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STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

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in Bible Times

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THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1, 2 PAGES 3-11

This two-part series focuses on Psalm 70. There we read that Jehovah is "the Provider of escape." The articles examine how Jehovah provided escape for his servants in Bible times and how he does so for us.

Study Article 3 PAGES 16-20

It can be a challenge for a married couple to remain united today, even when both are servants of Jehovah. This article contains practical suggestions on how Christians can keep Jehovah in their marriage, as well as what they can do when difficulties arise.

Study Article 4 PAGES 20-24

We face a choice: Will we seek to receive God's holy spirit and come under its influence, or will we allow the world's spirit to dominate? This article analyzes both possibilities, and it helps us to make the choice that leads to happiness.

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JEHOVAH—"PROVIDER OF ESCAPE" IN BIBLE TIMES

"O God, do act quickly for me. You are my help and the Provider of escape for me."—PS. 70:5.

WHILE on vacation, the parents of a 23-year-old married woman learn that their daughter has mysteriously disappeared. Foul play is suspected. At once they pack up and head for home, all the while beseeching Jehovah to help them. A 20-year-old Witness is diagnosed with a disease that will eventually leave him completely paralyzed. Immediately he turns to Jehovah in prayer. A single mother struggling to find a job does not have enough money to buy

1, 2. (a) When do God's worshippers turn to him for help? (b) What question arises, and where can we find the answer?



food for herself and her 12-year-old daughter. She pours out her heart to Jehovah. Yes, when faced with severe trials or hardships, God's worshippers naturally turn to him for help. Have you ever called out to Jehovah in a time of desperate need?

² An important question arises: Can we really expect Jehovah to respond to our prayers for help? The faith-strengthening answer is found in Psalm 70. This stirring psalm was written by David, a loyal worshipper of Jehovah who faced many difficult trials and challenges during his life. This inspired psalmist was moved to say of Jehovah: "O God, . . . you are my help and the Provider of escape for me." (Ps. 70:5) An examination of Psalm 70 can help us to see why we too can turn to Jehovah in times of need and fully trust that he will be our "Provider of escape."

"You Are . . . the Provider of Escape"

³ Psalm 70 begins and ends with an urgent cry for God's help. (*Read Psalm 70:1-5.*) David implores Jehovah to "make haste" and to "act quickly" to deliver him. In the verses in-between, David makes five petitions, each beginning with "may" and expressing a desire, or wish. The first three are about those trying to kill him. David petitions Jehovah to defeat these enemies and shame them for their wickedness. The next two pleas, in verse 4, relate to God's people. David prays

3. (a) Psalm 70 contains what urgent cry for help?
(b) What confidence does David express in the 70th Psalm?

that those seeking Jehovah be moved to rejoice and to magnify him. In concluding his psalm, David says to Jehovah: "You are my help and the Provider of escape for me." Notice that David does not say, "May you prove to be," as if making another petition. Instead, he says, "You are," expressing his confidence. David believes that he will receive divine help.

⁴ What does Psalm 70 indicate about David? When he had been faced with determined enemies who were out to take his life, David chose not to take matters into his own hands. Instead, he trusted that Jehovah would deal with the opposers in his own time and way. (1 Sam. 26:10) David continued firmly convinced that Jehovah helps and delivers those who seek him. (Heb. 11:6) David believed that such true worshippers have every reason to rejoice and to magnify Jehovah by telling others about his greatness.—Ps. 5:11; 35:27.

⁵ Like David, we can have full confidence that Jehovah is our Helper and "the Provider of escape" for us. Hence, when we face difficult trials or feel in desperate need of assistance, we can rightly pray that Jehovah quickly come to our aid. (Ps. 71:12) What, though, may Jehovah do in response to our prayers for assistance? Before we discuss how Jehovah may help us, let us examine three ways in which he provided David with escape, helping him in times of urgent need.

Delivered From Opposers

⁶ From the inspired Bible record then available, David knew that the righteous can count on Jehovah to help them. When Jehovah brought the Deluge upon an ungodly world, he preserved alive Noah and his God-

- 4, 5. What do we learn about David from Psalm 70, and what confidence can we have?
6. What helped David to know that Jehovah provides the righteous with escape?

fearing family. (Gen. 7:23) When Jehovah rained down fire and sulfur upon the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah, he helped righteous Lot and his two daughters to escape with their lives. (Gen. 19:12-26) When Jehovah destroyed proud Pharaoh and his military forces in the Red Sea, He kept his people safe, thus helping them to escape a terrible end. (Ex. 14:19-28) Is it any wonder, then, that David in another psalm extolled Jehovah as "a God of saving acts"?—Ps. 68:20.

⁷ David also had a very personal reason for placing his implicit trust in Jehovah's saving power. David had experienced firsthand that Jehovah's "everlasting arms" can deliver those who serve Him. (Deut. 33:27, *American Standard Version*) On more than one occasion, Jehovah had saved David from the clutches of "angry enemies." (Ps. 18:17-19, 48) Consider an example.

⁸ When the women of Israel began praising David for his military prowess, King Saul became so consumed with jealousy that on two occasions he hurled his spear at David. (1 Sam. 18:6-9) Both times David escaped the sharp tip of the spear. Was this simply because of David's skill and agility as an experienced warrior? No. The Bible record explains that "Jehovah was with him." (*Read 1 Samuel 18:11-14.*) Later, when Saul's scheme to have David killed by the Philistines failed, "Saul got to see and know that Jehovah was with David."—1 Sam. 18:17-28.

⁹ To whom did David give credit for his deliverance? The superscription to Psalm 18 says that David "spoke to Jehovah the words of this song in the day that Jehovah had delivered him . . . out of the hand of Saul." David expressed his sentiments in song, saying: "Jehovah is my crag and my stronghold and

- 7-9. (a) What reason did David have for placing his trust in God's saving power? (b) Whom did David credit for his deliverance?

the Provider of escape for me. My God is my rock. I shall take refuge in him." (Ps. 18:2) Is it not faith-strengthening to know that Jehovah is capable of delivering his people?—Ps. 35:10.

Sustained Upon a Sickbed

¹⁰ King David once experienced a severe sickness, which is mentioned in Psalm 41. Confined for a time to a sickbed, David was so ill that it seemed to some of his enemies that he would never "get up again." (Verses 7, 8) When was David stricken with such a serious illness? The circumstances mentioned in this psalm may relate to the stressful time of David's life when his son Absalom was trying to usurp the throne.—2 Sam. 15:6, 13, 14.

¹¹ For example, David refers to a trusted friend, one who used to eat bread with him, as betraying him. (Verse 9) This may remind us of one incident in David's life. During Absalom's rebellion, David's trusted counselor Ahithophel turned traitor and joined Absalom in the revolt against the king. (2 Sam. 15: 31; 16:15) Just imagine the weakened king on his sickbed, with no strength to get up, all the while knowing that he was surrounded by conspirators who wished him dead so that they could carry out their evil plans. —Verse 5.

¹² David's trust in "the Provider of escape" did not waver. Concerning an upright worshipper who is ill, David said: "In the day of calamity Jehovah will provide escape for him. Jehovah himself will sustain him upon a divan of illness; all his bed you will certainly change during his sickness." (Ps. 41:1, 3) Here again, notice David's confidence, as ex-

10, 11. What helps us to determine when David may have experienced the sickness mentioned at Psalm 41?

12, 13. (a) What confidence did David express? (b) How may God have strengthened David?

pressed in the words "Jehovah himself will." David was sure that Jehovah would provide escape for him. How?

¹³ David did not expect Jehovah to perform a miracle and remove the sickness. Rather, David felt certain that Jehovah would "sustain him"—that is, give him support and strength while he was lying on his sickbed. David definitely needed such help. In addition to the sickness that weakened him, he was surrounded by enemies who were saying evil things about him. (Verses 5, 6) Jehovah may well have strengthened David by bringing to his mind comforting thoughts. Notably, David said: "Because of my integrity you have upheld me." (Verse 12) David may also have found strength in reflecting on the fact that despite his weakened condition and the bad things that his enemies were saying, Jehovah regarded him as a man of integrity. David did finally recover from his sickness. Is it not reassuring to know that Jehovah can sustain those who are sick?—2 Cor. 1:3.

Supplied With Sustenance

¹⁴ When he became king of Israel, David could enjoy the best of food and drink and even invite many others to dine at his table. (2 Sam. 9:10) However, David also knew what it was like to be low on provisions. When his son Absalom organized a rebellion and tried to usurp the throne, David along with some loyal supporters moved out of Jerusalem. They fled to the land of Gilead, east of the Jordan River. (2 Sam. 17:22, 24) Forced to live as fugitives, David and his men soon found themselves in dire need of food and drink as well as rest. Where, though, would they find provisions in that relatively remote area?

14, 15. When did David and his men find themselves in need of sustenance, and what help did they receive?

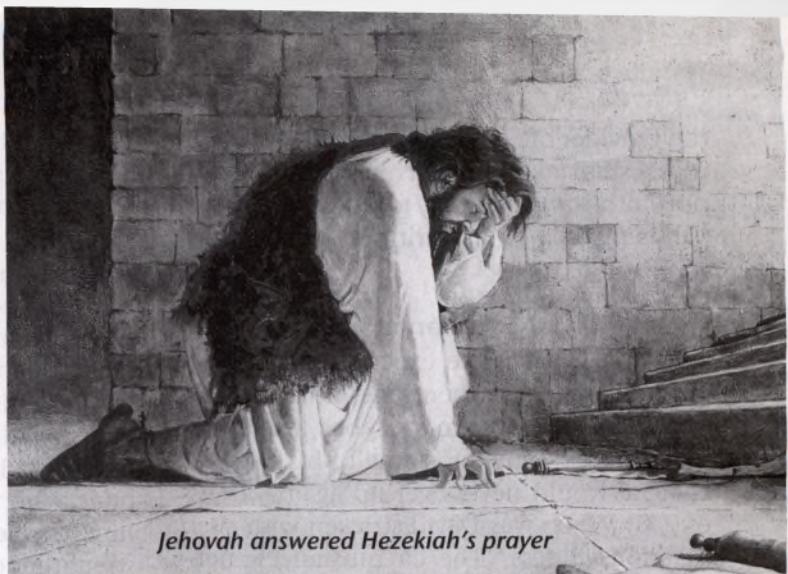
¹⁵ Finally, David and his men arrived at the city of Mahanaim. There they met three courageous men—Shobi, Machir, and Barzillai. They were willing to risk their lives to help the divinely appointed king, for if Absalom gained a firm hold on the kingship, he no doubt would severely punish anyone who had supported David. Recognizing the plight of David and his men, these three loyal subjects brought much needed supplies, including beds, wheat, barley, roasted grain, broad beans, lentils, honey, butter, and sheep. (*Read 2 Samuel 17:27-29.*) The extraordinary loyalty and hospitality of these three men must have touched David's heart. How could David ever forget what they did for him?

¹⁶ Who, though, was ultimately responsible for providing David and his men with sustenance? David was convinced that Jehovah cares for his people. Jehovah can surely give other servants of his a nudge, so to speak, moving them to come to the aid of a fellow worshipper in need. When reflecting on what happened in the land of Gilead, David no doubt saw the kindness of those three men as an expression of Jehovah's loving

16. Who was ultimately responsible for providing David and his men with sustenance?

Do You Recall?

- Psalm 70 gives us reason for what confidence?
- How was David sustained during illness?
- What examples show that Jehovah can deliver his people from opposers?



Jehovah answered Hezekiah's prayer

care. Toward the end of his life, David wrote: "A young man I used to be, I have also grown old, and yet I have not seen anyone righteous [including him] left entirely, nor his offspring looking for bread." (Ps. 37:25) Is it not comforting to know that Jehovah's hand is never short?—Prov. 10:3.

"Jehovah Knows How to Deliver People"

¹⁷ David was just one of many worshippers for whom Jehovah provided escape in Bible times. Since David's time, God has time and again demonstrated the truthfulness of the apostle Peter's words: "Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial." (2 Pet. 2:9) Consider two more examples.

¹⁸ When the mighty Assyrian army invaded Judah and threatened Jerusalem in the eighth century B.C.E., King Hezekiah prayed: "O Jehovah our God, save us . . . that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that you, O Jehovah, are God alone." (Isa. 37:20) Hezekiah's main concern was God's name and

17. What has Jehovah time and again demonstrated?

18. How did Jehovah provide deliverance in Hezekiah's day?

reputation. Jehovah answered that fervent prayer. In just one night, a single angel struck down 185,000 Assyrians, providing deliverance for Jehovah's faithful servants.—Isa. 37:32, 36.

¹⁹ Just days before his death, Jesus gave a prophetic warning for the benefit of his disciples in Judea. (*Read Luke 21:20-22.*) Decades passed, but in 66 C.E., a Jewish revolt brought Roman forces against Jerusalem. The legions under Cestius Gallus succeeded in undermining part of the temple wall; then they suddenly withdrew. Recognizing this as an opportunity to escape the destruction that Jesus had foretold, faithful Christians fled to the mountains. The Roman legions

19. By heeding what warning did first-century Christians escape calamity?

returned in 70 C.E. This time they did not withdraw, and Jerusalem was completely destroyed. The Christians who had heeded Jesus' warning escaped that terrible calamity.—Luke 19:41-44.

²⁰ It is faith-strengthening to reflect on the evidence that Jehovah helps his people. What he did in the past gives us basis for confidence. No matter what challenges we may be facing now or may yet encounter in the future, we too can put full trust in Jehovah as our "Provider of escape." How, though, may Jehovah provide us with escape? And what about the individuals mentioned at the outset? How did matters turn out for them? Let us see in the following article.

20. Why can we trust in Jehovah as our "Provider of escape"?

JEHOVAH IS "THE PROVIDER OF ESCAPE" FOR US

"Jehovah will help them and provide them with escape."—PS. 37:40.

SHADOWS created by the sun do not remain still. As the earth moves, the shadows are ever shifting and changing. The Creator of earth and sun, however, does not change. (Mal. 3:6) "With him," the Bible says, "there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow." (Jas. 1:17) This fundamental truth about Jehovah is truly a source of comfort and strength for us, especially when we face difficult trials and challenges. Why?

² As we noted in the preceding article, Jehovah proved to be "the Provider of escape" in Bible times. (Ps. 70:5) He is unchanging

1, 2. What fundamental truth about Jehovah is a source of comfort and strength for us?

and true to his word; hence, his worshippers today have every reason to trust in him to "help them and provide them with escape." (Ps. 37:40) How has Jehovah provided escape for his servants in modern times? How may he do so for us personally?

Delivered From Opposers

³ No amount of satanic opposition will ever prevent Jehovah's Witnesses from giving Jehovah the exclusive worship that he deserves. God's Word assures us: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you

3. Why can we be sure that opposers will not stop Jehovah's people from preaching the good news?



Arrested in 1918, Brother Rutherford and his associates were later released, and the charges against them were dropped

will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn." (Isa. 54:17) Opposers have tried but failed to prevent God's people from carrying out their commission to preach. Consider two examples.

⁴ In 1918, Jehovah's people faced a wave of clergy-inspired persecution aimed at silencing their preaching work. On May 7, federal warrants were issued for the arrest of J. F. Rutherford, who was overseeing the worldwide preaching work at that time, and for a number of others at headquarters. Within two months, Brother Rutherford and his associates were unjustly convicted of conspiracy and given long prison sentences. Had opposers succeeded in using the courts to cripple the preaching work permanently? Of course not!

⁵ Remember Jehovah's promise: "Any weapon . . . formed against you will have no success." In a dramatic turn of

^{4, 5} Jehovah's people faced what opposition in 1918, and with what result?

events, on March 26, 1919—nine months after Brother Rutherford and his associates were sentenced—the imprisoned brothers were released on bail. The following year, on May 5, 1920, the charges against them were dropped. The brothers used their freedom to press on with the Kingdom work. With what result? Why, phenomenal increase has taken place since then! All credit for what has resulted goes to "the Provider of escape."

—1 Cor. 3:7.

⁶ Now consider a second example. In 1934, Hitler vowed to exterminate Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany. That was no empty threat. Widespread arrests and imprisonments followed. Thousands of Witnesses were victimized; hundreds were killed in concentration camps. Did Hitler succeed in his campaign to eradicate the Witnesses? Did he stop all preaching of the good news in Germany? By no means! During the persecution, our brothers carried on the preaching work underground. After the collapse of the Nazi regime, they used their freedom to continue preaching. Today, there are over 165,000 Kingdom publishers in Germany. Again, "the Provider of escape" has proved true to his promise: "Any weapon . . . formed against you will have no success."

⁷ The modern history of Jehovah's Witnesses provides proof that Jehovah will never allow the extermination of his people as a group. (Ps. 116:15) What, though, about us as

^{6, 7} (a) What campaign against Jehovah's Witnesses was waged in Nazi Germany, and with what outcome? (b) The modern-day history of Jehovah's people bears testimony to what fact?

individuals? How does Jehovah provide escape for us personally?

What About Physical Protection?

⁸ As individuals, we know that our immediate physical protection is not guaranteed. We take the position expressed by the three faithful Hebrews who refused to bow down to King Nebuchadnezzar's image of gold. Those God-fearing young men did not presume that Jehovah would miraculously protect them from physical harm. (*Read Daniel 3:17, 18.*) As matters turned out, Jehovah did deliver them from the flames of the fiery furnace. (Dan. 3:21-27) Even in Bible times, however, miraculous deliverance was the exception rather than the rule. Many faithful servants of Jehovah died at the hands of opposers.—Heb. 11:35-37.

⁹ What about today? As "the Provider of escape," Jehovah certainly can deliver individuals from perilous situations. Can we definitively say whether Jehovah did or did not intervene in specific cases? No. Still, an individual who has escaped a dangerous situation may feel that Jehovah intervened. It would be presumptuous for others to take issue with his feeling. At the same time, we must realistically acknowledge that many faithful Christians have died as a result of persecution, as was the case during the Nazi era. Others have died under tragic circumstances. (Eccl. 9:11) We might ask, 'Did Jehovah fail to be "the Provider of escape" for faithful ones whose lives were cut short?' That could hardly be the case.

¹⁰ Consider this: Man is helpless in the face of death, for no human can "provide escape for his soul from the hand of Sheol," or

8, 9. (a) How do we know that our immediate physical protection is not guaranteed? (b) What must we realistically acknowledge?

10, 11. Why is man helpless in the face of death, but what can Jehovah do about it?

Hades, mankind's common grave. (Ps. 89:48) What, though, about Jehovah? One sister who survived the period of Nazi terror recalls what her Witness mother once told her to comfort her over the loss of loved ones in the concentration camps: "If death would keep mankind perpetually in its bonds, it would be stronger than God, wouldn't it?" Surely, death is no match for the all-powerful Source of life! (Ps. 36:9) All those in Sheol, or Hades, are in Jehovah's memory, and he will provide escape for each and every one of them.—Luke 20:37, 38; Rev. 20:11-14.

¹¹ Meanwhile, Jehovah is directly involved in the lives of his faithful worshippers today. Let us now consider three ways in which he certainly is "the Provider of escape" for us.

Protected Spiritually

¹² Jehovah offers us spiritual protection, which is of utmost importance. Being true Christians, we understand that there is something that is more valuable than our present life. Our most precious possession is our personal relationship with Jehovah. (Ps. 25:14; 63:3) Without that relationship, our present life would have little meaning and our future life prospects would be lost.

¹³ Thankfully, Jehovah gives us all the help we need to maintain a close relationship with him. We have his Word, his holy spirit, and his worldwide congregation to help us. How can we take full advantage of these provisions? By regularly and diligently studying his Word, we will strengthen our faith and brighten our hope. (Rom. 15:4) By sincerely praying for his spirit, we will receive help to resist the temptation to engage in questionable conduct. (Luke 11:13) By keeping up with the direction the slave class provides

12, 13. Why is spiritual protection of utmost importance, and how does Jehovah provide such for us?

through Bible-based publications as well as at meetings, assemblies, and conventions, we will be nourished with spiritual "food at the proper time." (Matt. 24:45) Such provisions protect us spiritually and help us to stay close to God.—Jas. 4:8.

¹⁴ To highlight such spiritual protection, recall the parents mentioned at the outset of the preceding article. A few days after their daughter, Theresa, was reported missing, they received devastating news: She had been murdered.* The father recalls: "I had prayed for Jehovah to protect her. When she was found murdered, I must admit that I initially wondered why my prayers were not answered. Of course, I know that Jehovah does not guarantee miraculous protection for his

* See the article "Coping With an Unspeakable Tragedy," in *Awake!* of July 22, 2001, pages 19-23.

14. Relate an experience that highlights spiritual protection.

*Jehovah can sustain us
upon "a divan of illness"*



people individually. I continued to pray for understanding. I have been comforted in the knowledge that Jehovah protects his people spiritually—that is, he provides what we need in order to safeguard our relationship with him. That type of protection is most important, for it can affect our eternal future. In that sense, Jehovah did protect Theresa; she was serving him faithfully at the time of her death. I have found peace in knowing that her future life prospects are in his loving hands."

Sustained Through Illness

¹⁵ Jehovah can sustain us "upon a divan of illness," as he did David. (Ps. 41:3) Although Jehovah is not in our time providing escape in the sense of miraculous healing, he does help us. How? The principles found in his Word may aid us in making wise decisions about treatment and other matters. (Prov. 2:6) We may glean helpful information and practical suggestions from articles published in *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* that discuss our particular health problem. By means of his spirit, Jehovah may grant us "the power beyond what is normal" to cope with our situation and to maintain our integrity, regardless of what may happen. (2 Cor. 4:7) With such help, we can avoid becoming so overwhelmed by our illness that we lose our spiritual focus.

¹⁶ Consider the young brother referred to at the beginning of the preceding article. In 1998, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, or ALS, which finally left him totally paralyzed.* How has he managed to cope with his illness? He explains: "I have

* See the article "Sustained by My Faith—Living With ALS," in *Awake!* of January 2006, pages 25-29.

15. In what ways may Jehovah help us when we are beset by illness?
16. How has one brother managed to cope with illness?

had moments of pain and frustration when I have felt that death would be my only means of escape. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, I pray that Jehovah give me three things: a calm heart, patience, and endurance. I feel that Jehovah has answered those prayers. A calm heart lets me reflect on comforting thoughts, such as what it will be like in the new world when I will be able to walk, enjoy a tasty meal, and talk with my family again. Patience helps me to put up with the inconveniences and challenges of paralysis. Endurance enables me to keep faithful and not lose my spiritual balance. I can truly identify with the psalmist David, for I feel that Jehovah has sustained me upon my divan of illness."

—Isa. 35:5, 6.

Supplied With Sustenance

¹⁷ Jehovah promises to care for us materially. (*Read Matthew 6:33, 34 and Hebrews 13: 5, 6.*) That does not mean that we may leave the providing of material needs to chance or that we should refuse to work. (2 Thess. 3:10) What that promise does mean is this: If we seek God's Kingdom first in our life and are willing to work for a living, we can count on Jehovah to help us to obtain life's necessities. (1 Thess. 4:11, 12; 1 Tim. 5:8) He can provide what we need in ways that we might not expect, perhaps through a fellow worshipper who comes to our aid or offers us work.

¹⁸ Recall the single mother mentioned in the introduction to the preceding article. When she and her young daughter moved to a new area, she had difficulty finding a job. She explains: "I would go out in the field service in the morning, and I would spend every afternoon looking for work. I remem-

17. What has Jehovah promised to do for us, and what does this promise mean?

18. Relate an experience that shows that we may be provided for in times of need.

ber one day when I went to the grocery store to buy some milk. I stood and looked at the vegetables, but I did not have enough money to buy any. I have never felt so depressed in my life. When I returned home from the store that day, my back porch was filled with bags of all kinds of vegetables. There was enough food there to sustain us for months. I just cried, and I thanked Jehovah." This sister soon learned that the bags had been left by a brother in the congregation who grew the vegetables in his garden. She later wrote to him: "Even though I thanked you very much that day, I also thanked Jehovah for using your kindness to remind me of his love."

—Prov. 19:17.

¹⁹ Clearly, what Jehovah has done in Bible times as well as in our day gives us reason to trust in him as our Helper. Soon, when the great tribulation comes upon Satan's world, we will need Jehovah's help as never before. Yet, Jehovah's servants will be able to look to him with complete confidence. They will be able to lift their heads and rejoice, knowing that their deliverance is near. (Luke 21:28) In the meantime, no matter what trials may come upon us, let us be determined to place our trust in Jehovah, having full assurance that our unchanging God is, indeed, our "Provider of escape."

19. At the great tribulation, Jehovah's servants will have what confidence, and what should we be determined to do now?

Do You Recall?

- How can Jehovah provide escape for those whose life has been cut short?
- Why is spiritual protection of utmost importance?
- What does Jehovah's promise to care for us materially mean?

Increase in ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE With “Eagerness of Mind”

ALL of Jehovah's servants seek his approval. Desiring to have such, we are eager to improve the quality of our faith and to render sacred service zealously. The apostle Paul, however, draws our attention to a potential danger, one that affected some Jews in his day: "They have a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge." (Rom. 10:2) Clearly, our faith and our worship of Jehovah should not be based merely on emotion. We need accurate knowledge of our Creator and his will.

Elsewhere in his writings, Paul linked conduct that has God's approval with our eager acquisition of knowledge. He prayed that Christ's followers "may be filled with the accurate knowledge" of God's will "in order to walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him" as they "go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." (Col. 1:9, 10) Why is our need for "accurate knowledge" so great? And why should we increase in such knowledge?

The Key to Faith

Accurate knowledge of God and his will as revealed in the Bible is the basis of our faith. Without such reliable knowledge, our faith in Jehovah would be like a house of cards that could topple over with the slightest breeze. Paul encourages us to render sacred service to God with our "power of reason" and to 'make our mind over.' (Rom. 12:1, 2) Regular study of the Bible can help us in that regard.

Ewa, a regular pioneer in Poland, acknowledges: "If I did not regularly study God's Word, I would stop growing in the accurate knowledge of Jehovah. My Christian identity would quickly begin to deteriorate, and my faith in God would weaken—I would be heading for spiritual bankruptcy." May that never happen to us! Consider the example of a man who increased in accurate knowledge of Jehovah and consequently enjoyed His approval.

"How I Do Love Your Law!"

The poetic song listed as Psalm 119 in our Bibles conveys the psalmist's feelings about the laws, reminders, orders, commands, and judicial decisions of Jehovah. The psalmist wrote: "For your statutes I shall show a fondness. . . . Your reminders are what I am fond of." He also wrote: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."—Ps. 119:16, 24, 47, 48, 77, 97.

The expressions "fondness" and "concern" suggest meditation on God's Word, in fact, taking delight in such meditation. Those expressions emphasize the obvious love that the psalmist had for study of the divine law. That love did not spring from a mere welling up of emotion in the psalmist's heart. Rather, he had an earnest desire to 'concern himself' with the law, to gain insight into Jehovah's words. We can see from his attitude that he wanted to get to know God and his will as accurately as possible.

It is clear that the psalmist's love for God's Word came from the bottom of his heart.

We can ask ourselves: 'Is that true of me? Do I delight in reading and analyzing a portion of the Bible each day? Do I approach the reading of God's Word diligently and prayerfully?' To the extent that we can answer yes to those questions, we are likely "increasing in the accurate knowledge of God."

Ewa remarks: "I constantly try to improve the quality of my personal study. Since receiving the '*See the Good Land*' brochure, I have used it nearly every time I study. I try more and more to look things up in the *Insight on the Scriptures* and in other reference works as needed."

Consider, too, the examples of Wojciech and Małgorzata, who have considerable family obligations. How do they manage to fit personal Bible study into their schedule? "We make time to study God's Word individually as we can. Then, during our family study and in our daily conversations, we share points that we found interesting or motivating." Deep personal study brings them a lot of joy and helps them to 'increase in accurate knowledge.'

Study With a Receptive Mind

As Christians, we believe that it is God's will "that all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) This fact underscores the value of reading the Bible and striving to "get the sense of it." (Matt. 15:10) One aid to that end is studying with a receptive mind. This was the attitude that the ancient Beroeans demonstrated when Paul

WHEN WE 'INCREASE IN ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE'...

We strengthen our faith in God and walk worthily of Jehovah.

—Col. 1:9, 10

We gain insight, being able to use discernment and make sensible decisions.

—Ps. 119:99

We take increased pleasure in helping others to draw close to Jehovah.

—Matt. 28:19, 20

shared the good news with them: "They received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so." —Acts 17:11.

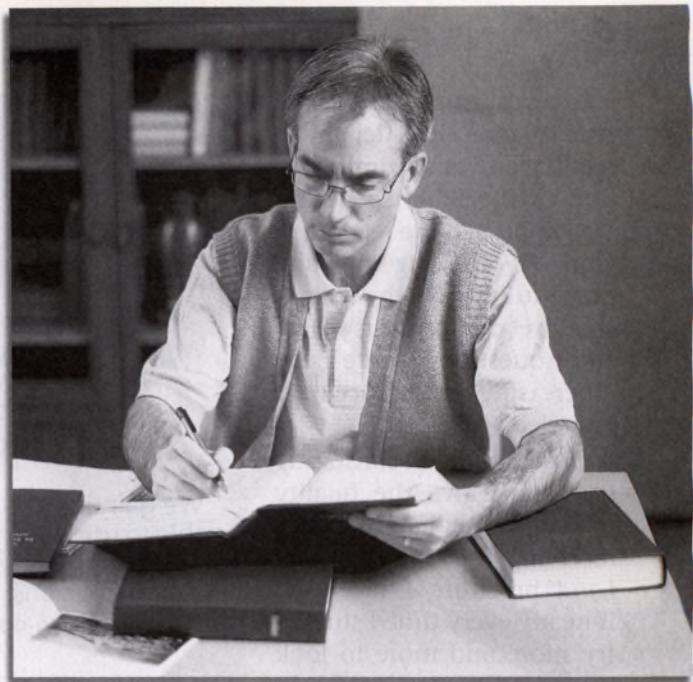
Do you follow the Beroeans' example of having eagerness of mind and keep your mind free of unnecessary distractions while you are studying the Bible? A Christian can work at imitating the Beroeans, even if in the past, he did not view study as pleasurable. Furthermore, some people tend to read and study less as they advance in age, but that need not be true of a Christian. Regardless of one's age, it is possible to work at avoiding distractions. And as you read, you can eagerly look for

information that you can share with others. For example, could you make it a point to mention to your mate or to a Christian friend things that you have read or learned during your study periods? Doing so can effectively fix in your mind and heart those things while having a positive effect on others.

Regarding your study periods, follow the example of Ezra, the ancient servant of God who "prepared his heart to consult the law of Jehovah." (Ezra 7:10) How can you do so? You can create an environment conducive to study. Then, sit down and pray to Jehovah for his direction and wisdom. (Jas. 1:5) Ask yourself, 'What do I expect to learn during this study period?' As you read, be on the lookout for key ideas. You may want to make a note of these or mark portions that you especially want to remember. Consider how you could



Finding a location that is conducive to study can be a challenge, but it is desirable



use the material when preaching, when making decisions, or when encouraging fellow believers. Near the end of your study period, briefly review what you have covered. That will enable you to retain what you have learned.

Ewa describes her approach: "As I read the Bible, I use the cross-references, the *Watch Tower Publications Index*, and the *Watchtower Library* on CD-ROM. I make notes for myself with a view to using them in my ministry."

Some have long enjoyed studying deeply, becoming absorbed in spiritual matters. (Prov. 2:1-5) Still, they have many responsibilities and have difficulty setting aside time for personal study. If that is true of you, what adjustments can you make in your schedule?

How Can I Find the Time?

You would probably agree that it is easier to make time for doing things that you enjoy. Many have found that an aid to being absorbed in personal study is setting a realistic

goal, such as reading the entire Bible. Granted, it may seem daunting to read lengthy genealogies, detailed descriptions of the ancient temple, or complex prophecies that do not seem to relate to everyday life. Try to take practical steps toward reaching your goal. For example, before examining a portion of the Bible that seems difficult, you could read about its historical setting or its practical application. Such information can be found in the book "*All Scripture Is Inspired of God and Beneficial*," available in almost 50 languages.

It is stimulating to use your imagination while you are reading the Bible. This can help you to create in your mind a picture of the characters and events involved. Applying just these few suggestions will likely make your study sessions more enjoyable and rewarding. Accordingly, you will be more eager to make time for them. It will be easier to maintain the habit of reading the Bible every day.

While the above suggestions can help us on an individual level, what can a busy family do? Why not sit down together for a re-

laxed discussion of the potential benefits of family study? Out of that discussion may come practical ideas, such as getting up a few minutes earlier each day or on certain days in order to consider a portion of the Bible. Or perhaps your discussion will reveal the need to adjust the family schedule. For example, some families have found it practical to discuss the text for the day or to read a portion of the Bible at the conclusion of a family meal. Before anyone starts to clear the table or leaves for another activity, the family spends 10 or 15 minutes discussing the Scriptures or doing the scheduled Bible reading. At first, this might seem a bit challenging, but soon it could become normal for the family and very pleasurable.

Wojciech and Małgorzata explain what helped their family: "In the past, our time was consumed by unimportant, trivial activities. We made the decision to cut back on the time we spent sending e-mails. We have also curtailed some of our pastimes and set aside a specific day and time for in-depth study." This family certainly does not regret making

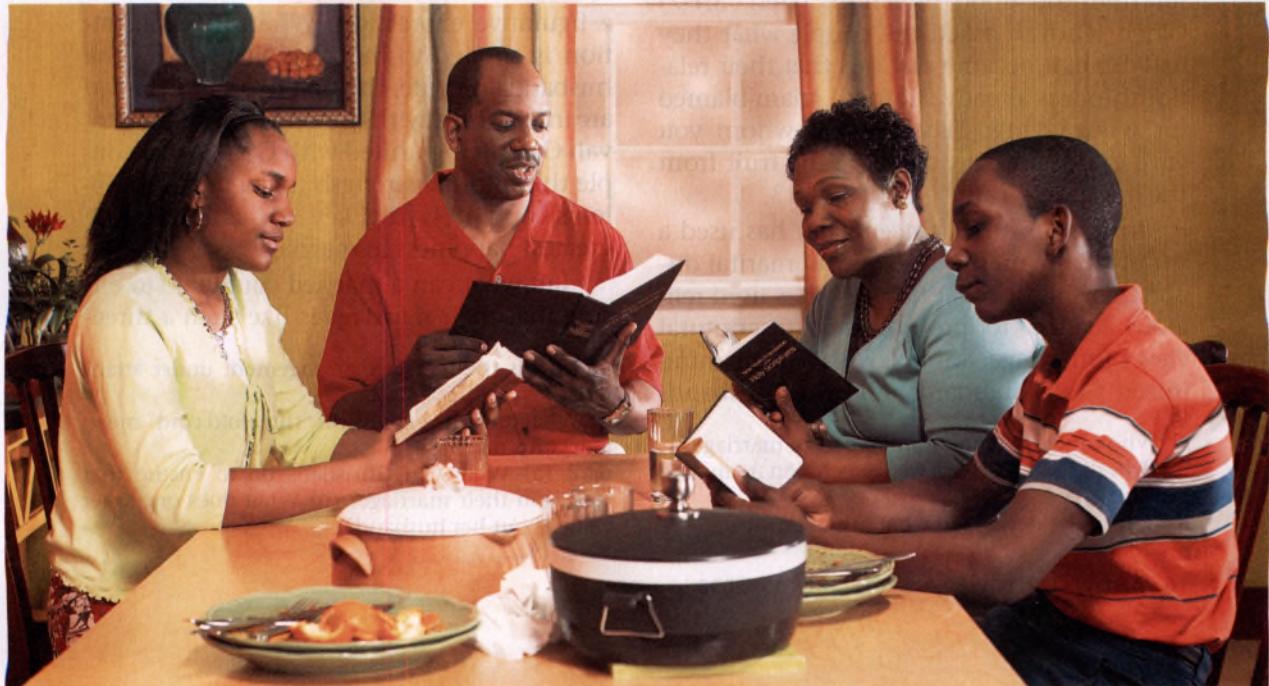
those adjustments, and you can find the same to be true of your family.

Increasing in Accurate Knowledge Is Worthwhile!

Deep study of God's Word can bear "fruit in every good work." (Col. 1:10) As that proves to be so in your life, your advancement will be manifest to all. You will be a spiritual person with a comprehensive understanding of Bible truths. Your decisions will be more balanced and the help you give to others more skillfully rendered, free of the extremes that often mark uninformed ones. Above all, you will draw closer to Jehovah. You will have a deeper appreciation of his qualities, and this will be evident as you tell others about him.—1 Tim. 4:15; Jas. 4:8.

Regardless of your age or experience, make every effort to keep on finding delight in God's Word and engaging in deep study of it with a receptive mind. You can be confident that Jehovah will not forget your efforts. (Heb. 6:10) He will pour out on you his rich blessings.

Some families read a portion of the Bible after a meal



MAINTAIN “A THREEFOLD CORD” IN MARRIAGE

“A threefold cord cannot quickly be torn in two.”—ECCL. 4:12.

FOLLOWING the creation of plant and animal life, Jehovah God formed the first man, Adam. God later caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, and He used one of Adam's ribs to make for him a perfect helper. Upon catching sight of her, Adam said: “This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.” (Gen. 1:27; 2:18, 21-23) Jehovah showed his approval of this development, yoking the first human pair in marriage and pronouncing his blessing upon them.—Gen. 1:28; 2:24.

² Sadly, before long the divine institution of marriage came under attack. How so? A wicked spirit, who came to be called Satan, deceived Eve into eating from the only tree that was forbidden to the couple. Subsequently, Adam joined his wife in what amounted to a rebellion against God's rightful rule and good direction. (Gen. 3:1-7) When Jehovah asked the couple what they had done, it became obvious that their relationship was already strained. Adam blamed his wife, saying: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree and so I ate.”—Gen. 3:11-13.

³ In the centuries since, Satan has used a variety of sly methods to spread marital discord. For instance, at times he has used religious leaders to promote an unscriptural view of marriage. Some Jewish leaders minimized God's standards, allowing husbands

1. Who united the first human pair in marriage?
2. How did Satan drive a wedge between Adam and Eve?
3. Some Jews developed what mistaken view?

to divorce their wives for such trivial matters as oversalting food. But Jesus pointed out: “Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery.”—Matt. 19:9.

⁴ Satan is still busy trying to rip apart the marital bond. Homosexual unions, unmarried couples living together, and easy divorces prove that he is having much success in this regard. (*Read Hebrews 13:4.*) As Christians, what can we do to avoid being influenced by the prevailing distorted view of marriage? Let us consider some traits of a happy, successful marriage.

Keep Jehovah in the Marriage

⁵ For a marriage to thrive, Jehovah needs to be involved in the relationship. His Word says: “A threefold cord cannot quickly be torn in two.” (Eccl. 4:12) “Threefold cord” is a figurative expression. When this illustration is applied to marriage, it includes the husband and wife, the first two strands, who are intertwined with the central strand, Jehovah God. Being united with God gives a couple the spiritual strength to cope with problems, and it is the key to achieving the greatest happiness in marriage.

⁶ But what can a married couple do to ensure that their marriage is like such a three-

4. How is the marriage arrangement under attack today?
5. What does the expression “threefold cord” mean as regards marriage?
- 6, 7. (a) What can Christians do to ensure that God is in their marriage? (b) What does one sister value about her husband?

fold cord? The psalmist David sang: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts." (Ps. 40:8) Our love for God likewise moves us to serve him with a complete heart. Thus, both mates should cultivate a warm personal relationship with Jehovah and find delight in doing his will. Marriage mates should also strive to strengthen their partner's love for God.—Prov. 27:17.

⁷ If God's law is truly within our inward parts, such qualities as faith, hope, and love will be displayed and will help to nourish the marriage bond. (1 Cor. 13:13) A Christian named Sandra, who has been married for 50 years, says: "What I most value in my husband are his spiritual guidance and advice and his love for Jehovah, which is stronger than his love for me." Husbands, could similar comments be made about you?

⁸ As a couple, do you keep spiritual matters and Kingdom interests to the fore in life? Moreover, do you truly view your mate as your partner in serving Jehovah? (Gen. 2:24) Wise King Solomon wrote: "Two are better than one, because they have a good reward for their hard work." (Eccl. 4:9) Indeed, a husband and wife must work hard in order to obtain "a good reward" in the form of a loving and lasting union that has God's blessing.

⁹ An indication of whether God is in a marriage is the effort both husband and wife put forth to measure up to His requirements. Husbands have the primary obligation to provide for the material and spiritual needs of the household. (1 Tim. 5:8) They are also encouraged to be considerate of their wife's emotional needs. At Colossians 3:19, we read: "You husbands, keep on loving your wives

8. What is needed to receive "a good reward" in marriage?

9. (a) What responsibilities do husbands have? (b) According to Colossians 3:19, how should a husband treat his wife?

and do not be bitterly angry with them." One Bible scholar explained that the expression "bitterly angry" involves "giving them either bitter words, or blows, and denying them their affection, care, provision, protection, and assistance." Clearly, such behavior would be inappropriate in a Christian household. A husband who exercises his headship in a loving way stimulates a readiness in his wife to be in subjection.

¹⁰ Christian wives who seek to keep Jehovah in their marriage must also measure up to God's requirements. The apostle Paul wrote: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation." (Eph. 5:22, 23) Satan deceived Eve, promoting the lie that independence from God would bring lasting happiness. Clearly, the spirit of independence is now seen in many marriages. For godly women, however, submission to their loving head is not distasteful. They remember that Jehovah appointed Eve to be "a complement" of her husband, which God obviously considered to be an honorable position. (Gen. 2:18) A Christian wife who willingly cooperates with that arrangement is truly "a crown" to her husband.—Prov. 12:4.

¹¹ Another aid to keeping God in a marriage is for a couple to study God's Word together. Gerald, who has been happily married for 55 years, says, "The most vital ingredient in a successful marriage is reading and studying the Bible together." He adds, "Doing things together, especially spiritual things, draws mates much closer to each other and to Jehovah." Studying the Bible together helps the family to keep Jehovah's

10. Christian wives should display what kind of attitude?

11. What did one brother conclude has helped his marriage?

standards clearly in mind, deepens spirituality, and makes for continued progress.

¹² Happily married couples also pray together. When a husband ‘pours out his heart’ with specific requests unique to their circumstances, it cannot help but strengthen the marriage bond. (Ps. 62:8) For example, how much easier it would be to put aside any disagreement with your mate after you together beseech the Almighty for guidance and direction! (Matt. 6:14, 15) In line with the prayer, how fitting it would be for each mate to make it a resolve to help the other and to “continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.” (Col. 3:13) Bear in mind that prayer demonstrates reliance on God. King David said: “To you the eyes of all look hopefully.” (Ps. 145:15) When we look hopefully to God in prayer, we have

12, 13. (a) Why is praying together so important for a couple? (b) What other spiritual activities strengthen a marriage?



fewer anxieties, knowing that ‘he cares for us.’—1 Pet. 5:7.

¹³ Another key way to keep Jehovah in a marriage is by attending congregation meetings and by working together in the ministry. At our meetings, couples learn how to combat the “crafty acts” that Satan is using to divide families. (Eph. 6:11, ftn.) And a husband and wife who regularly work together in the ministry learn to “become steadfast, unmovable.”—1 Cor. 15:58.

When Difficulties Arise

¹⁴ Granted, the above suggestions may not sound new or original, but why not openly discuss them with your mate? See if some area merits additional attention in your marriage. The Bible acknowledges, though, that even those who have God in their marriage “will have tribulation in their flesh.” (1 Cor. 7:28) Because of human imperfection, the bad influence of this lawless world, and the snares of the Devil, even marriages of faithful servants of God can come under great stress. (2 Cor. 2:11) But Jehovah enables us to cope with such stress. Yes, it can be done. The

14. What factors can contribute to marital stress?

Praying together helps married couples face challenging situations



faithful man Job lost his livestock, his attendants, and his children. Yet, the Bible says: "In all this Job did not sin or ascribe anything improper to God."—Job 1:13-22.

¹⁵ Job's wife, on the other hand, said to him: "Are you yet holding fast your integrity? Curse God and die!" (Job 2:9) Indeed, when tragedies or other difficult circumstances arise, the ensuing emotional turmoil can cause one to act irrationally. "Mere oppression may make a wise one act crazy," observes the wise man. (Eccl. 7:7) If your mate lashes out with hurtful words in response to hardship or "oppression," try to remain calm. Responding in kind might cause one or both of you to say something that will make the situation worse. (*Read Psalm 37:8.*) So overlook any "wild talk" that might result from frustration or discouragement.—Job 6:3.

¹⁶ Marriage partners need to have realistic expectations. One mate might note certain idiosyncrasies in the other and think, 'I can change him (or her).' With love and patience, you may be able to help your mate to make gradual improvement. Do not forget, though, that Jesus likened one who picks at another's minor failings to someone who sees a "straw" in his brother's eye but fails to notice a "rafter" in his own eye. Jesus urged us: "Stop judging that you may not be judged." (*Read Matthew 7:1-5.*) This does not mean that serious flaws should be ignored. Robert, married nearly 40 years, said: "Being open and frank with each other and then being willing to accept valid observations may require marriage partners to make changes in their life." So be balanced. Rather than fretting over the attributes you would like to see

15. How can stress cause people to react, and how can mates best deal with such reactions?

16. (a) How do Jesus' words found at Matthew 7:1-5 apply to marriage? (b) Why is balance so important in marriage?

in your mate, learn to appreciate and enjoy the positive qualities that he or she has *now*.—Eccl. 9:9.

¹⁷ Tests may come when circumstances in life change. A couple may face challenges when they have children. A mate or a child may become seriously ill. Aging parents may need special care. Grown children may move far away from home. Other changes may result from caring for theocratic privileges and responsibilities. All these changes can bring some stress and anxiety to a relationship.

¹⁸ If the strain on your marriage makes you feel that you have reached the breaking point, what can you do? (Prov. 24:10) Do not give up! Satan would like nothing better than for one of God's servants to abandon pure worship. He would be even happier if a couple did so. Hence, do all you can to make sure that your marriage remains a threefold cord. The Bible contains many accounts of ones who remained faithful despite severe trials. For example, on one occasion, David poured out his heart to Jehovah, saying: "Show me favor, O God, because mortal man . . . keeps oppressing me." (Ps. 56:1) Have you ever felt oppressed by "mortal man"? Whether the stress that you feel is coming from a distance or from someone close to you, remember: David found the strength to endure, and so can you. "I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me,"

17, 18. When troubles mount, where can we turn for help?

Do You Recall?

- What does it mean to have Jehovah in a marriage?
- What should marriage partners do when difficulties arise?
- How do we know when God is in a marriage?

said David. "Out of all my frights he delivered me."—Ps. 34:4.

Further Blessings

¹⁹ In this time of the end, marriage partners need to "keep comforting one another and building one another up." (1 Thess. 5:11) Do not forget, Satan maintains that our loyalty to Jehovah is based on selfishness. He will use any means possible, including disrupting a marriage, to break our integrity to God. To ward off Satan's attacks, we need to put our full trust in Jehovah. (Prov. 3:5, 6) Paul wrote: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Phil. 4:13.

19. In what way can we ward off Satan's attacks?

²⁰ The blessings that result from having God in a marriage are many. This has certainly proved true of Joel and his wife of 51 years. He says: "I thank Jehovah constantly for my wife and our happy companionship. She has been an ideal partner." What is their secret? "We have always endeavored to show kindness, patience, and love to each other." None of us will do that perfectly in this system of things. Yet, let us work hard to apply Bible principles and keep Jehovah in our marriage. If we do, then our marriage will be like "a threefold cord [that] cannot quickly be torn in two."—Eccl. 4:12.

20. What blessings come from keeping God in one's marriage?

RESIST "THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD"

"We received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is from God."

—1 COR. 2:12.

IN THE year 1911, British authorities passed a law designed to save the lives of coal miners. Each mine was required to keep two canaries. For what purpose? If a fire erupted in a mine, rescuers would carry the canaries underground with them. The tiny birds are sensitive to poisonous gases, such as carbon monoxide. If the air became contaminated, the birds would show signs of distress, even falling off their perch. This early warning was vital. Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that kills by stopping red blood cells from delivering oxygen in the body. Unless

alerted to the danger, the rescuers could faint and then die without ever realizing that they were being poisoned.

² In a spiritual sense, Christians face a situation similar to the mine workers. How? When Jesus gave his disciples the assignment to preach the good news worldwide, he knew that he was sending them into a hazardous environment, one dominated by Satan and the spirit of the world. (Matt. 10:16; 1 John 5:19) So concerned was Jesus about his disciples that on the night before he died, he prayed to his Father: "I request you, not to take them out of the world, but to watch over them because of the wicked one."—John 17:15.

1, 2. (a) In the past, why were canaries put in British mines? (b) What danger do Christians face?

³ Jesus warned his followers about the danger of what could amount to a death-dealing spiritual sleep. His words have special meaning for us, living as we do during the conclusion of the system of things. He urged his disciples: "Keep awake . . . that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man." (Luke 21:34-36) Happily, though, Jesus also promised that his Father would provide holy spirit to refresh their memories and to help them stay awake and be strong.—John 14:26.

⁴ What about us today? Is that same holy spirit available to help us? If so, what must we do to receive it? What is the spirit of the world, and how does it operate? And how can we successfully resist this world's spirit?—*Read 1 Corinthians 2:12.*

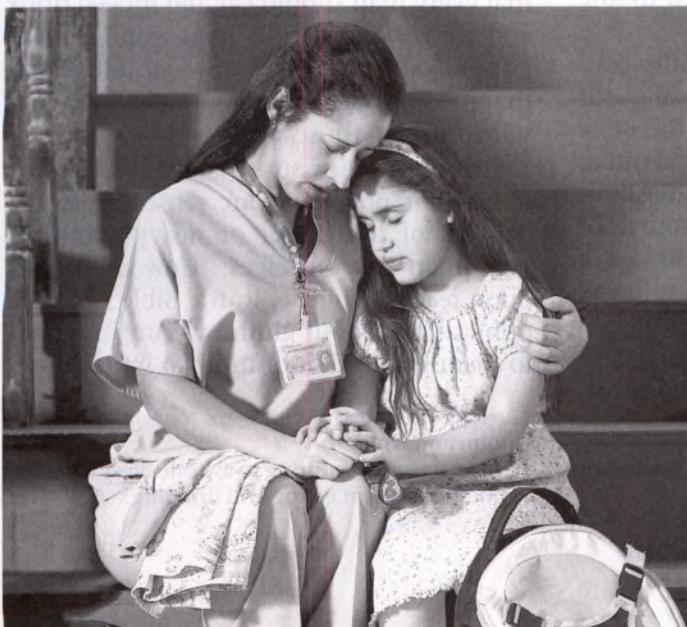
Holy Spirit or the World's Spirit?

⁵ The provision of holy spirit was not limit-

^{3, 4.} What warning did Jesus give his disciples, and why should that interest us?

^{5, 6.} What can holy spirit do for us, but what must we do to receive it?

Before going to work or school, pray for holy spirit



ed to the first century. It is readily available today, and God's spirit can give us the strength to do what is right as well as energize us in his service. (Rom. 12:11; Phil. 4:13) It can also produce in us tender qualities, such as love, kindness, and goodness, which are aspects of "the fruitage of the spirit." (Gal. 5:22, 23) However, Jehovah God does not force his holy spirit upon unwilling recipients.

⁶ It would be reasonable, then, for us to ask, 'What can I do to receive holy spirit?' Well, the Bible shows that there are a number of things we can do. An important step is quite straightforward—ask God for it. (*Read Luke 11:13.*) Another useful step is to study and apply the counsel in God's spirit-inspired Word. (2 Tim. 3:16) Of course, not everyone who simply reads the Bible receives God's spirit. But when a sincere Christian studies God's Word, he can absorb the sentiments and outlook reflected in the inspired Word. It is also vital that we accept that Jehovah has appointed Jesus as His representative and the one through whom God has provided his spirit. (Col. 2:6) Accordingly, we want

to model our lives on Jesus' example and teachings. (1 Pet. 2:21) The more we strive to be like Christ, the more we will receive holy spirit.

⁷ In contrast, the world's spirit influences people to reflect Satan's personality. (*Read Ephesians 2:1-3.*) The spirit of the world operates in a number of ways. As is evidenced all around us today, it encourages rebellion against God's standards. It promotes "the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display

^{7.} How does the spirit of the world influence individuals?

of one's means of life." (1 John 2:16) It produces fleshly works, such as fornication, idolatry, spiritism, jealousy, fits of anger, and drunkenness. (Gal. 5:19-21) And it fosters apostate speech that violates what is holy. (2 Tim. 2:14-18) Inevitably, the more a person allows himself to be influenced by the spirit of the world, the more like Satan he becomes.

⁸ We cannot live in a spiritual vacuum. Each individual must choose what he will allow to govern his life—holy spirit or the world's spirit. Those who are now dominated by the spirit of the world can break free from its influence and allow holy spirit to guide their lives. However, the opposite is also possible. Those who for a time were led by holy spirit can become ensnared by the spirit of the world. (Phil. 3:18, 19) Let us consider how we can resist the world's spirit.

Recognize Early Warning Signs

⁹ The British coal miners mentioned earlier used canaries to provide an early warning of the presence of poisonous gas. If a miner saw a bird fall from its perch, he knew he needed to act fast to survive. In a spiritual sense, what are some early warning signs signaling that we are being influenced by the spirit of the world?

¹⁰ When we first learned the truths contained in God's Word and then dedicated our lives to Jehovah, we probably read the Bible eagerly. We likely prayed fervently and often. And we delighted to attend congregation meetings, viewing each one as a source of spiritual refreshment, like an oasis for a thirsty man. That course helped us to break free of and keep free of the world's spirit.

¹¹ Do we still try to read the Bible each day? (Ps. 1:2) Are our prayers frequent and heart-

8. All of us face what choice?

9-11. What are some warning signs that we might be succumbing to the spirit of the world?

felt? Do we love congregation meetings, attending all of them each week? (Ps. 84:10) Or have we lost some of these good habits? Of course, we may have many demands upon our time and energy, and it can be challenging to maintain a healthy spiritual routine. But if some of our good habits have suffered over time, could it be that we are succumbing to the spirit of the world? Will we now make a strong effort to revive the good habits we once had?

"Never Become Weighed Down"

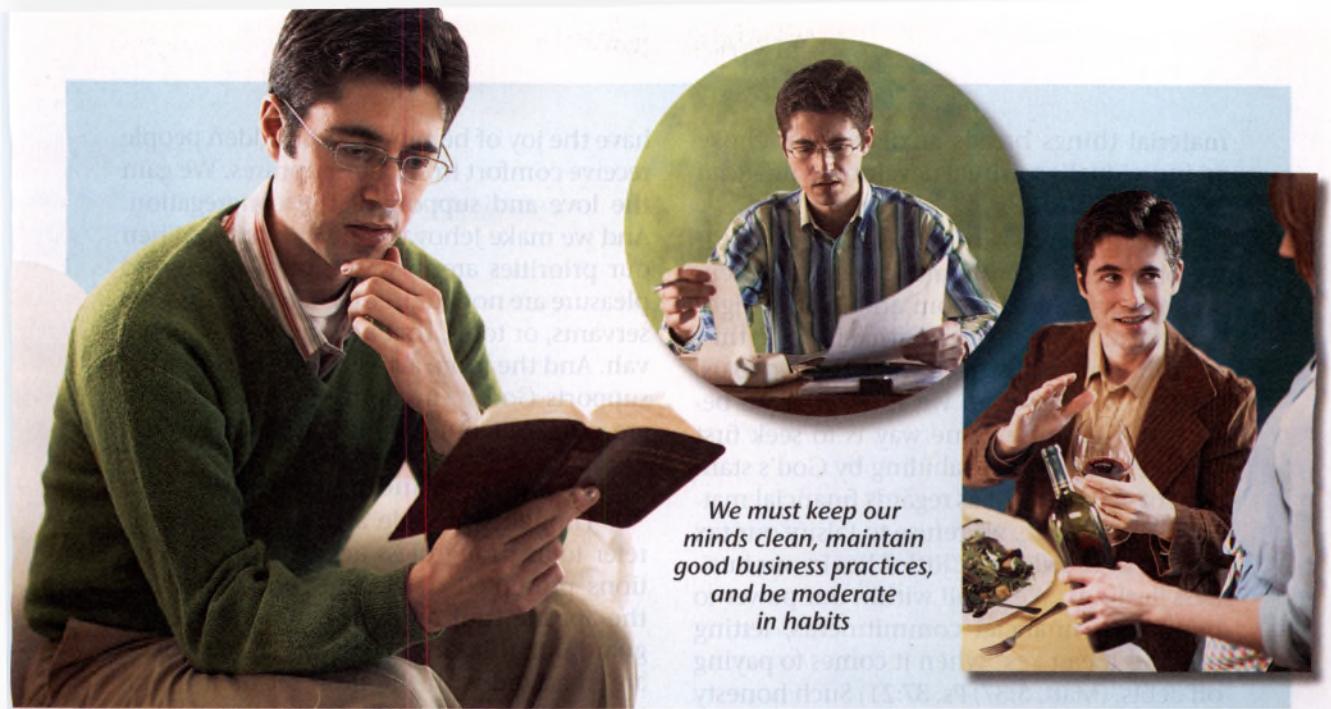
¹² What else can we do to resist the spirit of the world? When Jesus admonished his disciples to "keep awake," he had just warned them of some specific dangers. "Pay attention to yourselves," he said, "that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare."—Luke 21:34, 35.

¹³ Think about that warning. Did Jesus condemn the enjoyment of food and drink? No! He was aware of Solomon's words: "I have come to know that there is nothing better for [the sons of mankind] than to rejoice and to do good during one's life; and also that every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God." (Eccl. 3:12, 13) Yet, Jesus knew that the spirit of the world promotes a lack of self-control in those areas.

¹⁴ How can we be sure that the world's spirit has not poisoned our senses as to the dangers of overeating or heavy drinking? We might ask ourselves: 'How do I react upon reading counsel in the Bible or in our publications about gluttony? Am I inclined to dismiss this admonition as irrelevant or

12. Jesus told his disciples to "pay attention" to whom, and why?

13, 14. It would be fitting to ask ourselves what sort of questions about eating and drinking?



We must keep our minds clean, maintain good business practices, and be moderate in habits

extreme, perhaps offering excuses or justification for my ways?* What is my view of the advice about alcohol, using it—if at all—in moderation and definitely avoiding “drunken bouts”? Do I minimize such advice, feeling that it for some reason does not apply to me? If others express concern about my drinking, do I become defensive or angry? Do I encourage others to downplay such Bible counsel? Yes, a person’s attitude is a gauge as to whether he is succumbing to the world’s spirit.—Compare Romans 13:11-14.

Avoid Being Choked by Anxiety

¹⁵ Another vital step in resisting the spirit of the world involves managing anxiety. Je-

* Gluttony is a mental attitude, one marked by greedy or excessive indulgence. Thus, it is determined, not by someone’s size, but by his attitude toward food. A person may be of normal size, or even be thin, and yet be a glutton. On the other hand, in some cases being overweight is the result of an ailment, or hereditary factors may contribute to obesity. A key issue is whether a person, whatever his or her weight, is excessively greedy as regards eating.—See “Questions From Readers” in the November 1, 2004, issue of *The Watchtower*.

15. Jesus warned against what human tendency?

sus knew that as imperfect creatures, we have a tendency to become anxious about mundane matters. He lovingly said to his disciples: “Stop being anxious.” (Matt. 6:25) It is understandable that we are concerned about important issues, such as pleasing God, caring for Christian responsibilities, and providing the necessities of life for our family. (1 Cor. 7:32-34) What, then, can we learn from Jesus’ warning?

¹⁶ The world’s spirit, with its emphasis on the showy display of one’s means of life, infects many individuals with an unhealthy anxiety. They would have us believe that money equals security and that a person’s worth is measured, not by his spiritual qualities, but by the quantity and quality of his possessions. Those duped by this propaganda will slave to gain riches and are constantly anxious about acquiring the newest, the biggest, the most advanced products. (Prov. 18:11) Such a distorted view of

16. What effect does the world’s spirit have on many people?

material things breeds anxieties that choke an individual's spiritual development.—*Read Matthew 13:18, 22.*

¹⁷ We can avoid being choked by anxiety if we obey Jesus' command: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness." Jesus assures us that if we do this, the things we really need will be added to us. (Matt. 6:33) How can we show that we believe this promise? One way is to seek first God's righteousness—abiding by God's standard of what is right as regards financial matters. For instance, we refuse to falsify our tax returns or to tell even "little" lies in our business dealings. We do all within our power to honor our financial commitments, letting our "Yes mean Yes" when it comes to paying off debts. (Matt. 5:37; Ps. 37:21) Such honesty may not make a person rich, but it brings God's approval, produces a clean conscience, and greatly reduces anxiety.

¹⁸ Seeking first the Kingdom involves having our priorities in order. Consider Jesus' example. At times, he wore a good-quality garment. (John 19:23) He enjoyed food and wine in the company of good friends. (Matt. 11:18, 19) But possessions and entertainment were like seasoning or condiments in his life, not the meat of it. Jesus' food was to do Jehovah's will. (John 4:34-36) Life is so rewarding when we copy Jesus' example! We

17. How can we avoid being choked by anxiety?
18. Jesus set what fine example for us, and how do we benefit by imitating him?

Do You Recall?

- To receive holy spirit, what should we do?
- What are some ways that the world's spirit might affect us?
- How can we resist the spirit of the world?

have the joy of helping downtrodden people receive comfort from the Scriptures. We gain the love and support of the congregation. And we make Jehovah's heart rejoice. When our priorities are in order, possessions and pleasure are not our masters. Rather, they are servants, or tools, that help us worship Jehovah. And the more active we are in work that supports God's Kingdom, the less likely we are to be overcome by the spirit of the world.

Keep On 'Minding the Spirit'

¹⁹ Thoughts precede actions. What many refer to as thoughtless actions are often actions prompted by fleshly thinking. Thus, the apostle Paul reminds us of the need to guard our thinking. He wrote: "Those who are in accord with the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those in accord with the spirit on the things of the spirit."—Rom. 8:5.

²⁰ How can we avoid having our thinking—and thus our actions—dominated by the spirit of the world? We must put a filter on our mind, striving to block out the world's propaganda to the extent possible. For example, when choosing entertainment, we refuse to let our minds be sullied by programs that glorify immorality or violence. We realize that God's holy, or clean, spirit will not reside in a dirty mind. (Ps. 11:5; 2 Cor. 6:15-18) In addition, we invite God's spirit into our minds through regular Bible reading, prayer, meditation, and meeting attendance. And we work along with that spirit as we regularly share in the Christian preaching work.

²¹ Certainly, we must resist the spirit of the world and the fleshly desires it fosters. But doing so is worth our earnest effort because, as Paul states, "the minding of the flesh means death, but the minding of the spirit means life and peace."—Rom. 8:6.

- 19-21. How can we keep 'minding the spirit,' and why should we do so?



MARKETPLACE WITNESSING

WHEN in the city of Athens, the apostle Paul went every day to the marketplace to preach the good news about Jesus. (Acts 17:17) Paul chose the marketplace because that was the center of Athenian life.

Almost 2,000 years later, Jehovah's people still use the marketplace to spread the message of God's Kingdom. Why? Because many people can be found there. Today, the marketplace may be a shopping center or a mall. After having obtained permission from the manager or owner, some Witnesses have used a table or a booth for displaying Bible literature.

For example, at a shopping mall in New Jersey, U.S.A., an attractive display of literature was arranged on the theme "Maintaining Family Values—How?" The result? In one

day, 153 books in six languages were placed.

One woman who approached the literature booth listened attentively to the explanation given by one of the Witnesses. The woman agreed that it is important to have God in our life and in our family. She obtained the following publications: *Learn From the Great Teacher*, *The Secret of Family Happiness*, and *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*.

In the early afternoon, a man passed by the display of literature as he was about to enter the store next to it. His eyes were drawn to the *Young People Ask* book. The sister standing in the booth noticed a curious look on his face. She asked him, "Is there a book that interests you?" He nodded and pointed to the *Young People Ask* book. She

handed him the book, which he was already reaching for. He said that he has three children. As the conversation continued, he mentioned that he has discussions with them once a week. His two oldest children are teenagers. While scanning the book, he said that he could very easily use it as a guide for some of their family discussions. The publisher also directed his attention to *The Secret of Family Happiness*, assuring him that he and his wife would find some very helpful advice on making family decisions. The man was grateful for the suggestion, made a donation, and accepted the offer to have someone visit them.

How did the Witnesses feel about their

day of witnessing in the mall? "I personally enjoyed this avenue of preaching," said one sister. "What an experience it was for me!" Another sister said: "Jehovah says that the good news will be preached to the most distant part of the earth. Today, in Paramus, New Jersey, this good news touched people of different languages. It was wonderful to be a part of this arrangement. Everyone who participated in it was happy. None of us wanted to leave at the end of the day."

Can you expand the ways in which you preach the good news? Our primary method is that of going from house to house. (Acts 20:20) However, would you consider witnessing in the marketplace or in the mall?

IMITATE JESUS RENDER ACCEPTABLE WORSHIP TO GOD

God lovingly invites people "out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues" to worship him. (Rev. 7:9, 10; 15:3, 4) Those who accept this invitation can "behold the pleasantness of Jehovah." (Ps. 27:4; 90:17) Like the psalmist, they raise their voices in praise to God, saying: "Let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before Jehovah our Maker."—Ps. 95:6.

Highly Valued Worship

As God's only-begotten Son, Jesus had ample opportunity to learn his Father's thinking, principles, and standards. Thus, Jesus could confidently point the way to true wor-

ship. He said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."—John 1:14; 14:6.

Jesus set the perfect example of humble submission to his Father. He said: "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things." Then he added: "I always do the things pleasing to him." (John 8:28, 29) In what ways did Jesus please his Father?

For one thing, Jesus was fully devoted to his Father, and that is the essence of what it means to worship God. Jesus demonstrated a personal attachment to his Father by being obedient to Him, doing His will, even when

it involved great personal hardship. (Phil. 2:7, 8) An important aspect of Jesus' worship was his engaging regularly in the disciple-making work, to the point that he was called Teacher by both believers and unbelievers. (Matt. 22:23, 24; John 3:2) Moreover, Jesus expended himself in behalf of others. His self-sacrificing spirit left him little time for himself, but he was happy to minister to others. (Matt. 14:13, 14; 20:28) Despite being busy, Jesus always made time to speak to his heavenly Father in prayer. (Luke 6:12) How priceless Jesus' worship was to God!

The Struggle to Please God Well

Jehovah took note of his Son's conduct and expressed His approval. (Matt. 17:5) However, Satan the Devil also noticed Jesus' faithful life course. Thus, Jesus became a special target of Satan. Why? Because no human had yet maintained complete obedience to God, thereby worshipping him fully. And the Devil wanted to stop Jesus from rendering the worship that Jehovah so rightly deserved.—Rev. 4:11.

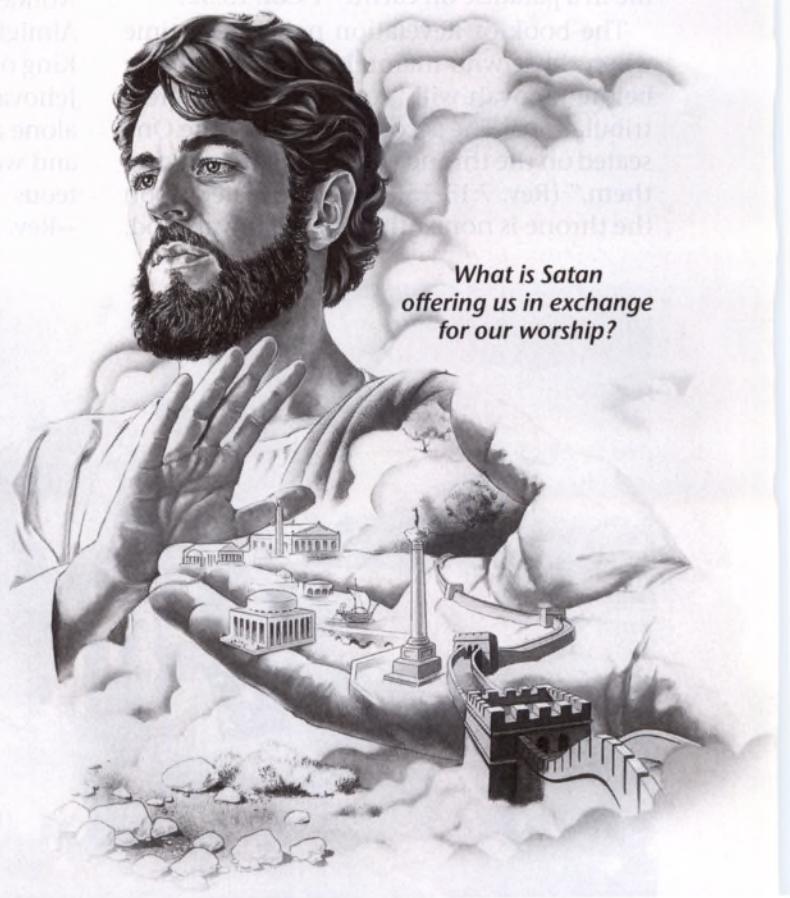
In an effort to corrupt Jesus, Satan approached him with a tempting offer. He took Jesus to "an unusually high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their glory." Then he said: "All these things I will give you if you fall down and do an act of worship to me." How did Jesus react? He said: "Go away, Satan! For it is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'" (Matt. 4:8-10) Yes, Jesus recognized that it would be an idolatrous act to bow down to Satan no matter what the benefit might seem to be. He was unwilling to render even one act of worship to anyone other than Jehovah.

In our case, Satan may not offer us all the kingdoms of the world and their glory in exchange for our worship. But he is still trying to disrupt the worship that sincere Christians render to God. The Devil wants us to worship someone or something else.—2 Cor. 4:4.

Christ Jesus proved himself faithful even to death. By maintaining his integrity to God, Jesus glorified Jehovah in a way that no other human had. As for true Christians today, we strive to follow Jesus' faithful life course by putting our worship of the Creator above all else. Indeed, a good relationship with God is our most precious possession.

Blessings From Rendering Acceptable Worship

Promoting "the form of worship that is clean and undefiled" from God's standpoint brings many blessings. (Jas. 1:27) For example, we live at a time when more and more



What is Satan offering us in exchange for our worship?

people are “lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming,” and “without love of goodness.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Within God’s household, however, we have the privilege of associating with a clean, wholesome people who strive to uphold God’s standards for worshipping him. Is that not a source of refreshment?

By remaining undefiled by this world, we have the added blessing of a clean conscience. We want to maintain a clean conscience by submitting to God’s righteous principles and by obeying those of Caesar’s laws that are not out of harmony with God’s laws.—Mark 12:17; Acts 5:27-29.

Whole-souled worship brings blessings of another sort. When we focus on doing God’s will rather than our own, our life becomes meaningful and satisfying. Instead of saying: “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die,” we have the reliable hope of everlasting life in a paradise on earth.—1 Cor. 15:32.

The book of Revelation points to a time when those who maintain a clean standing before Jehovah will “come out of the great tribulation.” The account says that “the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them.” (Rev. 7:13-15) That one seated upon the throne is none other than Jehovah God,

the most glorious Person in the universe. Try to imagine what a joy it will be when he welcomes you as a guest in his tent, supplying you with his protective care so that no harm will befall you! And to a certain extent, we can enjoy his protection and care even now.

Moreover, all who render worship acceptable to God are described as being guided to “fountains of waters of life.” These refreshing fountains represent all the provisions that Jehovah makes for our gaining everlasting life. Yes, by means of Christ’s ransom, “God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.” (Rev. 7:17) Mankind will be lifted to perfection, bringing untold joy to those having the prospect of living forever on earth. Even now, happy worshippers of God cry out joyfully, expressing their heartfelt appreciation to Jehovah and worshipping him along with those in heaven who sing: “Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal? For all the nations will come and worship before you, because your righteous decrees have been made manifest.”—Rev. 15:3, 4.



Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Letters to the Thessalonians and to Timothy

THE new congregation in Thessalonica has experienced opposition ever since it was formed when the apostle Paul visited there. So when Timothy—perhaps in his 20's—returns from there with a good report, Paul is moved to write the Thessalonians a letter to commend and encourage them. Likely composed late in 50 C.E., that letter is the first of Paul's inspired writings. Shortly thereafter, he writes the Christians in Thessalonica a second letter. This time, he corrects an erroneous viewpoint held by some and exhorts the brothers to stand firm in the faith.

About ten years later, Paul is in Macedonia and Timothy is in Ephesus. Paul writes to Timothy, encouraging him to stay in Ephesus and carry on spiritual warfare against false teachers inside the congregation. When a wave of persecution is unleashed upon Christians in the wake of a fire that ravages Rome in 64 C.E., Paul writes his second letter to Timothy. It is the last of his inspired writings. We today can benefit from the encouragement and counsel given in these four letters of Paul.—Heb. 4:12.

"STAY AWAKE" (1 Thess. 1:1-5:28)

Paul commends the Thessalonians for 'their faithful work, their loving labor, and their endurance.' He tells them that they are his 'hope and joy and crown of exultation.'—1 Thess. 1:3; 2:19.

After encouraging the Christians in Thessalonica to comfort one another with the resurrection hope, Paul states: "Jehovah's day is

coming exactly as a thief in the night." He counsels them to "stay awake" and keep their senses.—1 Thess. 4:16-18; 5:2, 6.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

4:15-17—Who are "caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air," and how does this happen? These are anointed Christians who are alive during Christ's presence in Kingdom power. They "meet the Lord" Jesus in the invisible heavenly realm. To experience this, though, they first need to die and be resurrected as spirit creatures. (Rom. 6:3-5; 1 Cor. 15:35, 44) Christ's presence has already begun, so anointed Christians who die today do not remain dead. They are "caught away," or raised instantly.—1 Cor. 15:51, 52.

5:23—What did Paul mean when he prayed that "the spirit and soul and body of [the] brothers be preserved"? Paul was referring to the spirit, soul, and body of the composite Christian congregation, which included spirit-anointed Christians in Thessalonica. Instead of simply praying that the congregation be preserved, he prayed for the preservation of its "spirit," or mental disposition. He also prayed for its "soul," its life, or existence, and for its "body"—the composite body of anointed Christians. (1 Cor. 12:12, 13) The prayer thus highlights Paul's intense concern for the congregation.

Lessons for Us:

1:3, 7; 2:13; 4:1-12; 5:15. An effective way to give counsel is to mix due commendation with encouragement to do better.

4:1, 9, 10. Jehovah's worshippers should continue to make spiritual progress.

5:1-3, 8, 20, 21. As Jehovah's day approaches, we should "keep our senses and have on the breastplate of faith and love and as a helmet the hope of salvation." Moreover, we should pay serious attention to God's prophetic Word, the Bible.

"STAND FIRM"

(2 Thess. 1:1-3:18)

Twisting what Paul said in his first letter, some in the congregation apparently contend that "the presence of [the] Lord" is at hand. To correct that viewpoint, Paul relates what has to 'come first.'—2 Thess. 2:1-3.

Paul exhorts: "Stand firm and maintain your hold on the traditions that you were taught." He gives them orders "to withdraw from every brother walking disorderly."—2 Thess. 2:15; 3:6.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

2:3, 8—Who is "the man of lawlessness," and how will he be done away with? This composite "man" is the clergy class of Christendom. The one authorized to declare God's judgments against the wicked and to give orders to execute them is "the Word"—God's Chief Spokesman, Jesus Christ. (John 1:1) Hence, it can be said that Jesus will do away with the man of lawlessness "by the spirit [activating force] of his mouth."

2:13, 14—How have the anointed Christians been 'selected from the beginning for salvation'? The anointed as a class were foreordained when Jehovah purposed for the seed of the woman to bruise Satan in the head. (Gen. 3:15) Jehovah also prescribed the requirements they must meet, the work they would do, and the testing they would undergo. He thus called them for 'this destiny.'

Lessons for Us:

1:6-9. Jehovah's judgments are executed selectively.

3:8-12. The nearness of Jehovah's day should not be used as an excuse for not working to provide for our needs and to support ourselves in the ministry. Idleness can make us lazy and induce us to become "a busybody in other people's matters."—1 Pet. 4:15.

"GUARD WHAT IS LAID UP IN TRUST WITH YOU"

(1 Tim. 1:1-6:21)

Paul instructs Timothy to "go on waging the fine warfare; holding faith and a good conscience." The apostle outlines qualifications for appointed men in the congregation. Paul also instructs Timothy to "turn down the false stories which violate what is holy."—1 Tim. 1:18, 19; 3:1-10, 12, 13; 4:7.

"Do not severely criticize an older man," Paul writes. He urges Timothy: "Guard what is laid up in trust with you, turning away from the empty speeches that violate what is holy and from the contradictions of the falsely called 'knowledge.'"—1 Tim. 5:1; 6:20.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:18; 4:14—What "predictions" were voiced concerning Timothy? They may have been certain prophecies concerning Timothy's future role in the Christian congregation, uttered under inspiration when Paul visited Lystra during his second missionary journey. (Acts 16:1, 2) Based on these "predictions," the older men of the congregation "laid their hands" upon young Timothy, setting him apart for a specific service.

2:15—How is a woman "kept safe through childbearing"? Childbearing, caring for her children, and managing a household can keep a woman "safe" from becoming an unoccupied 'gossipier and meddler in other people's affairs.'—1 Tim. 5:11-15.

3:16—What is the sacred secret of godly devotion? Whether perfect obedience to Jehovah's sovereignty is possible for humans or not was a secret for ages. Jesus provided the answer by maintaining perfect integrity to God until his death.

6:15, 16—Do these words apply to Jehovah God or to Jesus Christ? These words apply to the one whose manifestation they describe, namely, Jesus Christ. (1 Tim. 6:14) In comparison with humans who rule as kings and as lords, Jesus is the "only Potentate," and he alone has immortality. (Dan. 7:14; Rom. 6:9) Since his ascension to the invisible heavens, no man on earth "can see" him with literal eyes.

Lessons for Us:

4:15. Regardless of whether we have embraced Christianity recently or long ago, we should strive to be progressive and continue to make spiritual advancement.

6:2. If we are employed by a fellow believer, rather than take advantage of him in any way, we should serve him even more readily than we would someone outside the congregation.

"PREACH THE WORD, BE AT IT URGENTLY" **(2 Tim. 1:1–4:22)**

To prepare Timothy for the difficult times ahead, Paul writes: "God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of soundness of mind." Timothy is advised: "A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but needs to be gentle toward all, qualified to teach."—2 Tim. 1:7; 2:24.

"Continue in the things that you learned and were persuaded to believe," Paul exhorts Timothy. Apostate teachings were spreading, so the apostle counsels the younger overseer: "Preach the word, be at it urgently . . . , reprove, reprimand, exhort."—2 Tim. 3:14; 4:2.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:13—What is "the pattern of healthful words"? The "healthful words" are "those of our Lord Jesus Christ"—true Christian teachings. (1 Tim. 6:3) What Jesus taught and did was in harmony with God's Word, thus the expression "healthful words" can also by extension refer to all Bible teachings. These teachings can help us to see what Jehovah requires of us. We keep holding to this pattern by practicing what we have learned from the Bible.

4:13—What were "the parchments"? The designation "parchments" refers to a writing material of prepared leather. It is possible that Paul was asking for portions of the Hebrew Scriptures so that he could study them during his imprisonment in Rome. Some of the scrolls could have been of papyrus but others of parchment.

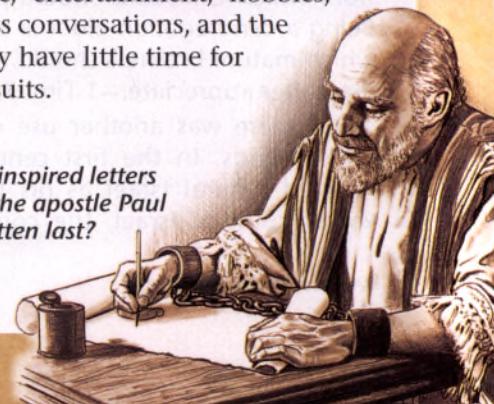
Lessons for Us:

1:5; 3:15. The fundamental reason why Timothy had faith in Christ Jesus, that is, faith that influenced everything Timothy did, was the early Scriptural education he received at home. How vital it is that family members think seriously about how they are fulfilling this responsibility toward God and their children!

1:16–18. When our fellow believers undergo trials, face persecution, or are imprisoned, let us pray for them and do all we can to help them.—Prov. 3:27; 1 Thess. 5:25.

2:22. Christians, especially youths, should not be so preoccupied with bodybuilding, sports, music, entertainment, hobbies, travel, aimless conversations, and the like, that they have little time for spiritual pursuits.

Which of the inspired letters composed by the apostle Paul was written last?



Questions From Readers

In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul spoke of “the laying on of the hands.” Was he referring to the appointing of elders or to something different?—Heb. 6:2.

There is no reason to be dogmatic, but Paul was likely referring to the laying on of hands to transmit gifts of the spirit.

The Bible does speak of the laying on of hands in connection with theocratic appointments. Moses “laid his hand upon” Joshua when appointing him as successor. (Deut. 34:9) In the Christian arrangement, some qualified men were appointed by the laying on of hands. (Acts 6:6; 1 Tim. 4:14) Paul advised against laying hands hastily upon a man.—1 Tim. 5:22.

However, Paul urged Hebrew Christians to “press on to maturity” now that they had left “the primary doctrine.” He then listed “repentance from dead works, and faith toward God, the teaching on baptisms and the laying on of the hands.” (Heb. 6:1, 2) Would the appointing of elders be just a *primary* thing from which Christians should *press on*? No. Being a congregation elder is a goal toward which mature brothers should reach out and thereafter appreciate.—1 Tim. 3:1.

But there was another use of the laying on of hands. In the first century, Jehovah rejected natural Israel as his people in favor of spiritual Israel, the congregation of

anointed Christians. (Matt. 21:43; Acts 15:14; Gal. 6:16) Miraculous gifts of the spirit, such as speaking in tongues, gave evidence of that change. (1 Cor. 12:4-11) When Cornelius and his household became believers, these new ones received holy spirit, as manifested by their “speaking with tongues.”—Acts 10:44-46.

At times, miraculous gifts were transmitted by the laying on of hands. When Philip spread the good news in Samaria, many got baptized. The governing body sent the apostles Peter and John there. Why? We read: “Then [these two] went laying their hands upon [the recently baptized people], and they began to receive holy spirit.” That must have meant that they received the gifts of the spirit, abilities that were observable. We know this because Simon, who formerly practiced magical arts, saw this operation of the spirit and greedily tried to buy the ability to lay his hands on others to impart holy spirit with miraculous results. (Acts 8:5-20) Later, 12 persons in Ephesus were baptized. We read: “When Paul laid his hands upon them, the holy spirit came upon them, and they began speaking with tongues and prophesying.”—Acts 19:1-7; compare 2 Timothy 1:6.

Hence, at Hebrews 6:2, Paul was apparently referring to the laying on of hands to transmit gifts of the spirit to new believers.

