8) But to gain everlasting life, they needed to keep meditating on God's sayings and to apply those sayings in their daily lives. Did the faithful apostles succeed in doing this to the end of their earthly lives? Indeed they did. We know this because each of their individual names is indelibly written upon the 12 foundation stones of the heavenly New Jerusalem.—Rev. 21:14.

⁷ According to Greek-language scholars, the Greek expression translated "taking in knowledge" can also be translated "should keep on knowing" or "should continue knowing." The two meanings are complementary, and both are important. The footnote to John 17:3 in the *Reference Bible* gives the alternative rendering "their knowing you." Thus, "taking in knowledge" refers to

6. For the apostles to get eternal life, what did they have to do, and how do we know that they succeeded?

7. What does "knowing" God mean, and why is that so important?



First-century Christians worked along with holy spirit to maintain unity
(See paragraph 13)

an ongoing process that results in the privileged state of “knowing” God. Knowing the greatest Person in the universe, however, involves much more than having a mental grasp of God’s qualities and purpose. Knowing Jehovah includes having a close bond of love with him and with fellow believers. “He that does not love,” explains the Bible, “has not come to know God.” (1 John 4:8) Thus, knowing God includes being obedient to him. (*Read 1 John 2:3-5.*) What a great privilege it is to be counted as one knowing Jehovah! But as in the case of Judas Iscariot, this precious relationship can be lost. Let us work hard to maintain it. Then we will eventually qualify for the undeserved gift of everlasting life.—Matt. 24:13.

“ON ACCOUNT OF YOUR OWN NAME”

8 After reading Jesus’ prayer recorded in John chapter 17, who can doubt

8, 9. What was Jesus’ primary concern during his earthly ministry, and what religious tradition would he have rejected?

Jesus’ deep love not only for his apostles there present but also for his future disciples? (John 17:20) At the same time, we need to understand that our salvation is not Jesus’ primary concern. His main purpose from the beginning to the end of his earthly ministry was to work for the sanctification and glory of his Father’s name. For example, when announcing his commission in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah: “Jehovah’s spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor.” Without question, Jesus would have pronounced God’s name clearly when he read this commission.—Luke 4:16-21.

9 According to Jewish tradition, long before Jesus came to earth, the religious leaders discouraged people from using God’s name. We can be sure that Jesus firmly rejected such an unscriptural tradition. He said to his opposers: “I have come *in the name of my Father*, but you do not receive me; if someone else arrived in his own name, you would receive that

one." (John 5:43) Then, a few days before his death, Jesus expressed his main concern in life by praying: "Father, glorify your name." (John 12:28) So we should not be surprised that Jesus weaves this concern for his Father's name throughout the prayer that we are now examining.

10 "I have made your name manifest," Jesus prayed, "to the men you gave me out of the world. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have observed your word. Also, I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world and I am coming to you. Holy Father, watch over them on account of your own name which you have given me, in order that they may be one just as we are." —John 17:6, 11.

11 Making his Father's name known to his disciples involved much more than verbally pronouncing that name. Jesus also helped them to know what God's name represented, namely, God's wonderful qualities and his way of dealing with us. (Ex. 34:5-7) Moreover, from Jesus' glorified position in heaven, he continues to help his disciples to make known Jehovah's name throughout the earth. With what goal in mind? That more disciples might be gathered before the end comes to this wicked system of things. Then, what a marvelous name Jehovah will make for himself as he acts to deliver his loyal witnesses! —Ezek. 36:23.

"THAT THE WORLD MAY BELIEVE"

12 While on earth, Jesus worked hard to help his disciples to overcome their

10, 11. (a) What was involved in Jesus' making known his Father's name? (b) Jesus' disciples should work toward what goal?

12. What three things are necessary for us to succeed in our lifesaving work?

weaknesses. This was essential for them to complete the work that Jesus had started. "Just as you sent me forth into the world," prays Jesus, "I also sent them forth into the world." For them to succeed in this lifesaving work, Jesus emphasizes three vital needs. First, he prays that his disciples be no part of Satan's unholy world. Second, he prays that they may be sanctified, or kept holy, by applying to themselves the truth of God's Word. Third, Jesus repeatedly begs that his disciples may be united in the same bond of love that exists between him and his Father. This calls for self-examination. Each of us should ask, 'Am I acting in harmony with Jesus' three requests?' By giving attention to these things, Jesus expresses optimism "that the world may believe that you sent me forth." —*Read John 17:15-21.*

13 That Jesus' prayer was answered can be seen by studying the Bible book that follows the four Gospels, Acts of Apostles. Think of the potential there was for division among the early Christians, who were made up of Jews and Gentiles, rich and poor, slaves and slave owners. Yet, all became so closely united that they could be likened to different parts of a human body with Jesus as their head. (Eph. 4:15, 16) What a miraculous accomplishment amid Satan's divided world! All credit for this must go to Jehovah, who made it possible by the operation of his powerful holy spirit. —1 Cor. 3:5-7.

14 Sadly, this miraculous unity did not survive the death of the apostles. Instead, as foretold, a great apostasy set

13. How was Jesus' prayer answered in the first century C.E.?

14. How has Jesus' prayer been answered in modern times?



Jehovah's people all around the world are united
(See paragraph 14)

in, which resulted in Christendom's divided sects. (Acts 20:29, 30) But in the year 1919, Jesus released his anointed followers from their captivity to false religion and gathered them together in "a perfect bond of union." (Col. 3:14) What effect has their preaching work had on the rest of the world? Over seven million "other sheep" companions from "all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" have been drawn into one united flock with God's anointed. (John 10:16; Rev. 7:9) What a spectacular answer to Jesus' prayer, "that the world may have the knowledge that you [Jehovah] sent me forth and that you loved them just as you loved me"!—John 17:23.

AN ENDEARING CONCLUSION

15 Earlier on the evening of Nisan 14, Jesus gave glory, or honor, to his apostles by making a covenant with them

15. Jesus made what special request in behalf of his anointed disciples?

to rule with him in his Kingdom. (Luke 22:28-30; John 17:22) So concerning all who would become his anointed followers, Jesus now prays: "Father, as to what you have given me, I wish that, where I am, they also may be with me, in order to behold my glory that you have given me, because you loved me before the founding of the world." (John 17:24) This causes rejoicing, not envy, on the part of Jesus' other sheep and is further proof of the unity that exists among all true Christians on earth today.

16 Under the influence of their religious leaders, the majority of people in the world choose to ignore the clear evidence that Jehovah has a united people who truly know him. The same was true respecting Jesus' day. So he concludes with these endearing words: "Righteous Father, the world has, indeed, not come to know you; but I have come to know you, and these have come to know that you sent me forth. And I have made your name known to them and will make it known, in order that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them."—John 17:25, 26.

17 Who can deny that Jesus has acted in harmony with his prayer? As Head of the congregation, he continues to help us make known his Father's name and purpose. May we keep on submitting to his headship by zealously obeying his command to preach and make disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 10:42) May we also work hard at preserving our precious unity. By doing these things, we will be acting in harmony with Jesus' prayer, to the glory of Jehovah's name and to our eternal happiness.

16, 17. (a) What determination did Jesus express in the conclusion of his prayer? (b) What should we be determined to do?

Can You Do More to Warn Others?

A charming silent film entitled *A Trip Down Market Street* entralls viewers with its revealing display of life as it was in San Francisco, U.S.A., at the turn of the 20th century. Filmmakers had mounted a hand-cranked camera on the front of a moving cable car and trained it on the bustling thoroughfare ahead. The film's subjects included horse-drawn wagons and early-model automobiles, as well as shoppers and newsboys carrying on their daily affairs.

What lends the film more poignancy is the likelihood that it was filmed in April 1906, just prior to the deadly earthquake and fire on April 18 that claimed thousands of lives and nearly destroyed that part of the city. Probably, some of the vibrant faces captured on film had mere days to live. "I just see the people there," says Scott Miles, a descendant of one of the filmmakers, "and they don't know what's about to hit them. And you can't help but feel for them."

A sobering parallel to our day can be drawn. We too cannot help but feel for our neighbors. They go about their daily activities completely oblivious to the calamity that lies immediate-

ly ahead—the destruction of this system of things and their way of life. Unlike an unforeseeable earthquake, however, there is a brief opportunity remaining to warn our neighbors about Jehovah's day of judgment. It is likely that you reserve some time each week to engage in the door-to-door ministry, but can you do more to warn others?

JESUS WAS NEVER OFF DUTY

Jesus' example is noteworthy in that he never considered himself to be off duty. He preached to everyone he encountered, be it a tax collector he passed on the road or a woman he met at a well during a midday pause. (Luke 19:1-5; John 4:5-10, 21-24) Even when he set aside time to relax, Jesus ungrudgingly abandoned his plans in order to teach others. Compassion for his neighbors caused him to offer more than a token witness. (Mark 6:30-34) How is Jesus' sense of urgency being imitated today?

THEY PURSUE EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Melika lives in a high-security apartment building. Many of her neighbors are foreign students who use unlisted mobile phones and

Without warning, the 1906 earthquake and resulting fire destroyed a large part of downtown San Francisco

U.S. National Archives photo



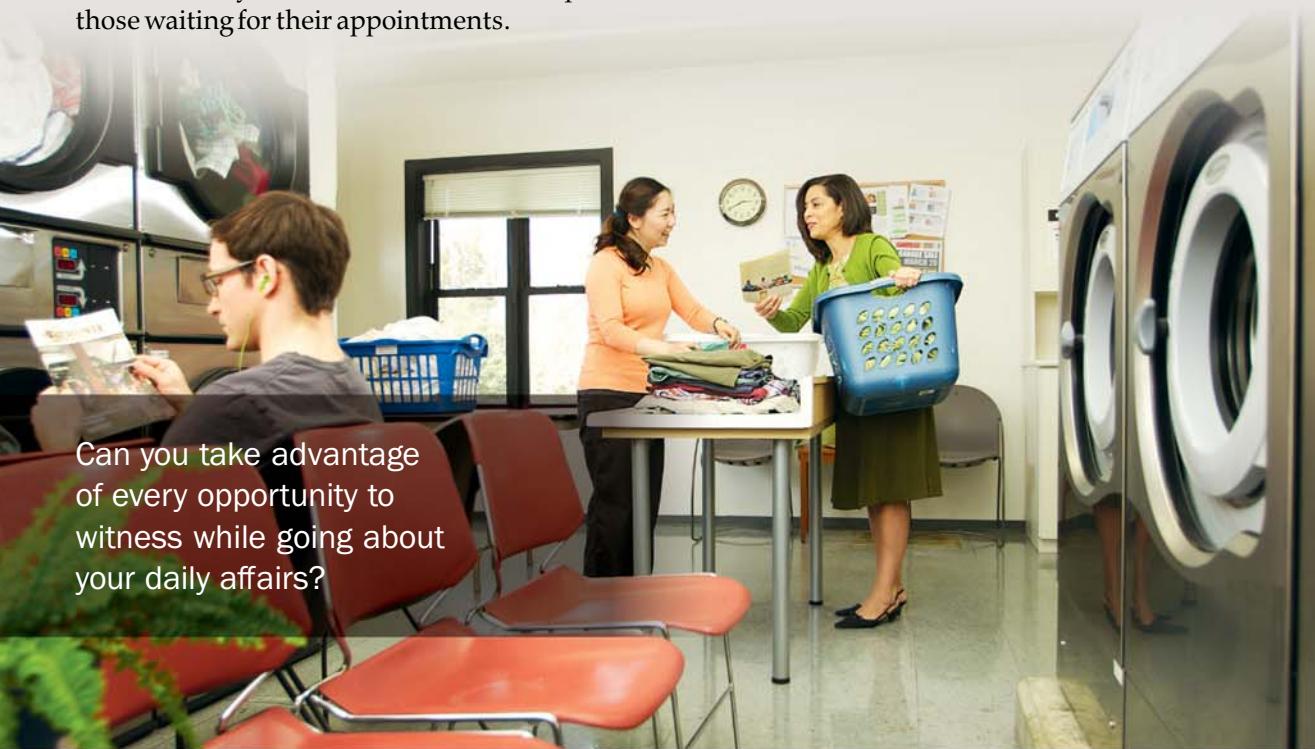
whose names are not listed in the lobby directory. She appreciates the special opportunity open to her to start spiritual discussions with tenants in the lobby and elevator. She says, "In a way, I consider it *my* territory." Melika carries literature with her in several languages, and many accept tracts and magazines. She also directs their attention to our Web site, jw.org. She has started several Bible studies.

Sonia is also alert to witness to whomever she can. She is employed at a doctor's clinic, and she set the goal of giving a thorough witness to each of her coworkers. First, she took time to learn the needs and interests of each person. Then, she used her lunchtime break to seek them out individually for a spiritual conversation. As a result, Sonia was able to start two Bible studies. She is also planning to take some of her breaks in the entrance lobby of the medical center and speak to those waiting for their appointments.

SEIZE YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

One survivor of the 1906 earthquake called it "the most terrible disaster that ever befell a state or city." Yet, soon all disasters will pale in comparison with the day of vengeance coming upon all "those who do not know God." (2 Thess. 1:8) Jehovah keenly desires that people have a change of mind and heart and respond to the warning message that is being given by his Witnesses. —2 Pet. 3:9, ftn.; Rev. 14:6, 7.

You have the privilege of opening people's eyes to our critical times and helping them to turn away from selfish interests in order to seek Jehovah. (Zeph. 2:2, 3) Can you take advantage of every opportunity to witness to your workmates, to your neighbors, and to those you meet while going about your daily affairs? Will you do more to warn others?



Can you take advantage
of every opportunity to
witness while going about
your daily affairs?



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