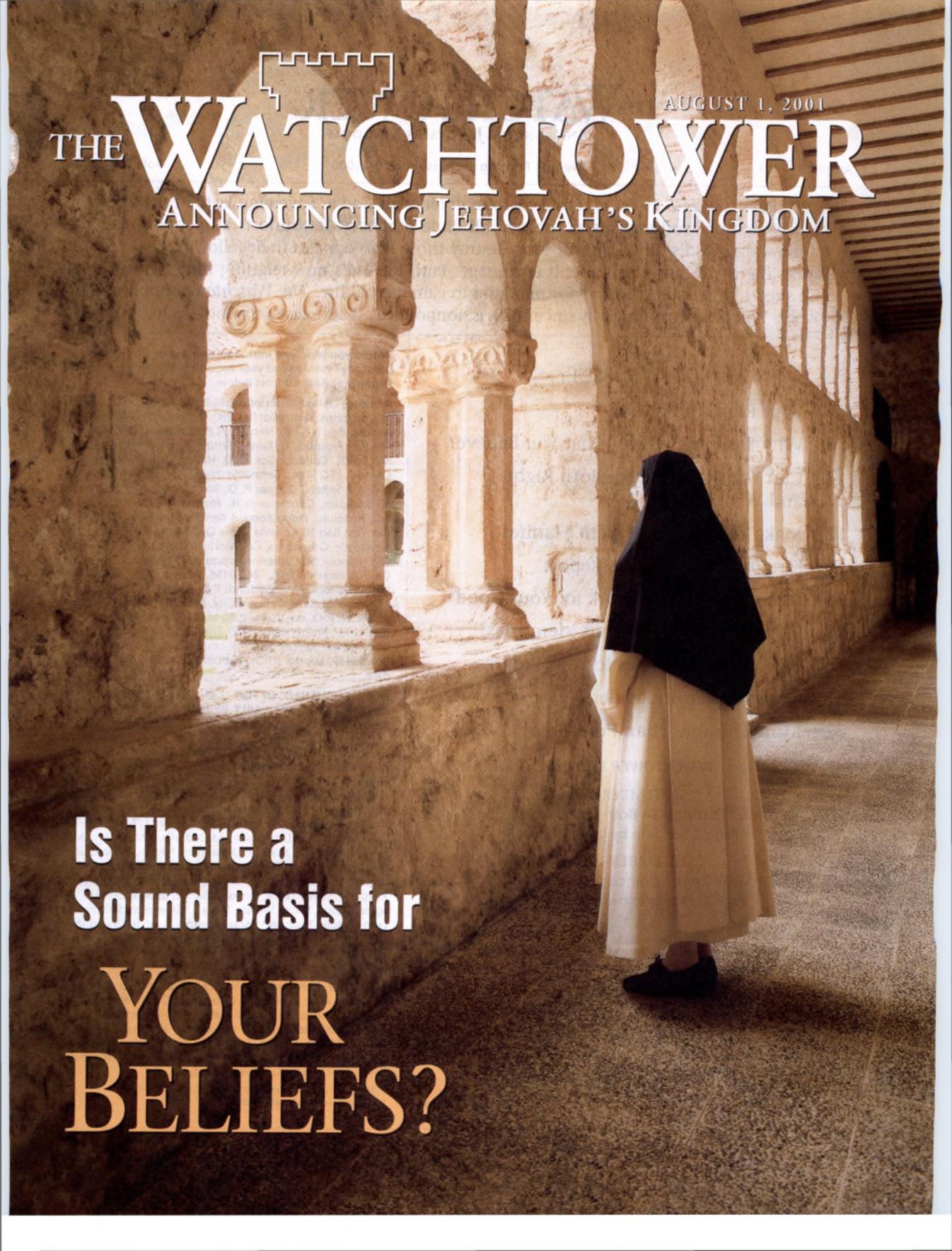


AUGUST 1, 2001

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



Is There a
Sound Basis for
YOUR
BELIEFS?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

August 1, 2001

Average Printing Each Issue: 23,042,000

Vol. 122, No. 15

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

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Your Right to Believe
- 4 Why Do You Believe What You Believe?
- 7 Can You "Distinguish Both Right and Wrong"?
- 12 Make Your Advancement Manifest
- 18 Kingdom Proclaimers Report
- 19 Let Force of Habit Work for Your Good
- 23 Grateful for My Precious Memories!
- 28 Overcome Obstacles to Your Progress!
- 31 Questions From Readers
- 32 More Durable Than Pure Gold

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

SEPTEMBER 3-9:

- Can You "Distinguish Both Right and Wrong"?
Page 7. Songs to be used: 24, 191.

SEPTEMBER 10-16:

- Make Your Advancement Manifest
Page 12. Songs to be used: 138, 123.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. The Bible translation used is the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*, unless otherwise indicated.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 2001 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Semimonthly

ENGLISH

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Watch Tower, using the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. *Antigua:* Box 119, St. Johns. *Australia:* Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. *Bahamas:* Box N-1247, Nassau, N.P. *Barbados, W.I.:* Crusher Site Rd., Prospect, St. James. *Britain:* The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. *Canada:* Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. *Germany:* Niederselters, Am Steinfeld, D-65618 Selters. *Ghana:* P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. *Guyana:* 50 Brickdam, Georgetown 16. *Hawaii:* 96819: 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. *Hong Kong:* 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. *India:* Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. *Jamaica:* P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. *Japan:* 1271 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. *Kenya:* P.O. Box 47788, 00100 Nairobi. *New Zealand:* P.O. Box 75-142, Manurewa. *Nigeria:* P.M.B. 1090, Benin City, Edo State. *Philippines, Republic of:* P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. *South Africa:* Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. *Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:* Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. *Zambia:* Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. *Zimbabwe:* P. Bag A-6113, Avondale.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 141 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, * Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Ci-bemba, Croatian, Czech, ** Danish, ** Dutch, ** East Armenian, Efik, English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish, ** French, ** Ga, Georgian, German, ** Greek, * Gujаратி, Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Hungarian, * Igbo, Ilokano, * Indonesian, Italian, ** Japanese** (also Braille), Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Korean** (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Marathi, Myanmar, Nepali, New Guinea Pidgin, Norwegian, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, ** Portuguese** (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, * Russian, * Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, * Slovenian, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Spanish, ** Sranantongo, Swahili, * Swedish, ** Tagalog, * Tahitian, Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, * Urdu, Venda, Vietnamese, Walladian, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

MONTHLY LANGUAGES AVAILABLE BY MAIL: Azerbaijani, Cambodian, Chitonga, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Hausa, Icelandic, Isoko, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Lvuale, Marshallese, Monokutuba, Moore, Niuean, Ossetian, Otetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Seychelles Creole, Tatar, Tiv, Trukese, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Yapese, Zande

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

** Audiocassettes also available.

YOUR RIGHT TO BELIEVE

You probably cherish your right to believe whatever you wish to believe. So does almost everyone else. By exercising this right, earth's six billion inhabitants have produced an amazing diversity of beliefs. Like the variations in color, shape, texture, taste, smell, and sound that we find in creation, differing beliefs often add interest, excitement, and enjoyment to life. Such variety can, indeed, be the spice of life.—Psalm 104:24.

BUT there is a need for caution. Some beliefs are not only different but also dangerous. Early in the 20th century, for example, some people came to believe that Jews and Freemasons had plans to "disrupt Christian civilization and erect a world state under their joint rule." One source of this belief was an anti-Semitic tract entitled *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*. The tract alleged that the plans included advocating excessive taxation, promoting armament production, encouraging giant monopolies so that 'Gentile wealth could be destroyed in one blow.' Allegations also included manipulating the education system so as to 'turn Gentiles into unthinking beasts,' and even constructing underground railways to join capital cities so that the Jewish elders could 'quell any opposers by blowing them sky-high.'

These, of course, were lies—designed to inflame anti-Semitic feelings. 'This preposterous fiction,' says Mark Jones of the British Museum, 'spread abroad from

Russia,' where it first appeared in a newspaper article in 1903. It reached *The Times* of London on May 8, 1920. More than a year later, *The Times* exposed the document as a fake. In the meantime, the damage had been done. 'Lies like these,' says Jones, 'are hard to suppress.' Once people accept them, they produce some very jaundiced, poisonous, and dangerous beliefs—often with disastrous consequences, as the history of the 20th century has shown.—Proverbs 6:16-19.

Belief Versus Truth

Of course, it does not take deliberate lies to develop mistaken beliefs. At times, we just misread things. How many people have met untimely deaths doing something they believed was right? Then again, often we believe a thing simply because we want to believe it. One professor says that even scientists "often fall in love with their own constructions." Their beliefs



1921 article exposing
"Protocols of the Learned
Elders of Zion"

becloud their critical judgment. Then they may spend a lifetime in vain trying to shore up mistaken beliefs.—Jeremiah 17:9.

Similar things have happened with religious beliefs—where immense contradictions exist. (1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 4:3, 4) One man has deep faith in God. Another says that the man is only “weaving faith out of moonshine.” One maintains that you have

an immortal soul that survives death. Another believes that when you die you cease to exist, totally and completely. Obviously, conflicting beliefs like these cannot all be true. Is it not the course of wisdom, then, to make sure that what you believe actually is true and not simply what you want to believe? (Proverbs 1:5) How can you do that? The following article will examine this subject.

WHY DO YOU BELIEVE WHAT YOU BELIEVE?

To believe has been defined as “to accept as true, genuine, or real.”

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights enshrines every person’s “right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.” This right includes the freedom “to change his religion or belief” if he wants to do so.

WHY, though, would anyone want to change his religion or belief? “I have my own beliefs, and I am happy with them,” is the commonly expressed view. Many feel that even mistaken beliefs cause little harm to anyone. Someone who believes that the earth is flat, for example, is not likely to hurt himself or anyone else. “We should just agree to differ,” some say. Is that always wise? Would a doctor simply agree to differ if one of his colleagues continued to believe he could go straight from handling dead bodies in a morgue to examining sick patients in a hospital ward?

When it comes to religion, mistaken beliefs have historically caused great harm. Think of the horrors that resulted when religious leaders “inspired Christian zealots to

pitiless violence” during the so-called Holy Crusades of the Middle Ages. Or think of the modern-day “Christian” gunmen in a recent civil war who, “just like medieval warriors who had saints’ names on their sword hilts, taped pictures of the Virgin to their rifle butts.” All these zealots believed that they were right. Yet, obviously in these and other religious struggles and fights, something was terribly wrong.

Why is there so much confusion and conflict? The Bible’s answer is that Satan the Devil is “misleading the entire inhabited earth.” (Revelation 12:9; 2 Corinthians 4:4; 11:3) The apostle Paul warned that many religious people would, sadly, be “doomed to perish” because they would be deceived by Satan, who would “produce miracles and wonders calculated to deceive.” Such ones,

said Paul, would "shut their minds to the love of truth which could have saved them" and would thus be 'deluded into believing what is a lie.' (2 Thessalonians 2:9-12, *The New Testament*, by William Barclay) How can you minimize the possibility of believing a lie? Why, in fact, do you believe the way you do?

Brought Up to Believe It?

Perhaps you have been brought up in the beliefs of your family. That may well be a good thing. God wants parents to teach their children. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; 11:18-21) The young man Timothy, for example, benefited greatly from listening to his mother and grandmother. (2 Timothy 1:5; 3:14, 15) The Scriptures encourage respect for what parents believe. (Proverbs 1:8; Ephesians 6:1) But did your Creator mean for you to believe things simply because your parents believe them? Unthinking adherence to what previous generations believed and did can, in fact, be dangerous.—Psalm 78:8; Amos 2:4.

A Samaritan woman who met Jesus Christ had been brought up to believe in her Samaritan religion. (John 4:20) Jesus respected her freedom to choose what she wanted to believe, but he also pointed out to her: "You worship what you do not know." Many of her religious beliefs were, in fact, mistaken, and he told her that she would have to make changes in her beliefs if she was going to worship God acceptably—"with spirit and truth." Rather than cling to what were no doubt cherished beliefs, she and others like her would, in time, have to become "obedient to the faith" revealed through Jesus Christ.—John 4:21-24, 39-41; Acts 6:7.

Educated to Believe It?

Many teachers and authorities in specialized fields of knowledge deserve great re-

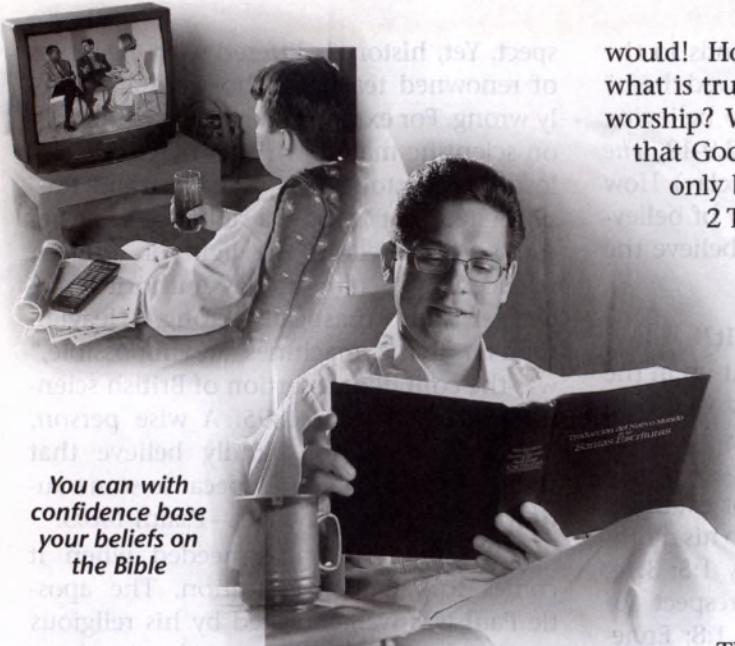
spect. Yet, history is littered with examples of renowned teachers who were absolutely wrong. For example, regarding two books on scientific matters written by Greek philosopher Aristotle, historian Bertrand Russell stated that "hardly a sentence in either can be accepted in the light of modern science." Even modern-day authorities often get things drastically wrong. "Heavier-than-air flying machines are impossible," was the confident assertion of British scientist Lord Kelvin in 1895. A wise person, therefore, does not blindly believe that something is true simply because some authoritative teacher says it is.—Psalm 146:3.

The same caution is needed when it comes to religious education. The apostle Paul was well-educated by his religious teachers and was extremely "zealous for the traditions of [his] fathers." His zeal for the traditional beliefs of his ancestors, however, actually created problems for him. It led to his "persecuting the congregation of God and devastating it." (Galatians 1:13, 14; John 16:2, 3) Worse still, for a long time, Paul kept "kicking against the goads," resisting the influences that should have led him to believe in Jesus Christ. It required a dramatic intervention by Jesus himself to move Paul to adjust his beliefs.—Acts 9:1-6; 26:14.

Influenced by the Media?

Maybe the media have greatly influenced your beliefs. Most people are glad that there is freedom of speech in the media, giving them access to information that can be useful. However, there are powerful forces that can and frequently do manipulate the media. What is often presented is biased information that can insidiously affect your thinking.

In addition, to appeal to or to attract a larger audience, the media tend to give



You can with confidence base your beliefs on the Bible

publicity to what is sensational and unconventional. What could hardly be said or printed for public consumption just a few years ago has become commonplace today. Slowly but surely, established standards of behavior are attacked and whittled away. People's thinking is gradually becoming distorted. They begin to believe that "good is bad and bad is good."—Isaiah 5:20; 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

Finding a Sound Basis for Belief

Building on the ideas and philosophies of men is like building on sand. (Matthew 7:26; 1 Corinthians 1:19, 20) On what, then, can you confidently base your beliefs? Since God has given you intellectual capacity to investigate the world around you and to ask questions concerning spiritual matters, does it not make sense that he would also provide the means to get accurate answers to your questions? (1 John 5:20) Yes, of course he

would! How, though, can you establish what is true, genuine, or real in matters of worship? We have no hesitation in saying that God's Word, the Bible, provides the only basis for doing this.—John 17:17; 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.

"But wait," someone will say, "is it not the very ones who have the Bible who have caused the most conflict and confusion in world affairs?" Well, it is true that religious leaders who claim to follow the Bible have produced many confusing and conflicting ideas. This is because they have not, in fact, based their beliefs on the Bible.

The apostle Peter describes them as "false prophets" and "false teachers" who would create "destructive sects." As a consequence of their activities, says Peter, "the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively." (2 Peter 2:1, 2) Still, writes Peter, "we have the prophetic word made more sure; and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place." —2 Peter 1:19; Psalm 119:105.

The Bible encourages us to check our beliefs against what it teaches. (1 John 4:1) Millions of readers of this magazine can testify that doing so has added purpose and stability to their lives. So be like the noble-minded Bereans. 'Carefully examine the Scriptures daily' before you decide what to believe. (Acts 17:11) Jehovah's Witnesses will be happy to help you to do this. Of course, it is *your* decision as to what you want to believe. However, it is the course of wisdom to make sure that your beliefs are shaped, not by human wisdom and desires, but, rather, by God's revealed Word of truth.—1 Thessalonians 2:13; 5:21.

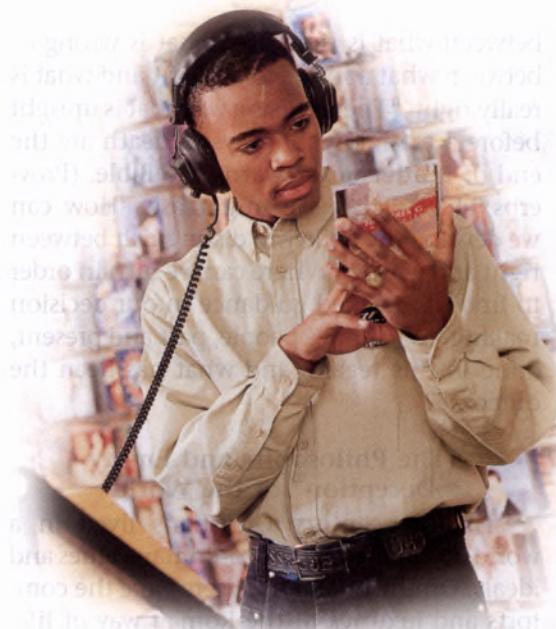
CAN YOU “DISTINGUISH BOTH RIGHT AND WRONG”?

“Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord.”—EPHESIANS 5:10.

I WELL know, O Jehovah, that to earthly man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step.” (Jeremiah 10:23) Jeremiah’s insightful observation applies to us today with added force. Why? It is because we are living in “critical times hard to deal with,” as the Bible foretold. (2 Timothy 3:1) Every day, we are confronted with perplexing situations that require that we make decisions. Large or small, these decisions can have a profound effect on our welfare—physically, emotionally, and spiritually.

2 Many choices we make in our daily life may be considered routine or trivial. Each day, for example, we go through the process of choosing the clothes we wear, the food we eat, the people we see, and so on. We make these choices almost automatically, with little thought. But are such matters really trivial? For dedicated Christians, it is a matter of deep concern that the choices we make in our attire and appearance, in our eating and drinking, and in our speech and conduct always reflect our role as servants of the Most High, Jehovah God. We are reminded of the apostle Paul’s words: “Whether you are eating or

1. In what way can life today be perplexing, and why?
2. What choices may be considered trivial, yet how do dedicated Christians view such?



drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God’s glory.”—1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:9, 10.

3 Then there are choices that are of even more serious concern. The decision to marry or to remain single, for example, surely has a profound and lasting effect on one’s life. To be sure, choosing the right person to marry, to be one’s lifelong partner, is no small matter.* (Proverbs 18:22) Additionally, our choice in friends and associates, in education, in employment, and in entertainment and recreation plays an influential, even decisive, role in our spirituality—hence, in our eternal welfare.—Romans 13:13, 14; Ephesians 5:3, 4.

4 Faced with all of this, it is certainly desirable for us to have the ability to distinguish

* In a list of over 40 of the most stressful experiences in people’s life, compiled by Drs. Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe, death of a spouse, divorce, and separation occupy the top three spots. Getting married ranks seventh.

3. What choices are of genuinely serious concern?
4. (a) What ability would be most desirable?
(b) What questions need to be considered?

between what is right and what is wrong or between what appears to be right and what is really right. "There exists a way that is upright before a man, but the ways of death are the end of it afterward," warns the Bible. (Proverbs 14:12) Thus, we might ask: 'How can we develop the ability to distinguish between right and wrong? Where can we turn in order to find the needed guidance in our decision making? What have people, past and present, done in this regard, and what has been the outcome?'

"The Philosophy and Empty Deception" of the World

⁵ The first-century Christians lived in a world dominated by Greco-Roman values and ideals. On the one hand, there were the comforts and luxuries of the Roman way of life, regarded by many as something to be envied. On the other hand, the intellectual circle of the day was abuzz not only with the philosophical ideas of Plato and Aristotle but also with those of the newer schools, such as the Epicureans and the Stoics. When the apostle Paul came to Athens on his second missionary tour, he was confronted by Epicurean and Stoic philosophers who felt that they were superior to "this chattering," Paul.—Acts 17:18.

⁶ It is not hard, therefore, to understand why some among the early Christians were drawn to the pretentious ways and life-styles of the people around them. (2 Timothy 4:10) Those who were part and parcel of the system seemed to enjoy many benefits and advantages, and the choices they made appeared to be sound. The world seemed to have something valuable to offer that the dedicated Christian way of life did not. However, the apostle Paul warned: "Look out: perhaps there

5. What kind of world did the early Christians live in?

6. (a) What were some of the early Christians tempted to do? (b) What warning did Paul sound?

may be 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." (Colossians 2:8) Why did Paul say that?

⁷ Paul sounded that warning because he sensed a real danger lurking behind the thinking of those attracted by the world. His use of the term "philosophy and empty deception" is especially significant. The word "philosophy" literally means "the love and pursuit of wisdom." That in itself may be beneficial. In fact, the Bible, particularly in the book of Proverbs, encourages the pursuit of the right kind of knowledge and wisdom. (Proverbs 1:1-7; 3:13-18) Paul, however, coupled "philosophy" with "empty deception." In other words, Paul viewed the wisdom that the world had to offer as empty and deceptive. Like an inflated balloon, it had the appearance of solidity, but there was no substance to it. It would certainly be futile, even disastrous, to base one's choice of right and wrong on something as insubstantial as "the philosophy and empty deception" of the world.

Those Saying That "Good Is Bad and Bad Is Good"

⁸ Things are not very different today. In practically every field of human endeavor, there are experts galore. Marriage and family counselors, columnists, self-styled therapists, astrologers, psychics, and others are ready to offer advice—for a fee. But what kind of advice is being offered? Often, Bible standards on morality are put aside to make room for the so-called new morality. For example, in speaking about the government's refusal to register "same-sex marriages," an editorial in Canada's

7. What does the wisdom of the world really amount to?

8. (a) To whom do people turn for advice? (b) What kind of advice is dispensed?

mainstream newspaper *The Globe and Mail* declares: "In the year 2000, it is grotesque that a loving and committed couple should be denied their fondest wish because they happen to be of the same sex." The trend today is to be tolerant, not judgmental. Everything is considered relative; there is no longer any absolute in right and wrong.—Psalm 10:3, 4.

⁹ Others look to the socially and financially successful—the rich and famous—as models in their decision making. Although the rich and famous are considered respectable in today's society, they often pay only lip service to virtues like honesty and trust. In the pursuit of power and profit, many feel no qualms about cutting corners and trampling on moral principles. To achieve fame and popularity, some casually discard established values and standards in preference to behavior that is bizarre and shocking. The result is a profit-motivated, permissive society in which the motto is, "Anything goes." Is it any wonder that people are confused and lost when it comes to right and wrong?—Luke 6:39.

¹⁰ The tragic consequences of bad decisions made on the basis of faulty guidance are all around us—broken marriages and families, drug and alcohol abuse, violent youth gangs, promiscuity, sexually transmitted diseases, to name but a few. Really, how can we expect things to be otherwise when people abandon all standards or points of reference when it comes to right and wrong? (Romans 1:28-32) It is just as the prophet Isaiah declared: "Woe to those who are saying that good is bad and bad is good, those who are putting darkness for light and light for darkness, those who are

9. What do people considered respectable in society often do?

10. How have Isaiah's words about good and bad proved true?



Looking to the rich and famous for guidance is futile

putting bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those wise in their own eyes and discreet even in front of their own faces!"—Isaiah 5:20, 21.

¹¹ The fact that God called to account those ancient Jews who became "wise in their own eyes" makes it all the more important for us to avoid relying on ourselves in determining right and wrong. Many people today subscribe to the notion of "just listen to your heart," or "do what you *feel* is right." Is such an approach sound? Not according to the Bible, which plainly says: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) Would you rely on a treacherous and desperate person to guide you in your decision making? Hardly. If anything, you would probably do just the opposite of what such a person tells you. That is why the Bible reminds us: "He that is trusting in his own heart is stupid, but he that is walking in

11. Why is it unsound thinking to rely on oneself when determining right and wrong?

wisdom is the one that will escape."—Proverbs 3:5-7; 28:26.

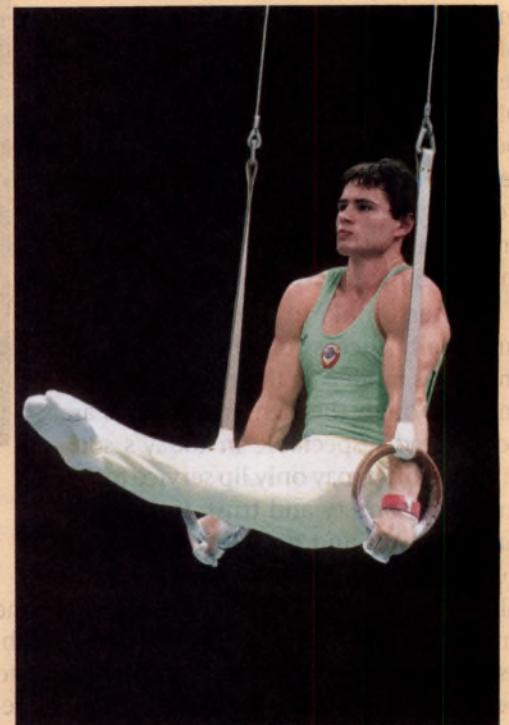
Learning What Is Acceptable to God

¹² Since we should rely neither on the wisdom of the world nor on ourselves when it comes to right and wrong, what should we do? Note this clear and unambiguous counsel from the apostle Paul: "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." (Romans 12:2) Why do we need to prove to ourselves the will of God? In the Bible, Jehovah gives a straightforward but powerful reason, saying: "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:9) Thus, rather than relying on so-called common sense or good feelings, we are admonished: "Keep on making sure of what is acceptable to the Lord."—Ephesians 5:10.

¹³ Jesus Christ emphasized this need when he said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) The expression "taking in knowledge" has a far deeper meaning than simply "knowing." According to *Vine's Expository Dictionary*, it "indicates a relation between the person knowing and the object known; in this respect, what is known is of value or importance to the one who knows, and hence the establishment of the relationship." To have a relationship with someone means more than just knowing who that person is or what his name is. It also involves knowing the likes and dislikes of that person, knowing his values, his standards—and honoring them.—1 John 2:3; 4:8.

12. Why do we need to prove to ourselves the "will of God"?

13. How do Jesus' words recorded at John 17:3 emphasize the need to know what is acceptable to God?



Like a gymnast, we must have full control of all our senses and body members

Training Our Perceptive Powers

¹⁴ How, then, can we acquire the ability to distinguish between right and wrong? Paul's words to the first-century Hebrew Christians provide the answer. He wrote: "Everyone that partakes of milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is a babe. But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." Here Paul contrasted "milk," which he described in the preceding verse as "the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God," with "solid food," which belongs to "mature people," who "have their

14. What did Paul say is the chief distinction between spiritual babes and mature people?

perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Hebrews 5:12-14.

¹⁵ This means that, first of all, we must work hard to gain an accurate understanding of God's standards as contained in his Word, the Bible. We are not looking for a list of dos and don'ts to tell us what we may or may not do. The Bible is not such a book. Rather, Paul explained: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16, 17) To benefit from that teaching, reproofing, and disciplining, we must put our mind and thinking ability to use. This takes effort, but the result—being "fully competent, completely equipped for every good work"—is well worth it.—Proverbs 2:3-6.

¹⁶ Then, as Paul indicated, mature people "have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." Here we come to the crux of the matter. The expression "have their perceptive powers trained" literally means "the sense organs having been trained (like gymnast)." (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) A seasoned gymnast on a chosen apparatus, such as rings or a balance beam, can perform split-second maneuvers that seem to defy gravity or other natural laws. He has full control of his body members at all times, and he senses almost instinctively what moves he must make so that he can complete his routine successfully. All of this is the result of rigorous training and incessant practice.

¹⁷ We too must be trained like a gymnast, spiritually speaking, if we want to be sure that

15. Why is hard work needed to gain an accurate knowledge of God?

16. What does it mean to have one's perceptive powers trained?

17. In what sense should we be like gymnasts?

the decisions and choices we make are always sound. We must at all times have full control of our senses and body members. (Matthew 5: 29, 30; Colossians 3:5-10) For example, do you discipline your eyes not to look at immoral material or your ears not to listen to degrading music or speech? It is true that such unwholesome material is all around us. However, it is still up to us whether we let it take root in our heart and mind. We can imitate the psalmist who said: "I shall not set in front of my eyes any good-for-nothing thing. The doing of those who fall away I have hated; it does not cling to me. . . . As for anyone speaking falsehoods, he will not be firmly established in front of my eyes."—Psalm 101:3, 7.

Train Your Perceptive Powers Through Use

¹⁸ Bear in mind that it is "through use" that we can have our perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong. In other words, every time we are faced with a decision, we should learn to use our mental powers to discern what Bible principles are involved and how they can be applied. Develop the habit of doing research in Bible

18. What is suggested by the expression "through use" in Paul's explanation about training one's perceptive powers?

Can You Explain?

- What ability is needed to make sound decisions?
- Why is it unwise to look to prominent people or to rely on our own feelings when deciding right and wrong?
- Why should we be sure of what is acceptable to God when making decisions, and how can we do so?
- What does it mean 'to have our perceptive powers trained'?

publications provided through “the faithful and discreet slave.” (Matthew 24:45) We can, of course, seek the help of mature Christians. Nonetheless, the personal effort we put forth to study God’s Word, coupled with prayer to Jehovah for his guidance and spirit, will pay rich dividends in the long run.—Ephesians 3:14-19.

¹⁹ As we progressively train our perceptive powers, the objective is that “we should no

19. What blessings can be ours if we progressively train our perceptive powers?

MAKE YOUR ADVANCEMENT MANIFEST

“Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons.”—1 TIMOTHY 4:15.

PICTURE in your mind your favorite fruit—a peach, a pear, a mango, or something else. Can you tell when it is ripe and ready to eat? Most certainly. Its aroma, color, and feel all tell you that a mouth-watering experience awaits you. The moment you get a piece of it into your mouth, you may let out a sigh. What succulence! What sweetness! It gives you a great deal of enjoyment and pleasure.

² This simple but delightful experience has its parallels in other areas of life. For one thing, as is true with ripeness in fruit, spiritual maturity in a person is also manifest in various ways. We recognize maturity in a person when we see discernment, insight, wisdom,

1. How can you tell when a fruit is ripe and ready to eat?
2. How is maturity made manifest, and what effect does it have on personal relationships?

longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error.” (Ephesians 4:14) Rather, based on our knowledge and understanding of what is acceptable to God, we can make wise decisions, big and small, that are beneficial to us, upbuilding to our fellow worshipers, and above all pleasing to our heavenly Father. (Proverbs 27:11) What a blessing and protection that is in these critical times!

and so on. (Job 32:7-9) It is certainly a delight to associate and work with people who display such qualities in their attitudes and actions.—Proverbs 13:20.

³ On the other hand, a person may be grown physically, but the way he talks and acts may reveal that he is immature emotionally and spiritually. For example, speaking of the wayward generation of his day, Jesus Christ said: “John came neither eating nor drinking, yet people say, ‘He has a demon’; the Son of man did come eating and drinking, still people say, ‘Look! A man gluttonous and given to drinking wine.’” Even though those people were mature physically, Jesus said that they acted like “young children”—anything but mature. Thus, he added: “All

3. What did Jesus’ description of the people of his day reveal about maturity?

the same, wisdom is proved righteous by its works.”—Matthew 11:16-19.

⁴ From Jesus’ words, we can see that whether a person is in possession of true wisdom—a distinctive sign of maturity—is indicated by the works he performs and the results produced. Along this line, note the apostle Paul’s counsel to Timothy. After enumerating the things that Timothy should pursue, Paul said: “Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons.” (1 Timothy 4:15) Yes, a Christian’s advancement toward maturity is “manifest,” or clearly discernible. Christian maturity, like a shining light, is not an internal or hidden quality. (Matthew 5:14-16) We will, therefore, consider two principal ways in which advancement and maturity may be made manifest: (1) growing in knowledge, understanding, and wisdom; (2) manifesting the fruitage of the spirit.

Oneness in Faith and Knowledge

⁵ Most dictionaries describe maturity as the state of full development, of being full-grown, and as having attained a final state or desired standard. A piece of fruit, as mentioned earlier, is mature, or ripe, when it has completed its natural growth cycle and its appearance, color, aroma, and taste have reached what is considered desirable. Maturity, therefore, is synonymous with excellence,

4. In what ways are advancement and maturity made manifest?
5. How can maturity be defined?



*Ripeness, or maturity, is
clearly discernible*

completeness, even perfection.—Isaiah 18:5; Matthew 5:45-48; James 1:4.

⁶ Jehovah God is keenly interested in having all his worshipers advance to spiritual maturity. To that end, he has made wonderful provisions within the Christian congregation. To the Christians in Ephesus, the apostle Paul wrote: “He gave some as apostles, some as prophets, some as evangelizers, some as shepherds and teachers, with a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work, for the building up of the body of the Christ, until we all attain to the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God, to a full-grown man, to the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ; in order that we should no longer be babes, tossed about as by waves and carried hither and thither by every wind of teaching by means of the trickery of men, by means of cunning in contriving error.”—Ephesians 4:11-14.

⁷ In these verses, Paul explained that among the reasons why God made such ample spiritual provisions in the congregation are that all should ‘attain oneness in the faith and in accurate knowledge,’ become “a full-grown man,” and have the ‘measure of stature of Christ.’ Only then will we be safe from being tossed about like spiritual babes by false ideas and teachings. Thus we see the close relationship between advancing

6, 7. (a) What shows that Jehovah is keenly interested in having all his worshipers advance to spiritual maturity? (b) To what is spiritual maturity closely related?

to Christian maturity and gaining "oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge of the Son of God." There are a number of points in Paul's counsel we do well to take to heart.

⁸ First, since "oneness" is to be observed, a mature Christian must be in unity and full harmony with fellow believers as far as faith and knowledge are concerned. He does not advocate or insist on personal opinions or harbor private ideas when it comes to Bible understanding. Rather, he has complete confidence in the truth as it is revealed by Jehovah God through his Son, Jesus Christ, and "the faithful and discreet slave." By regularly taking in the spiritual food provided "at the proper time"—through Christian publications, meetings, assemblies, and conventions—we can be sure that we maintain "oneness" with fellow Christians in faith and knowledge.—Matthew 24:45.

⁹ Second, the expression "the faith" refers, not to the conviction that each individual Christian professes, but to the totality of our belief, "the breadth and length and height and depth" of it. (Ephesians 3:18; 4:5; Colossians 1:23; 2:7) In fact, how can a Christian be in oneness with fellow believers if he only believes or accepts a certain part of "the faith"? This means that we must not be content with knowing just the basic teachings of the Bible or having just hazy or partial knowledge of the truth. Rather, we should be interested in taking advantage of all of Jehovah's provisions through his organization to dig deeply into his Word. We must endeavor to gain as accurate and as full an understanding of God's will and purpose as possible. This includes taking the time to read and study the Bible and Bible publications, to

8. What does attaining "oneness" in the faith and accurate knowledge require?
9. Explain the meaning of the expression "the faith" as used by Paul in his letter to the Ephesians.

pray to God for his help and guidance, to attend Christian meetings regularly, and to have a full share in the Kingdom-preaching and disciple-making work.—Proverbs 2:1-5.

¹⁰ Third, Paul prefaced the description of the three-fold goal with the words "until we all attain." Regarding the expression "we all," one Bible handbook gives the meaning as "not all, one by one, separately, but all together." In other words, each one of us should put forth a reasonable effort to pursue the goal of Christian maturity along with the entire brotherhood. *The Interpreter's Bible* observes: "The fullness of spiritual achievement is not to be attained by the individual in isolation, just as one part of the body cannot reach its mature development except as the whole body continues its healthy growth." Paul reminded the Ephesian Christians that it was "with all the holy ones" that they should strive to grasp mentally the full scope of the faith.—Ephesians 3:18a.

¹¹ It is clear from Paul's words that making spiritual advancement does not mean merely filling our mind with knowledge and great learning. The mature Christian is not one who dazzles others with his brilliance. Rather, the Bible says: "The path of the righteous ones is like the bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established." (Proverbs 4:18) Yes, it is "the path," not the individual, that is "getting lighter and lighter." If we put forth a continuous effort to keep up with the ever brightening understanding of God's Word that Jehovah is granting his people, we will be making spiritual advancement. In this case, to keep up is to move ahead, and that is something all of us can do.—Psalm 97:11; 119:105.

10. What is the significance of the words "until we all attain," as used at Ephesians 4:13?
11. (a) What does making spiritual advancement not imply? (b) What do we need to do to make advancement?



We make spiritual advancement by keeping up with revealed truth

Manifest "the Fruitage of the Spirit"

¹² While attaining "the oneness in the faith and in the accurate knowledge" is important, it is equally important for us to manifest the fruitage of God's spirit in every aspect of our life. Why? This is because maturity, as we have seen, is not internal or hidden, but it is marked by clearly discernible characteristics that can benefit and build up others. Of course, our quest for spiritual advancement is not merely an effort to look cultivated or to put on airs. Rather, as we grow spiritually, following the leading of God's spirit, there will be a wonderful transformation in our attitudes and actions. "Keep walking by spirit and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all," said the apostle Paul.—Galatians 5:16.

12. Why is manifesting the fruitage of the spirit important in our quest for spiritual advancement?

¹³ Paul went on to list "the works of the flesh," which are numerous and "manifest." Before a person comes to appreciate God's requirements, his life is patterned after the ways of the world and may be filled with some of the things Paul mentioned: "fornication, uncleanness, loose conduct, idolatry, practice of spiritism, enmities, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, contentions, divisions, sects, envies, drunken bouts, revelries, and things like these." (Galatians 5:19-21) But as the person makes spiritual progress, he gradually gains the mastery over these undesirable "works of the flesh" and makes room for "the fruitage of the spirit."

This outwardly visible change is a clear indication that the person is advancing toward Christian maturity.—Galatians 5:22.

¹⁴ We should note the two expressions "the works of the flesh" and "the fruitage of the spirit." "Works" are the results of what one does, the product of one's actions. In other words, the items that Paul listed as the works of the flesh are the results either of one's conscious effort or of the influence of the fallen human flesh. (Romans 1:24, 28; 7:21-25) On the other hand, the expression "the fruitage of the spirit" implies that the qualities listed are, not the results of efforts in so-called character development or personality enhancement, but the results of the operation of God's spirit on a person. Just as a tree will bear fruit when it is properly tended, so a person will manifest the fruitage of the

13. What change is a clear indication of advancement?

14. Explain the two expressions "the works of the flesh" and "the fruitage of the spirit."

spirit when holy spirit flows freely in his life.
—Psalm 1:1-3.

¹⁵ Another point to consider is Paul's use of the word "fruitage" to encompass all the desirable qualities that he mentioned.* The spirit does not produce a variety of fruits for us to pick our favorite. All the qualities listed by Paul—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control—are equally important, and together they make possible the new Christian personality. (Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10) Therefore, while we may find that certain ones of these qualities are more evident in our life on account of our own personality and inclinations, it is important that we give attention to all the aspects mentioned by Paul. By so doing, we can more fully reflect a Christlike personality in our life.—1 Peter 2:12, 21.

¹⁶ The important lesson we can learn from Paul's discussion is that in the pursuit of Christian maturity, our objective is neither to acquire great knowledge and learning nor to cultivate refined personality traits. It is to gain a free flow of God's spirit in our life. To the extent that our thinking and actions are responsive to the leading of God's spirit, to that extent we become spiritually mature. How can we achieve this objective? We must open our heart and mind to the influence of God's spirit. This involves our faithfully attending and participating in Christian meetings. We should also regularly study and meditate on God's Word, allowing its principles to guide our dealings with others and

* The word "fruitage" is simply "fruit" in the original language.—Galatians 5:22, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

15. Why is it important to give attention to all aspects of "the fruitage of the spirit"?
16. What is our objective in our pursuit of Christian maturity, and how can it be achieved?

the choices and decisions we make. Certainly, then, our advancement will be clearly manifest.

Make Advancement for God's Glory

¹⁷ Ultimately, making our advancement manifest brings glory and praise, not to us, but to our heavenly Father, Jehovah, who makes it possible for us to gain spiritual maturity. On the night before Jesus was killed, he told the disciples: "My Father is glorified in this, that you keep bearing much fruit and prove yourselves my disciples." (John 15:8) Both by the fruitage of the spirit and by the Kingdom fruitage of their ministry, the disciples brought glory to Jehovah.—Acts 11:4, 18; 13:48.

¹⁸ Today, Jehovah's blessing is upon his people as they engage in a global spiritual harvest. For a number of years now, about 300,000 new ones every year have dedicated themselves to Jehovah and symbolized their dedication by water baptism. This makes us happy and undoubtedly also makes Jehovah's heart rejoice. (Proverbs 27:11) However, for this to be a continuous source of joy and

17. How is making advancement related to glorifying our heavenly Father?
18. (a) What joyful harvest is taking place today? (b) What challenge does this harvest present?

Do You Recall?

- In what ways can spiritual maturity be made manifest?
- What kind of knowledge and understanding reflect maturity?
- How does manifesting "the fruitage of the spirit" indicate spiritual advancement?
- What challenge should we accept as we press on to maturity?

praise to Jehovah, all such new ones need to "go on walking in union with [Christ], rooted and being built up in him and being stabilized in the faith." (Colossians 2:6, 7) This presents a two-fold challenge to God's people. On the one hand, if you are newly baptized, will you accept the challenge to apply yourself so that "your advancement may be manifest to all persons"? On the other hand, if you have been in the truth for some time, will you accept the challenge to shoulder the responsibility of caring for the spiritual welfare of new ones? In either case, the need for pressing on to maturity is clear.—Philippians 3:16; Hebrews 6:1.

¹⁹ Wonderful blessings await all who work hard to make their advancement manifest. Recall Paul's encouraging words after he urged Timothy to make advancement: "Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching. Stay by these things, for by doing this you will save both yourself and those who listen to you." (1 Timothy 4:16) By diligently making your advancement manifest, you too can share in the privilege of glorifying God's name and enjoying his blessings.

19. What privilege and blessings can be yours if you make your advancement manifest?

*Prayer helps us to manifest
"the fruitage of the spirit"*



God Has Wiped Out Her Tears

PEOPLE who bring their lives into harmony with Jehovah's laws and principles are greatly blessed. Although making the necessary changes is not always easy, help and encouragement are readily available. (Psalm 84:11) The following experience from Southeast Asia illustrates this.

While on vacation a Witness from France spoke to a shop owner named Kim* about Jehovah's purpose for the earth. She also left with Kim a copy of the book *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*. Browsing through the book, Kim came across the words, "he will wipe out every tear from their eyes." (Revelation 21:4) "This verse really moved me," recalls Kim. "Seeing me smile and chat all day long in the shop, who could know that once I got home in the evening, I cried myself to sleep?" Revealing the source of her sorrow, she says: "I had been living with a man for 18 years and was very unhappy because he refused to marry me. I wanted to end this way of life, but having lived with him for so long, I did not have the courage."

A short time later, Kim accepted a Bible study with one of Jehovah's Witnesses named Linh. "I was eager to put into practice the Bible's teaching," says Kim. "For example, I stopped worshipping my ancestors, even though this led to opposition from my family. Moreover, I attempted to legalize our union, but my companion refused

* Names have been changed.

to do so. During this difficult time, the Witness from France continued to send me Bible publications, and Linh was very encouraging to me. The patience and loving support of these sisters helped me to persevere until I could see my companion for what he really was. I discovered that he already had 5 'wives' and 25 children! This gave me the courage to leave him.

"Leaving a large comfortable house for a small apartment was not easy. What is more, my former companion pressured me to come to live with him again, even threatening to disfigure me with acid if I refused. With Jehovah's help, I was able to do what was right." Kim continued to make progress and was finally baptized in April 1998. Additionally, two of her sisters and her teenage son began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses.

"I used to think that my life would always be hopeless," says Kim. "Today, however, I am happy, and I no longer cry at night. Jehovah has already wiped the tears from my eyes."

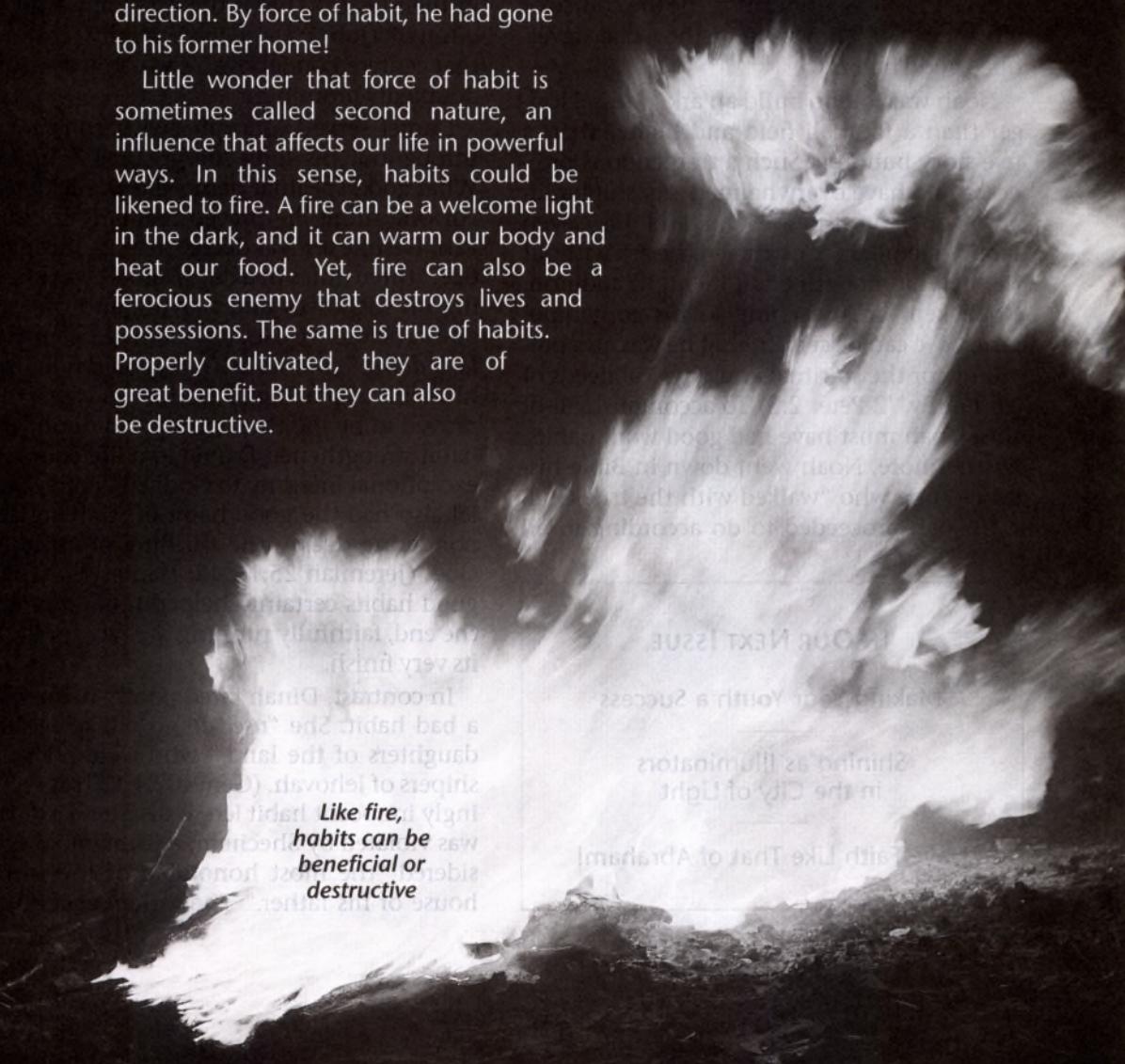


Let ***Force of Habit*** Work for Your Good

THE man had lived in a suburb of Athens for 12 years. Every day, he took the same route home from work. Then he moved to another suburb across town. One day after work, he set out for home. Only when he found himself in his old neighborhood did he realize that he had gone in the wrong direction. By force of habit, he had gone to his former home!

Little wonder that force of habit is sometimes called second nature, an influence that affects our life in powerful ways. In this sense, habits could be likened to fire. A fire can be a welcome light in the dark, and it can warm our body and heat our food. Yet, fire can also be a ferocious enemy that destroys lives and possessions. The same is true of habits. Properly cultivated, they are of great benefit. But they can also be destructive.

*Like fire,
habits can be
beneficial or
destructive*



In the case of the man mentioned at the outset, force of habit cost him only some time stuck in city traffic. When it comes to more important things, habits can reward us with success or lead us to calamity. Consider a few real-life examples found in the Bible that show how habits can help or hinder our service to God and our relationship with him.

Bible Examples of Good and Bad Habits

Noah, Job, and Daniel were all blessed with a close relationship with God. The Bible extols them "because of their righteousness." (Ezekiel 14:14) Significantly, the life course of all three men showed that they had developed good habits.

Noah was told to build an ark, a vessel longer than a football field and higher than a five-story building. Such a tremendous project would have overwhelmed any shipbuilder of ancient times. Noah and his seven family members constructed the ark without the help of modern equipment. In addition, Noah kept on preaching to his contemporaries. We can be certain that he was also providing for the spiritual and physical needs of his family. (2 Peter 2:5) To accomplish all of this, Noah must have had good work habits. Furthermore, Noah went down in Bible history as one who "walked with the true God. . . . Noah proceeded to do according to all

that Jehovah had commanded him." (Genesis 6:9, 22; 7:5) Since he was pronounced "faultless" in the Bible, he must have continued to walk with God after the Deluge and even after the rebellion against Jehovah reared its head at Babel. Indeed, Noah kept on walking with God right down till his death at 950 years of age.—Genesis 9:29.

Job's good habits helped make him a man "blameless and upright." (Job 1:1, 8; 2:3) He customarily, or habitually, acted as the family priest in offering sacrifices in behalf of his children after each one of their banquets, in case they had "'sinned and [had] cursed God in their heart.' That is the way Job would do *always*." (Job 1:5) In Job's family, customs that centered on Jehovah's worship were undoubtedly prominent.

Daniel served Jehovah "with constancy" throughout his long life. (Daniel 6:16, 20) What good spiritual habits did Daniel have? For one thing, he prayed regularly to Jehovah. Despite a royal decree against this practice, "three times in a day [Daniel] was kneeling on his knees and praying and offering praise before his God, as he had been *regularly doing*." (Daniel 6:10) He could not forgo his habit of praying to God, even when that proved to be life threatening. No doubt this habit strengthened Daniel in a life course of exceptional integrity to God. Evidently, Daniel also had the good habit of studying and pondering deeply the thrilling promises of God. (Jeremiah 25:11, 12; Daniel 9:2) These good habits certainly helped him endure to the end, faithfully running the race for life to its very finish.

In contrast, Dinah fared poorly because of a bad habit. She "*used to go out to see the daughters of the land*," who were not worshipers of Jehovah. (Genesis 34:1) This seemingly innocent habit led to disaster. First, she was violated by Shechem, a young man considered "the most honorable of the whole house of his father." Then, the vengeful re-

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Making Your Youth a Success

Shining as Illuminators
in the City of Light

Have Faith Like That of Abraham!

It was Jesus' custom to be in the synagogue on the Sabbath for the reading of God's Word

action of two of her brothers led them to slaughter all the males in an entire city. What a terrible outcome!—Genesis 34:19, 25-29.

How can we be sure that our habits will benefit us and not harm us?

Putting Habits to Work

"Habits are destiny," wrote one philosopher. But they do not have to be. The Bible shows very clearly that we can *choose* to change our bad habits and cultivate good ones.

With good habits, the Christian way of life becomes more efficient and easier to keep up. Alex, a Christian from Greece, says: "The habit of sticking to a schedule for accomplishing various tasks saves me valuable time." Theophilus, a Christian elder, points to planning as a habit that helps him to be effective. He says: "I am fully convinced that I would not be able to handle my Christian duties successfully without the habit of good planning."

As Christians, we are urged to "go on walking orderly in this same *routine*." (Philippians 3:16) A routine involves a "habitual . . . performance of an established procedure." Such good habits benefit us because we do not have to spend time in deliberating each step—we have already established a good pattern that we follow by force of habit. Strong habits become almost automatic. Just as safe driving habits may guide a driver to make instant lifesaving decisions when facing dangers on the road, good habits can help us to make appropriate decisions swiftly as we walk in our Christian course.

As English writer Jeremy Taylor put it: "Habits are the daughters of action." If our habits are good, we can perform good things with little difficulty. For example, if as Christian ministers we have the habit of regularly



sharing in the preaching work, it is easier and more enjoyable to go out in the field service. Regarding the apostles, we read that "*every day* in the temple and from house to house they continued without letup teaching and declaring the good news about the Christ, Jesus." (Acts 5:42; 17:2) On the other hand, if we share in the ministry only occasionally, we may feel anxious, needing more time to get into the rhythm before we feel confident in this vital Christian activity.

The same is true of other aspects of our Christian routine. Good habits can help us to be regular in 'reading God's Word day and night.' (Joshua 1:8; Psalm 1:2) One Christian has the habit of reading the Bible for 20 to 30 minutes before retiring for the night. Even when he is very tired, he finds that if he goes to bed without doing the reading, he cannot sleep well. He has to get up and care for that spiritual need. This good habit has also helped him to read the whole Bible once a year for several years.

Our Exemplar, Jesus Christ, had the habit of attending meetings where the Bible was discussed. "According to his custom on the sabbath day, he entered into the synagogue, and he stood up to read." (Luke 4:16) For Joe, an elder with a large family who works long hours, habit has helped to create in him a need and a desire to attend meetings regularly. He says: "This habit keeps me going,

providing much-needed spiritual strength so that I can face challenges and problems successfully."—Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Such habits are indispensable in the Christian race for life. A report from a country where Jehovah's people have been persecuted noted: "Those with good spiritual habits and a deep appreciation of the truth have no problem in holding firm when tests arrive, but those who in 'favorable season' miss meetings, are irregular in field service and compromise on small issues often fall when under a 'fiery' test."—2 Timothy 4:2.

Avoid Bad Habits, Utilize Good Ones

It has been said that 'a man should cultivate only those habits that he is willing to have master him.' Bad habits are indeed an oppressive master. Still, they can be broken.

Stella was for a time a compulsive TV watcher. She admits: "Behind every bad habit I have succumbed to, there is usually an 'innocent' reason." This was the case with her habit of excessive TV watching. She told herself that she would watch just for "a little relaxation" or for "a change of pace." But her habit went out of control, keeping her in front of the television for long hours. "At the

Good spiritual habits strengthen our relationship with God

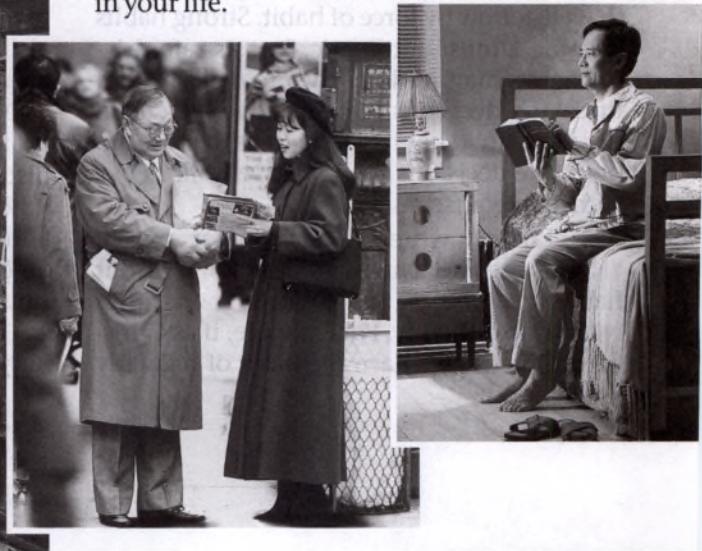


least, this bad habit delayed my spiritual progress," she says. With determined effort, she finally reduced the time she spent watching TV and became more selective. "I always try to remember why I wanted to break this habit," Stella says, "and I rely on Jehovah to keep my resolution."

A Christian named Charalambos points to a bad habit that hindered him from making spiritual advancement—procrastination. "When I realized that the habit of putting things off was harmful, I began working to turn my life around. When setting goals, I planned specifically when and how to start working toward them. Regularity in the application of my decisions and plans was the antidote, and it remains a good habit till now." Indeed, good habits are the best replacement for bad ones.

Our associates can also cause us to develop habits, good or bad. Good habits rub off, just as bad ones do. Even as "bad associations spoil useful habits," good associates may provide us with examples of wholesome habits to imitate. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Most important, habits can strengthen or weaken our relationship with God. Stella says: "If our habits are good, they make our struggle to serve Jehovah easier. If they are harmful, they hinder our efforts."

Establish good habits, and let them guide you. They will be a powerful, beneficial force in your life.





GRATEFUL FOR MY PRECIOUS MEMORIES!

AS TOLD BY
DRUSILLA CAINE

The year was 1933, and I had just married Zanoah Caine, who like me, was a colporteur—a full-time evangelizer. Bubbling with excitement, I planned to join my husband in his assignment, but to do so, I needed a bicycle—a luxury I had never been able to afford, as times were hard during the depression. What could I do?

HEARING of my predicament, my brothers-in-law searched local rubbish dumps, trying to find old parts to make a bicycle for me. They did, and it worked! As soon as I learned to ride, Zanoah and I were on our way, happily cycling through the English counties of Worcester and Hereford, witnessing to all whom we met.

Little did I realize that this simple step of faith would lead to a life filled with rich memories. The spiritual foundation for my life, however, had been laid by my dear parents.

Difficult Years of the Great War

I was born in December 1909. Shortly afterward my mother obtained a copy of *The Divine Plan of the Ages*, and in 1914 my parents took me to see the "Photo-Drama of Creation," in Oldham, Lancashire. (Both were produced by those now known as Jehovah's Witnesses.) Young as I was, I clearly remember skipping for joy on the way home at what I had seen! Frank Heeley then started a Bible study group in Rochdale, where we lived. Attending this helped us as a family to build up an understanding of the Scriptures.

The serenity of our lives was shattered that same year by the outbreak of the Great War—World War I, as we call it now. My father was drafted for the army but took a neutral stand. He was described in court as “a very decent man,” and several letters were submitted from “gentlemen stating that they believed he was sincere in his objection to take up arms,” reported the local newspaper.

Instead of being granted full exemption, however, my father was registered as exempt “from Combatant Service only.” He immediately became an object of derision, as did my mother and I. Eventually, his classification was reviewed, and he was assigned to agricultural work, but some farmers exploited the situation and paid him little or nothing. To support the family, my mother worked—for a pittance—doing heavy work in a privately owned laundry. Yet, I see now how strengthening it was for me to spend the formative years of my life coping with such difficult circumstances; it helped me appreciate the more important spiritual things.

A Small Beginning

Daniel Hughes, a keen Bible student, soon appeared on the scene. He was a collier (coal miner) in Ruabon, a village some 12 miles from Oswestry, where we had moved to. Uncle Dan, as I called him, kept in touch with our family, and whenever he came to see us, his conversation was always on Scriptural matters. He never engaged in small talk. A Bible study class was started in Oswestry in 1920, and Uncle Dan gave me a copy of *The Harp of God* in 1921. I treasured this because it made the Bible teachings so much easier for me to grasp.

Then there was Pryce Hughes,* who later became the presiding minister of the Lon-

* “In Step With the Faithful Organization,” the life story of Pryce Hughes, appeared in *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1963.

don branch office of Jehovah’s Witnesses. He lived with his family nearby at Bronygarth, on the Welsh border, and his sister, Cissie, became a close friend of my mother’s.

I remember the excitement in 1922 when the call came to ‘advertise the King and his kingdom.’ During the years that followed, although I was still in school, I eagerly joined in distributing the special tracts, particularly *Ecclesiastics Indicted* in 1924. Looking back on that decade, what a privilege it was to associate with so many faithful brothers and sisters—among them Maud Clark* and her partner Mary Grant,* Edgar Clay,* Robert Hadlington, Katy Roberts, Edwin Skinner,* along with Percy Chapman and Jack Nathan,* who both went to Canada to assist with the work there.

The Bible lecture “Millions Now Living Will Never Die” proved to be a timely witness in our extensive territory. On May 14, 1922, Stanley Rogers, a relative of Pryce Hughes, came from Liverpool to deliver this talk in Chirk, a village just north of our town, and later that evening at The Picture Playhouse in Oswestry. I still have one of the handbills specially printed for that event. During all this time, our little group continued to be strengthened by visits from three traveling overseers—pilgrims as we used to call them—Herbert Senior, Albert Lloyd, and John Blaney.

A Time of Decision

In 1929, I made my decision to be baptized. I was 19 years old, and at the same time, I faced my first real test. I met a young man whose father was a politician. We were mutually attracted, and he proposed marriage. The year before, the book *Government* had been released, so I gave him a copy. But it soon became apparent that he had no interest in a heavenly government, the theme

* Life stories of these faithful servants of Jehovah have appeared in earlier issues of *The Watchtower*.



**Handbill advertising
the Bible lecture
"Millions Now
Living Will
Never Die,"
which I heard on
May 14, 1922**

of this book. I knew from my studies that the Israelites of old were commanded not to form any marriage alliances with unbelievers and that this principle applied to Christians. Therefore, although it was difficult to do so, I declined his proposal.—Deuteronomy 7:3; 2 Corinthians 6:14.

I drew strength from the apostle Paul's words: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out." (Galatians 6:9) Dear Uncle Dan also helped when he wrote: "In trials small and trials great, take Romans 8, verse 28," which says: "Now we know that God makes all his works cooperate together for the good of those who love God, those who are the ones called according to his purpose." It was not easy, but I knew that I had made the right decision. That year I enrolled as a colporteur.

Meeting the Challenge

In 1931 we received our new name, Jehovah's Witnesses, and in that year, we had a vigorous campaign using the booklet *The*

Kingdom, the Hope of the World. A copy was given to every politician, clergyman, and businessman. My territory extended from Oswestry to Wrexham, some 15 miles to the north. It was a challenge to cover it all.

At a convention in Birmingham the following year, a call went out for 24 volunteers. Eagerly, 24 of us turned in our names for a new feature of service, not knowing what it was to be. Imagine our surprise when we were assigned in pairs to offer the same booklet, *The Kingdom, the Hope of the World*, while wearing heavy sandwich boards advertising the Kingdom.

Working the precincts of the cathedral, I felt very self-conscious, but consoled myself that nobody in that city knew me. Yet, the first person to approach me was an old school friend, who just stared and said: "What on earth are you doing dressed like that?" That experience cured me of any fear of man I might have had!

Moving Further Afield

In 1933, I married Zanoah, a widower 25 years my senior. His first wife had been a zealous Bible Student, and Zanoah had faithfully remained in his assignment after her death. We soon moved from England to our new territory in North Wales, about 90 miles away. Cartons, suitcases, and other precious belongings were perched precariously on our bicycle handlebars, wedged between the crossbars, and packed into panniers, but we made it! In that assignment our cycles were indispensable—they took us everywhere, even near the top of Cader Idris, a Welsh mountain almost 3,000 feet high. It was so rewarding to find people who longed to hear "this good news of the kingdom."—Matthew 24:14.

We had not been there long when people told us that a certain Tom Pryce had been preaching to them, just as we were doing.



With Zanoah shortly after our marriage in 1933

Standing by "Elizabeth," our caravan built by my husband



We eventually located Tom living on Long Mountain, near Welshpool—and what a surprise we had! During my early witnessing days, I had placed the Bible study aid *Reconciliation* with him. He studied it on his own, wrote to London for more literature, and had been zealously sharing his newfound faith ever since. We enjoyed many hours of happy fellowship, the three of us often studying together to encourage one another.

A Disaster Leads to Blessings

In 1934 all colporteurs close to North Wales were invited to go to the town of Wrexham to help with the distribution of the booklet *Righteous Ruler*. The day before we started this special campaign, there had been a national disaster. An explosion at the Gresford colliery (coal mine), two miles north of Wrexham, had killed 266 miners. Over 200 children were left fatherless, and 160 women were widowed.

We were to list the bereaved, visit them personally, and leave a booklet. One of the names given to me was that of a Mrs. Chadwick who had lost a 19-year-old son. When I called, an older son, Jack, was visiting his mother to comfort her. This young man recognized me but did not say so. Subsequently, he read the booklet and then searched

for *The Final War*, another booklet I had left with him some years earlier.

Jack and his wife, May, found out where I was staying and came for more literature. In 1936 they agreed to hold meetings in their home at Wrexham. Following a visit from Albert Lloyd six months later, a congregation was established, with Jack Chadwick as the presiding overseer. There are now three congregations in Wrexham.

Life in a Gypsy Caravan

Up to this time, we used whatever accommodations we could find as we moved from place to place, but Zanoah decided that the time had come for us to have a home of our own, one that could be towed from site to site. My husband was a skilled carpenter of Gypsy extraction, and he built a Gypsy caravan for us. We called it Elizabeth, a Bible name meaning "God of Plenty."

I particularly remember one place we stayed—it was in an orchard by a stream. To me it was just like Paradise! Nothing marred the happiness of the years we spent together in that caravan, even though it had evident limitations. In the cold weather, the bedclothes often froze to the caravan walls, and condensation was a constant problem. Water also had to be carried, sometimes quite a distance, but we overcame these difficulties together.

One winter I was ill, and we had little food and no money. Zanoah sat on the bed, took my hand in his, and read Psalm 37:25 to me:

"A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." Gazing at me he said: "If something doesn't happen soon, we will be begging, and I can't see God letting that take place!" He then went out to witness to our neighbors.

When Zanoah returned at midday to make me something to drink, an envelope awaited him. It contained £50 from his father. Some years earlier Zanoah had been falsely accused of embezzlement, but his innocence had just been established. This gift was to make amends. How timely!

A Salutary Lesson

Sometimes we learn lessons after a number of years have passed. To illustrate: Before quitting school in 1927, I witnessed to all my classmates and teachers—except one, Lavinia Fairclough. Since no one was interested in what I planned to do with my life, and as I did not get on very well with Miss Fairclough anyway, I decided not to tell her. Imagine my surprise—and delight—some 20 years later when my mother told me that this teacher had returned to visit all her old friends and pupils to tell them that she was now one of Jehovah's Witnesses!

When we met, I explained why I had not told her earlier of my faith and planned career. She listened quietly and then said: "I had always been looking for the truth. It had been the quest of my life!" This experience was a salutary lesson for me—never to hold back from witnessing to all whom I meet and never to prejudge anyone.

Another War—And Beyond

War clouds began to gather again as the 1930's drew to a close. Dennis, my brother ten years my junior, was exempted from military service on the condition that he remain

in his secular employment. He had never shown much interest in the truth, so my husband and I asked local pioneers Rupert Bradbury and his brother David if they would visit him. They did, and they studied the Bible with him. Dennis was baptized in 1942, later entered the pioneer service, and was appointed as a traveling overseer in 1957.

Our daughter, Elizabeth, was born in 1938, and to meet the needs of the family, Zanoah enlarged our caravan. When our second daughter, Eunice, came along in 1942, it seemed wise to look for a more permanent home. For this reason Zanoah ceased pioneering for a few years, and we moved to a small house near Wrexham. Later, we settled in Middlewich in the adjoining county of Cheshire. There my dear husband died in 1956.

Our two daughters became full-time evangelizers, and both are happily married. Eunice and her husband, an elder, still serve as special pioneers in London. Elizabeth's husband is also a congregation elder, and it is a joy for me to have them, their children, and my four great-grandchildren living near me in Preston, Lancashire.

I am grateful that I can walk from the front door of my apartment to the Kingdom Hall across the road. In recent years, I have associated with the Gujarati-speaking group, which also meets there. Learning the language has not been easy because I am slightly deaf now. It is difficult at times to pick up many of the subtleties of tone, as younger folk can. But it is an interesting challenge.

I am still able to preach from door to door and to conduct Bible studies in my home. When friends come to visit me, it is always a pleasure to recount some of my earlier experiences. I am so grateful for my precious memories of the blessings I have received while associating with Jehovah's people for close to 90 years.



OVERCOME Obstacles TO YOUR PROGRESS!

YOUR car is in gear, and the engine is running, but it refuses to move forward. A mechanical problem? No, a large rock is lodged in front of one of the wheels. Removing it is all that is necessary to get the car moving.

In a similar way, some who are studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses have obstacles that can impede their spiritual progress. For example, Jesus warned that such things as "the anxiety of this system of things and the deceptive power of riches" could "choke the word" of truth and hinder growth.—Matthew 13:22.

For others, ingrained habits or weaknesses block their progress. A Japanese man named Yutaka liked the Bible's message, yet he had a serious problem with gambling. He had often tried to conquer this bad habit but had failed. His addiction had cost him a small fortune, three homes, the respect of his family, and his own dignity. Could he remove this stumbling block and become a Christian?

Or consider a woman named Keiko. With the Bible's help, she had rid herself of such vices as idolatry, immorality, and fortune telling. However, Keiko admits: "The biggest obstacle for me was smoking. I tried to quit many times but couldn't."

Jesus promised that with faith, mountainlike obstacles would be overcome

You may likewise have what appears to be an immovable obstacle standing in the way of your progress. Whatever it is, be assured that with God's help, it can be overcome.

Recall Jesus' counsel to his disciples after they had failed to expel a demon from an epileptic man. After Jesus succeeded where they had failed, he told his disciples: "If you have faith the size of a mustard grain, you will say to this mountain, 'Transfer from here to there,' and it will transfer, and nothing will be impossible for you." (Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:17-29) Yes, a problem that may appear to be like a looming mountain to us is tiny and insignificant to our all-powerful Creator.—Genesis 18:14; Mark 10:27.

Identifying Impediments to Progress

Before you can overcome your obstacles, you must identify just what those obstacles are. How can you do so? Sometimes a member of the congregation, such as an elder or the person studying the Bible with you, will call something to your attention. Rather than resenting such loving counsel, you should humbly "listen to discipline and become wise." (Proverbs 8:33) At other times, you may become aware of your weaknesses through your study of the Bible. Yes, God's word is "alive and exerts power." (Hebrews 4:12) Reading the Bible and Bible-based publications can expose your deepest thoughts, feelings, and motives. It helps you to measure yourself according to Jehovah's lofty standards. It reveals and identifies things that might impede your spiritual progress.
—James 1:23-25.

For example, suppose a Bible student has had the habit of dwelling on immoral fantasies. He may see little harm in doing so, reasoning that he is not actually *doing* anything wrong. In the course of his study, he comes upon the words of James 1:14, 15: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by

his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death." Now he sees just how detrimental continuing in this course would be to his progress! How can he eliminate this impediment?—Mark 7:21-23.

Overcoming Obstacles

Perhaps with the aid of a mature Christian, the student might do some additional research in God's Word, using the *Watch Tower Publications Index*.^{*} The heading "Thoughts," for example, directs a reader to a number of published articles that deal with overcoming harmful fantasies. These articles highlight helpful Bible texts, such as Philippians 4:8, which says: "Whatever things are true, whatever things are of serious concern, whatever things are righteous, whatever things are chaste, whatever things are lovable, whatever things are well spoken of, whatever virtue there is and whatever praiseworthy thing there is, continue considering these things." Yes, immoral thoughts must be replaced by chaste, upbuilding thoughts!

During his research, the student will no doubt discover other Bible principles that will help him to avoid aggravating his problem. For example, Proverbs 6:27 and Matthew 5:28 warn against feeding one's mind on sexually provocative material. "Make my eyes pass on from seeing what is worthless," prayed the psalmist. (Psalm 119:37) Of course, simply reading these Bible texts is not enough. "The heart of the righteous one meditates," says the wise man. (Proverbs 15:28) By pondering not only on *what* God commands but also on *why* he so commands, the student can come to have a deeper understanding of the wisdom and reasonableness of Jehovah's ways.

* Published in a number of languages by Jehovah's Witnesses.

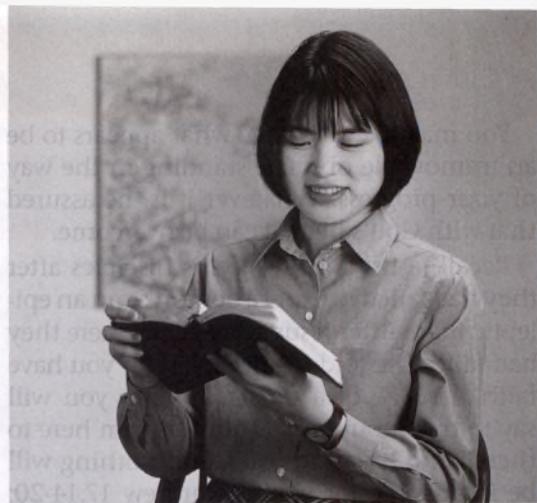
Finally, the one striving to overcome this hindrance to his progress should freely seek Jehovah's help. After all, God well knows our makeup, that we are imperfect, made from dust. (Psalm 103:14) Incessant prayers to God for help, coupled with strenuous efforts to avoid indulging in immoral fantasies, will eventually yield a very desirable result—a clean, unburdened conscience. —Hebrews 9:14.

Do Not Give Up

Whatever difficulty you are struggling with, realize that relapses may sometimes occur. When that happens, it is only natural to feel frustrated and disappointed. However, remember the words of Galatians 6:9: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out." Such devoted servants of God as David and Peter experienced some humiliating failures. But they did not quit. They humbly accepted counsel, made needed changes, and went on to prove themselves outstanding servants of God. (Proverbs 24:16) In spite of David's mistakes, Jehovah called him "a man agreeable to my heart, who will do all the things I desire." (Acts 13:22) Peter likewise lived down his mistakes and became a pillar in the Christian congregation.

Many today have enjoyed similar success in overcoming obstacles. Yutaka, mentioned earlier, accepted the offer of a Bible study. He relates: "Jehovah's support and blessing on each forward step I took helped me to overcome my gambling problem. I have much joy in experiencing the reality of Jesus' words—that with faith, even 'mountains' can be moved." In time, Yutaka became a ministerial servant in the congregation.

What about Keiko, who had an addiction to tobacco? The sister studying with her suggested that she read various *Awake!* articles



Reading the Bible strengthens our effort to overcome spiritual flaws

on the subject of tobacco addiction. Keiko even displayed the words of 2 Corinthians 7:1 in her automobile as a daily reminder to stay clean in Jehovah's eyes. Still, she could not quit. "I was so frustrated with myself," Keiko recalls. "So I started to ask myself what I really wanted—did I want to serve Jehovah or Satan?" Once she decided that it was Jehovah she wanted to serve, she prayed earnestly for help. "To my surprise," she recalls, "I was able to stop smoking without much pain. I only regret that I didn't act sooner."

You too can succeed in overcoming obstacles to your progress. The more you conform your thoughts, desires, words, and actions to Bible standards, the more you will gain a sense of self-respect and confidence. Your spiritual brothers and sisters, as well as family members, will be refreshed and encouraged when they associate with you. Most important of all, you will deepen your relationship with Jehovah God. He promised that he would 'remove any obstacle from the way of his people' when fleeing Satan's control. (Isaiah 57:14) And you can be assured that if you put forth the effort to remove and overcome obstacles to your spiritual progress, Jehovah will richly bless you.

Questions From Readers

Where was Daniel when the three Hebrews were tested before the huge image that Nebuchadnezzar had erected on the plain of Dura?

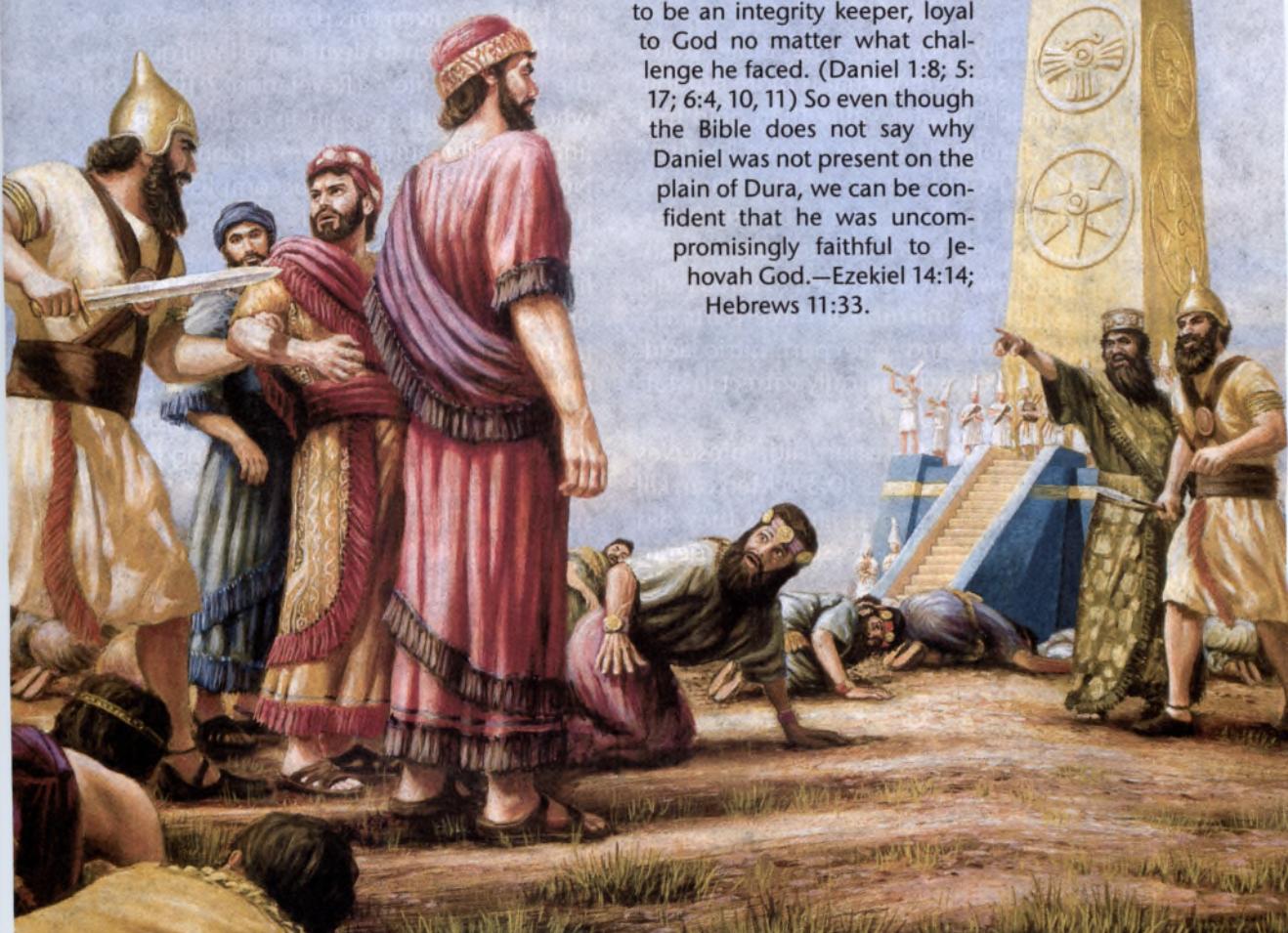
The Bible does not say, so no man today can establish Daniel's whereabouts during that test.

Some have suggested that Daniel's official rank or his standing in Nebuchadnezzar's favor was higher than that of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and that Daniel therefore was not obliged to go to the plain of Dura. Daniel 2:49 does indicate that for a time he

had a position higher than that of his three companions. But we cannot prove that this exempted him from assembling with the others before the image.

Attempting to explain Daniel's absence, others have said that he might have been away on an official assignment or that he was sick and thus unable to attend. However, the Bible does not say that. In any case, Daniel's course must not have been open to criticism, for if it had been, jealous Babylonian officials would undoubtedly have used it to bring accusations against him. (Daniel 3:8)

Both before and after this episode, Daniel proved himself to be an integrity keeper, loyal to God no matter what challenge he faced. (Daniel 1:8; 5:17; 6:4, 10, 11) So even though the Bible does not say why Daniel was not present on the plain of Dura, we can be confident that he was uncompromisingly faithful to Jehovah God.—Ezekiel 14:14; Hebrews 11:33.

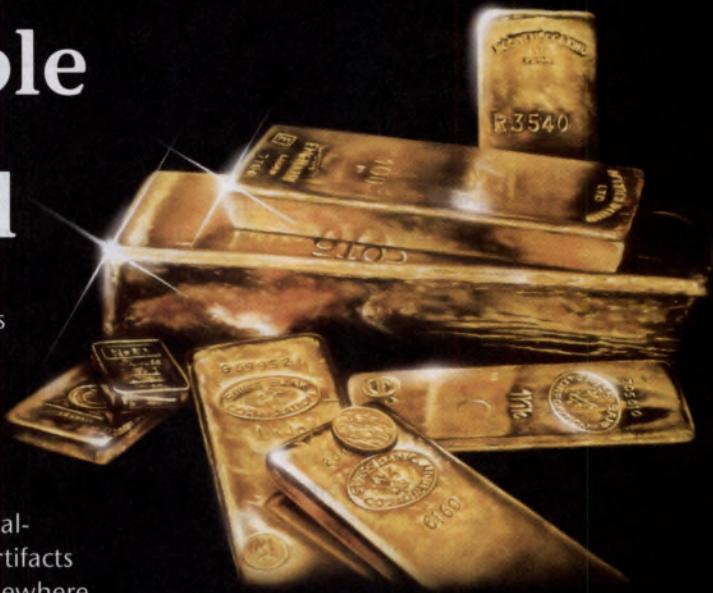


More Durable Than Pure Gold

GOLD is much sought after for its beauty and durability. Much of its desirability lies in the fact that it remains bright and untarnished seemingly indefinitely. This is because gold is resistant to attacks by water, oxygen, sulfur, and almost everything else. Many gold artifacts discovered in sunken vessels and elsewhere still retain their luster after hundreds of years.

Interestingly, however, the Bible states that there is something that is more durable and "of much greater value than gold that perishes despite its being proved by fire." (1 Peter 1:7) Gold "proved," or refined, by fire and other processes can attain 99.9 percent purity. Yet, even refined gold perishes, or dissolves, when exposed to aqua regia (royal water), a mixture of three parts hydrochloric acid and one part nitric acid. Thus, the Bible is scientifically correct in stating that 'gold perishes.'

By contrast, true Christian faith 'preserves alive the soul.' (Hebrews 10:39) Men can kill a person who has strong faith, as they did with Jesus Christ. But possessors of genu-



ine faith are given this promise: "Prove yourself faithful even to death, and I will give you the crown of life." (Revelation 2:10) Those who die in faith remain in God's memory, and he will resurrect them. (John 5:28, 29) No amount of gold can accomplish that. In this respect, faith is truly of much greater value than gold. For faith to have such excelling value, however, it must also be proved, or tested. In fact, it is 'the tested quality of faith' that Peter said is of greater value than gold. Jehovah's Witnesses would be happy to help you to study the Bible in order for you to develop and maintain strong faith in the true God, Jehovah, and in his Son, Jesus Christ. This, according to Jesus, "means everlasting life."—John 17:3.