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# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
MAY 1–JUNE 4, 2023

## SONG 34

Walking in Integrity

## PREVIEW

Baptism is a vital step for every Bible student. What can move a student to take that step? In a word, love. But love for what and for whom? In this article, we will find the answers and discuss what kind of life we can expect as baptized Christians.

## Why Get Baptized?

*“Let each one of you be baptized.”—ACTS 2:38.*

HAVE you ever watched a group of baptism candidates? You hear the conviction in their voices as they answer the two questions before they get baptized. You see family members and friends beaming. When the candidates come up out of the water, you hear the applause and see the joy that radiates on their faces. On average, thousands each week take that step, becoming dedicated, baptized Witnesses of Jehovah God.

<sup>2</sup> What about you? If you are thinking about getting baptized, you are a bright spot in this wicked world as someone who is “seeking Jehovah.” (Ps. 14:1, 2) This article is addressed to you whether you are young or old. But those of us who are already baptized also want to strengthen our determination to serve Jehovah forever. So let us consider together three of the many reasons for serving Jehovah.

### YOU LOVE TRUTH AND RIGHTEOUSNESS

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah commanded his people to “love truth.” (Zech. 8:19) Jesus urged his followers to pursue righteousness. (Matt. 5:6) This means that one needs to have a strong desire to do what is right, good, and clean in God’s eyes. Do you love truth and righteousness? We are sure that you do. You hate lies and all that is wrong and wicked. **(Read Psalm 119:128, 163.)** Lies reflect the personality of Satan, the ruler of this world. (John 8:44; 12:

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1-2. What often happens when people get baptized, and what should you consider?

3. Why do Jehovah’s servants love truth and righteousness? (Psalm 119:128, 163)

31) One of Satan's goals is to slander the holy name of Jehovah God. Satan has been spreading lies about our God since the rebellion in Eden. He portrayed Jehovah as a selfish and dishonest Ruler who withholds good from humans. (Gen. 3:1, 4, 5) Satan's lies about Jehovah have continued to poison the minds and hearts of people. When humans choose not to "love truth," Satan can lead them into all kinds of unrighteous and wicked conduct.—Rom. 1: 25-31.

4 Jehovah is "the God of truth," and he generously teaches the truth to those who love him. (Ps. 31:5) By doing so, he lifts them up, freeing them from Satan's lies. Jehovah also teaches his servants to be honest and righteous. They thus find a measure of dignity and inner peace. (Prov. 13:5, 6) Has he done that for you as you have studied the Bible? You have learned that Jehovah's ways are best for all humankind and for you personally. (Ps. 77:13) So you want to take your stand for God's righteousness. (Matt. 6:33) You want to defend truth and help to disprove the slander about our God, Jehovah. How can you do that?

5 You can choose a life course that says, in effect: "I reject Satan's lies, and I uphold the truth. I want Jehovah as my Sovereign, and I want to do what he says is right." How do you take such a stand? Approach Jehovah in prayer and dedi-

4. How has Jehovah proved to be "the God of truth"? (See also picture.)

5. How can you stand up for truth and righteousness?



Satan has slandered Jehovah's good name for thousands of years and continues to do so  
(See paragraphs 3-4)

cate yourself to him and then make that dedication public by getting baptized. Love for what is true and right is a powerful motive for choosing to get baptized.

### YOU LOVE JESUS CHRIST

6 Why do you love Jesus Christ? Note some compelling reasons found at **Psalm 45:4. (Read.)** Jesus stands for truth, humility, and righteousness. If you love truth and righteousness, it is

6. What reasons does Psalm 45:4 give you for loving Jesus Christ?



understandable that you also love Jesus Christ. Think of how Jesus courageously defended what is true and right. (John 18:37) How, though, does Jesus promote humility?

<sup>7</sup> Jesus promotes humility by his example. For instance, he directs all glory to his Father, never to himself. (Mark 10:17, 18; John 5:19) How do you feel about seeing such humility? Does it not move you to love God's Son and to follow him? Surely it does. Why is Jesus humble? Because he loves and imitates his Father, who is humble. (Ps. 18:35; Heb. 1:3) Are you not drawn to Jesus, who perfectly reflects Jehovah's qualities?

<sup>8</sup> We love Jesus as our King because he is the ideal Ruler. Jehovah himself trained his Son and appointed him to rule. (Isa. 50:4, 5) Think, too, of the self-sacrificing love Jesus has shown. (John 13:1) As your King, Jesus fully deserves your love. He explained that those who truly love him—those whom he calls his friends—show their love by obeying his commands. (John 14:15; 15:14, 15) What an honor it is to be a friend of Jehovah's Son!

<sup>9</sup> One of Jesus' commands is that his followers get baptized. (Matt. 28:19, 20) He set the example. In some ways, his baptism is different from that of his followers. (See the box "The Baptism of Jesus and the Baptism of His Followers—How They Differ.") But in other ways, it is similar. In getting baptized, Jesus

presented himself to do his Father's will. (Heb. 10:7) Similarly, Christ's followers get baptized as a public symbol that they have dedicated themselves to Jehovah God. Their life is now focused on doing his will, not their own. So they are following their Master's example.

<sup>10</sup> You accept Jesus as Jehovah's only-begotten Son and as the King whom God has appointed to rule over us. You see Jesus as a perfect, humble reflection of his Father. You have learned that he fed the hungry, comforted the discouraged, and even healed the sick. (Matt. 14:14-21) You have seen how he leads his congregation today. (Matt. 23:10) And you know that he will do far more in the future as King of God's Kingdom. How can you show that you love him? By following his example. (John 14:21) You can begin to do just that by dedicating yourself to Jehovah and getting baptized.

### YOU LOVE JEHOVAH GOD

<sup>11</sup> What is the most important reason for getting baptized? Jesus revealed what is the greatest of God's commandments, saying: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength." (Mark 12:30) Do those words describe your love for God?

<sup>12</sup> There are so many reasons to love Jehovah. For example, you have come to understand that he is "the source of

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7. What do you find appealing about Jesus' humility?

8. Why do we love Jesus as our King?

9. How is the baptism of Christians similar to that of Christ?

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10. Why should love for Jesus motivate you to get baptized?

11. What would you say is the most important reason for getting baptized, and why is that so?

12. Why do you love Jehovah? (See also picture.)

## The Baptism of Jesus and the Baptism of His Followers—How They Differ



### Jesus' Baptism:

He did not need to dedicate himself to Jehovah, for he was born into a nation dedicated to God.—Ex. 19:4-8.

He did not need to repent of a sinful course or to request a clean conscience, for he was a perfect, sinless man.—Heb. 4:15; 1 Pet. 2:22.



### Baptism of Christ's Followers:

There is no race or nationality today that is dedicated to Jehovah as was ancient Israel. (Acts 10:34, 35) Jesus' followers today dedicate themselves to Jehovah before baptism.

For imperfect humans, getting baptized involves repenting of past sins and requesting a clean conscience.—Acts 2:38; 1 Pet. 3:21.

life” and that he is the Giver of “every good gift and every perfect present.” (Ps. 36:9; Jas. 1:17) Every good thing that you enjoy comes from our generous, loving God.

<sup>13</sup> The ransom is a wonderful gift that Jehovah has given to us. Why can we say that? Consider the bond that exists between Jehovah and his Son. Jesus said: “The Father loves me” and “I love the Father.” (John 10:17; 14:31) The bond between them grew stronger over the course of billions of years. (Prov. 8:22, 23, 30) Now think how it must have

pained God to allow his Son to suffer and die. Jehovah loves mankind—including you—so much that he was willing to give his beloved Son as a sacrifice to enable you and others to live forever. (John 3:16; Gal. 2:20) There can be no greater reason to love God.

<sup>14</sup> Your love for Jehovah has grown as you have learned more about him. Surely you want to draw closer to him now and forever. And you can. He kindly encourages you to make his heart rejoice. (Prov. 23:15, 16) You can do that not

13. What makes the ransom such a wonderful gift?

14. What is the best goal in life you could ever choose?



Jehovah is the Source of every good thing you have ever enjoyed and will ever enjoy  
(See paragraphs 12-13)

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only by words but also by actions. The way you live your life will show that you truly love Jehovah. (1 John 5:3) That is the best goal in life you could ever choose.

<sup>15</sup> How can you demonstrate your love for Jehovah? First, you offer a special prayer in which you dedicate yourself to the only true God. (Ps. 40:8) Then, you make that private dedication public by getting baptized. As we discussed earlier in this article, that becomes a happy milestone, a great turning point. You start out on a new life, not for yourself, but for Jehovah. (Rom. 14:8; 1 Pet. 4:1, 2) That may sound like a big step to take, and it is. But it opens the way for the very best life. How so?

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah is the most generous Person. No matter what you give him, he

will always give you back far more. (Mark 10:29, 30) He will give you the most interesting, rewarding, and fulfilling life possible, even now in this dying old world. And that is just the beginning. The journey that begins with your baptism does not have to end. You can go on serving your beloved Father forever. The love between you and your Father will continue to grow, and you will actually live as long as he lives, for all eternity.—**Read Psalm 41:12.**

<sup>17</sup> When you take the steps of dedication and baptism, you have the privilege of giving something truly precious to your Father. He has given you every good thing, every happy moment, that you have ever enjoyed. In response, you can give the Owner of heaven and earth something that he does not already have—your willing, devoted service. (Job 1:8; 41:11; Prov. 27:11) What better use

15. How can you demonstrate your love for Jehovah?

16. As Psalm 41:12 suggests, how will Jehovah reward those who devote their life to serving him?

17. What can you give Jehovah that he does not already have?

could you ever make of your life? Without a doubt, your love for Jehovah is the best reason to get baptized.

### WHY WAIT?

<sup>18</sup> How, then, do you respond to the question, Will you get baptized? Only you can answer. But it might help if you ask yourself, ‘Why wait?’ (Acts 8:36) Remember the three reasons that we have considered. First, you love truth and righteousness. Ask yourself, ‘Do I want to see the day when everyone will speak the truth and do what is right?’ Second, you love Jesus Christ. Ask yourself, ‘Do I want God’s Son as my King, and do I want to follow his example?’ Third, above all, you love Jehovah. Ask yourself, ‘Do I want to make Jehovah’s heart rejoice by serving him as my God?’ If your answers to those questions are yes, then why *not* get baptized? Why wait?—Acts 16:33.

<sup>19</sup> If you are hesitant about getting

18. What questions might you ask?

19. Why should you not be hesitant about getting baptized? Illustrate. (John 4:34)

baptized, consider an illustration that Jesus used. **(Read John 4:34.)** Note that Jesus compared doing his Father’s will to food. Why? Food is good for us. Jesus knew that everything that Jehovah asks us to do is good for us. Jehovah does not want us to do anything that would result in our harm. Does Jehovah’s will for you include getting baptized? Yes. (Acts 2:38) Then you can be confident that obeying the command to get baptized will benefit you. If you would not hesitate to enjoy the best meal ever, why hesitate to get baptized?

<sup>20</sup> Why wait? Many might answer this way, “I am not ready yet.” The fact is that the decision to dedicate yourself to Jehovah and to get baptized is the most important decision you will ever make. So it does take time, careful thought, and diligent effort to get ready. But if you have a sincere desire to take that step, what can you do now to prepare yourself? We will consider the answer to that question in the following article.

20. What will we consider in the next article?

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## HOW DO THE FOLLOWING MOVE US TO GET BAPTIZED?

■ Love of truth and righteousness

■ Love for Jesus Christ

■ Love for Jehovah God

## SONG 50

My Prayer of Dedication

## PREVIEW

In order to progress toward baptism, we need to have the right motive. We also need to take the right actions. Using the example of an Ethiopian court official, we will consider what steps a Bible student needs to take in order to qualify for baptism.

## Baptism—How to Get Ready

*“What prevents me from getting baptized?”—ACTS 8:36.*

IF YOU are interested in getting baptized, you have set a wonderful goal for yourself. Are you ready to take that step right now? If you believe that you are and the elders agree, do not hesitate to follow through at the next opportunity. A rewarding life in Jehovah’s service awaits you.

<sup>2</sup> On the other hand, have you been told that you need to make further progress before getting baptized? Or do you realize that about yourself? If so, do not be discouraged. You can make progress toward that important step, whether you are young or old.

### “WHAT PREVENTS ME?”

<sup>3</sup> **Read Acts 8:36, 38.** A court official from Ethiopia asked Philip the evangelizer: “What prevents me from getting baptized?” The Ethiopian man desired to get baptized, but was he truly ready for that important step?

<sup>4</sup> The Ethiopian man “had gone to Jerusalem to worship.” (Acts 8:27) He must therefore have been a Jewish proselyte; he had converted to Judaism. No doubt he had learned about Jehovah from the sacred writings of

1-2. If you are not yet ready for baptism, why should you not be discouraged? (See cover picture.)

3. What did an Ethiopian court official ask Philip, and what question arises? (Acts 8:36, 38)

4. How did the Ethiopian show that he was determined to keep learning?





The Ethiopian official was determined to continue taking in knowledge about Jehovah  
(See paragraph 4)

the Hebrew Scriptures. Still, he was eager to learn more. In fact, when Philip met that official on the road, what did Philip find the man doing? Poring over a scroll of the prophet Isaiah's writings. (Acts 8:28) That was solid spiritual food. The court official was not content simply to learn a few basics; he wanted to keep learning.

<sup>5</sup> The man was a high official under Queen Candace of Ethiopia; he "was in charge of all her treasure." (Acts 8:27) So he must have been a busy man with many responsibilities. Yet, he took time to worship Jehovah. He was not content with *learning* the truth; he *acted* on what he learned. He therefore traveled all the way from Ethiopia in order to worship Jehovah at the temple in Jerusalem. That journey must have involved a great deal of time and expense, but the man spared no effort where Jehovah's worship was concerned.

<sup>6</sup> The Ethiopian learned from Philip some vital new truths, including the identity of the Messiah. (Acts 8:34, 35)

5. What did the Ethiopian do about what he learned?

6-7. How did the Ethiopian's love for Jehovah continue to grow?

This court official was surely touched to learn what Jesus had done for him. How would he respond? He could have remained as he was, a respected Jewish proselyte. Instead, his love for Jehovah and His Son grew. He was moved to make the life-changing decision to get baptized as a follower of Jesus Christ. Seeing that the man was ready, Philip baptized him.

<sup>7</sup> If you follow that Ethiopian's example, you can get ready for baptism. You too will be able to say with real confidence, "What prevents me from getting baptized?" Let us consider how you can follow the same steps he took: He kept learning, he acted on what he learned, and he continued to grow in his love for God.

### KEEP LEARNING

<sup>8</sup> **Read John 17:3.** Did these words of Jesus help you decide to study the Bible? That is true for many of us. But do the same words also tell us to keep on learning? Yes. We will never stop "coming to know . . . the only true God." (Eccl. 3:11) For all eternity, we will keep

8. How does John 17:3 apply to you?

learning. The more we learn, the closer we will draw to Jehovah.—Ps. 73:28.

<sup>9</sup> Understandably, learning about Jehovah starts with the basics. In his letter to the Hebrews, the apostle Paul referred to basic teachings as “the elementary things.” He was not belittling “the primary doctrine”; he was comparing it to the milk that nourishes a baby. (Heb. 5:12; 6:1) But he also urged all Christians to keep moving beyond those basic teachings and to learn the deeper truths of God’s Word. Have you developed a hunger for the deeper teachings of the Bible? Are you willing to keep growing, to keep learning about Jehovah and his purposes?

<sup>10</sup> For many of us, though, it is a challenge to study. What about you? At school, did you learn to read and study effectively? Did you find study to be enjoyable and rewarding? Or did you conclude that you are not good at learning from books? If so, you are not alone. However, Jehovah can help you. He is perfect and is the best Teacher there is.

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah calls himself “your Grand Instructor.” (Isa. 30:20, 21) He is a patient, kind, understanding Teacher. He looks for the good in his students. (Ps. 130:3) And he never expects more of us than we can do. Remember, he designed your brain, a wonderful gift. (Ps. 139:14) We have a natural hunger to learn. Our Creator wants us to keep learning for—

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9. What do we need to do after gaining basic knowledge of the truth?

10. Why might some find it a challenge to study?

11. How does Jehovah prove to be the “Grand Instructor”?

ever—and to enjoy it. So it is wise to “form a longing” for Bible truths now. (1 Pet. 2:2) Set goals that you can reach, and stick to a schedule of Bible reading and study. (Josh. 1:8) With Jehovah’s blessing, you will come to enjoy reading and learning about him more and more.

<sup>12</sup> Regularly spend time meditating on Jesus’ life and ministry. Our following Jesus’ steps closely is the key to serving Jehovah, especially in these difficult times. (1 Pet. 2:21) Jesus spoke frankly about the challenges his followers would face. (Luke 14:27, 28) Yet, he was confident that his true followers could succeed, as he did. (John 16:33) Study details of Jesus’ life course, and set goals to imitate him in your daily life.

<sup>13</sup> Knowledge alone is never enough. Its primary value is in how it helps you to learn more about Jehovah and to develop such qualities as love for him and faith in him. (1 Cor. 8:1-3) As you continue learning, keep asking Jehovah to help you gain more faith. (Luke 17:5) He generously answers such prayers. Genuine faith based on accurate knowledge of our God will help you take further action.—Jas. 2:26.

### KEEP ACTING ON WHAT YOU LEARN

<sup>14</sup> The apostle Peter highlighted how important it is for followers of Christ to keep acting on what they learn. He re-

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12. Why should we focus on Jesus in our personal study?

13. What should you keep asking Jehovah for, and why?

14. How did the apostle Peter highlight the importance of acting on what we learn? (See also picture.)

ferred to the Bible account about Noah. Jehovah told Noah that by means of a flood, He was going to bring destruction on the wicked people of that day. Simply knowing that a flood was coming was not enough to save Noah and his family. Note that Peter referred to the time period before the Flood ***“while the ark was being constructed.”*** (1 Pet. 3:20) Yes, Noah and his family acted on what they learned from God by building an ark, a huge vessel. (Heb. 11:7) Peter then compared what Noah did to baptism, writing: “Baptism, which corresponds to this, is also now saving you.” (1 Pet. 3:21) In a sense, we might compare the work you are doing now to prepare for baptism to the work Noah and his family did for years to build the ark. What work do you need to do in order to get ready for baptism?

<sup>15</sup> One of the first things we must do is sincerely repent of our sins. (Acts 2:37, 38) Genuine repentance leads to genuine change. Have you put away any practices that displease Jehovah, such as living immorally, using tobacco, or using foul or abusive language? (1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 4:29) If you have not yet done so, keep trying to make changes. Talk to the person studying the Bible with you, or ask the congregation elders for help and guidance. If you are young and are living at home, keep asking your parents for help to break any bad habits that might prevent you from getting baptized.

<sup>16</sup> It is also important to follow a good

15. What does genuine repentance involve?

16. What does a good spiritual routine include?



Before the Flood, Noah and his family faithfully acted on what they learned  
(See paragraph 14)

spiritual routine. That would include attending Christian meetings and participating in them. (Heb. 10:24, 25) And once you qualify to engage in the Christian ministry, make that part of your routine as well. The more you share in that lifesaving work, the more you will enjoy it. (2 Tim. 4:5) If you are young and living at home, ask yourself: ‘Do my parents need to remind me to attend

You can express your gratitude to Jehovah daily  
(See paragraph 19)



the meetings or to join in the ministry? Or do I take the initiative myself?’ By taking such actions on your own, you express your faith and show your love and gratitude to Jehovah God. These are “deeds of godly devotion,” gifts you offer to Jehovah. (2 Pet. 3:11; Heb. 13:15) All gifts that we offer freely and without being pressured are pleasing to our God. (Compare 2 Corinthians 9:7.) We take such actions because we delight in offering our best to Jehovah.

#### KEEP GROWING IN YOUR LOVE FOR JEHOVAH

<sup>17</sup> As you continue to progress toward baptism, you will face challenges. Some people may ridicule you for your new faith; they may even oppose or persecute you. (2 Tim. 3:12) As you work to overcome a bad habit, you may suffer an occasional relapse. Or you may just feel impatient and frustrated because your goal seems far away. What will help you to endure? A vital quality—love for Jehovah.

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17-18. What vital quality will help you to progress toward baptism, and why? (Proverbs 3:3-6)

<sup>18</sup> Your love for Jehovah is a beautiful quality, the very best you have. **(Read Proverbs 3:3-6.)** Strong love for God can help you to face life’s challenges successfully. The Bible often refers to Jehovah’s loyal love for his servants. This is a strong attachment that never quits, never lets go. (Ps. 100:5) You are made in God’s image. (Gen. 1:26) How can you reflect that kind of love?

<sup>19</sup> Start with gratitude. (1 Thess. 5:18) Each day, ask yourself, ‘How has Jehovah shown love to me?’ Then make sure to thank Jehovah in your prayers, mentioning specific things that he has done for you. See his acts of love as personal, directed to you as an individual, just as the apostle Paul came to realize this about Jehovah. **(Read Galatians 2:20.)** Ask yourself, ‘Do I want to show him my love in return?’ Love for Jehovah will help you to keep resisting temptations and to face challenges with success. It will move you to hold on to your spiritual routine, consistently

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19. How can you deepen your gratitude for all that Jehovah has done for you? (Galatians 2:20)



showing your love for your Father day by day.

<sup>20</sup> In time, your love for Jehovah will move you to say a special prayer. You will dedicate yourself to God. Remember, once you are dedicated to Jehovah, you have this marvelous prospect: You can belong to him for all eternity. A vow of dedication to Jehovah endures beyond life's ups and downs. It never needs to be renewed. True, when we make a dedication, we are taking a serious step. Consider this, though: You will make many decisions in your life, some of them very good, but you will never make a better one than that of dedicating your life to Jehovah. (Ps. 50:14) Satan will try to weaken your love for your Father, hoping that you will give up your integrity. Never let Satan win! (Job 27:5) Your strong love for Jehovah will

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20. What is involved in dedicating yourself to Jehovah, and how important is this decision?

help you live up to your dedication and grow ever closer to your heavenly Father.

<sup>21</sup> After you make your dedication to Jehovah, talk to the elders in your congregation about taking that next vital step. Always remember, though, that baptism is not the end but the beginning. It begins an endless life course of serving Jehovah. So strengthen your love for your Father now. Set goals so that your love can grow stronger day by day. Such a course will lead you to baptism. That will be a wonderful day. But this is just the beginning. May your love for Jehovah and for his Son keep on growing forever!

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21. Why can we say that baptism is not the end but the beginning?

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**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 12:** A young sister tells Jehovah in prayer how grateful she is for what he has provided.

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## HOW DO THE FOLLOWING STEPS LEAD TO BAPTISM?

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| ■ Continuing to learn about Jehovah | ■ Continuing to act on what you learn | ■ Continuing to grow in your love for Jehovah |
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## Why did the man called “So-and-so” say it would “ruin” his own inheritance if he married Ruth? (Ruth 4:1, 6)

■ If a married man in Bible times died childless, some questions needed answering: What would happen to any land he owned? Would his family name be lost forever? The Mosaic Law addressed such questions.

What happened to the land of a man who died or who became poor and sold his land? A brother or a close relative could redeem, or repurchase, that land. This would keep it within the family.—Lev. 25:23-28; Num. 27:8-11.

How was the deceased man’s family name preserved? By means of levirate, or brother-in-law, marriage, which was used in the case of Ruth. A man would marry his brother’s widow to produce an heir who would take on the dead man’s name and inherit his property. This loving arrangement also cared for the widow.—Deut. 25:5-7; Matt. 22:23-28.

Consider the example of Naomi. She was married to a man named Elimelech. When he and their two sons died, she was left without a breadwinner to care for her. (Ruth 1:1-5) Once back in Judah, Naomi directed her daughter-in-law Ruth to ask Boaz to act as a repurchaser of the land. He was a close relative of Elimelech. (Ruth 2:1, 19, 20; 3:1-4) But Boaz realized that another relative, whom the Bible calls “So-and-so,” was a closer relative. He thus had first claim to act as a repurchaser.—Ruth 3:9, 12, 13.

Initially, “So-and-so” was willing to help. (Ruth 4:1-4) Although it would involve some expense, he realized that Naomi would be unable to bear a child who would inherit the land from Elimelech. The land would, in effect, be added to So-and-so’s land inheritance, so this could appear to be a good investment.

But So-and-so changed his mind when he realized that Ruth was available for re-

marriage. He said: “I am unable to repurchase it, for I may ruin my own inheritance.” (Ruth 4:5, 6) Why did he change his mind?

If So-and-so or someone else married Ruth and she gave birth to a son, that son would inherit Elimelech’s land. How would this “ruin” So-and-so’s “inheritance”? The Bible does not say, but here are some possible ways.

- First, the money he spent would seem to be a waste, for Elimelech’s land ultimately would not be his. It would go to Ruth’s son.
- Second, he would have the responsibility to feed and care for both Naomi and Ruth.
- Third, if Ruth bore other children by So-and-so, they would share the inheritance with any children he had.
- Fourth, if So-and-so did not have other children of his own, a son Ruth bore would have rights to both Elimelech’s and So-and-so’s land. He would thus lose his land to a child who bore Elimelech’s name, not his. So-and-so was not willing to risk his inheritance to help Naomi. He preferred to allow the next repurchaser in line, Boaz, to take on that responsibility. Boaz did so because he wanted “to restore the name of the dead man to his inheritance.”—Ruth 4:10.

So-and-so was apparently more interested in maintaining his own name and inheritance. Selfishness dominated his thinking. But rather than preserve his name, So-and-so’s name became lost to history. He also missed out on the special privilege that Boaz received, to be listed in the line of descent leading to the Messiah, Jesus Christ. What a sad result for So-and-so because he selfishly avoided the opportunity to help someone in need!—Matt. 1:5; Luke 3:23, 32.

**SONG 6**

The Heavens Declare  
God's Glory

**PREVIEW**

Jehovah's creation is awe-inspiring. From the overwhelming power of the sun to the delicate petals of a flower, his works amaze us. Lessons from creation can also help us to discern aspects of Jehovah's personality. In this article, we will discuss why we should make time to examine creation and how doing so can help us draw closer to our God.

## Learn More About Jehovah Through His Creation

*“His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made.”—ROM. 1:20.*

OF ALL the conversations Job had throughout his life, one in particular must have stood out—the conversation he had with Jehovah God. To strengthen Job's confidence in His wisdom and ability to care for His servants, Jehovah pointed to some extraordinary features of nature. For instance, Job was reminded that God provides for the animals, so He could also take care of Job. (Job 38:39-41; 39:1, 5, 13-16) By considering examples from creation, Job learned a great deal about the qualities of his God.

<sup>2</sup> We too can learn more about our God when we examine his creative works. However, we may not always find it easy to do so. If we live in a city, we may see little evidence of nature in our daily lives. Even if we do live close to nature, we may feel that we have little time to study it. So let us discuss why it is worthwhile to take the time and make the effort to observe creation. We will consider how Jehovah and Jesus used creation to teach and what we can do to learn further lessons from nature.

### WHY SHOULD WE OBSERVE CREATION?

<sup>3</sup> Jehovah wanted the first human to enjoy His creation. When God made Adam, He gave him an unspoiled

1. What is one way in which Job came to know Jehovah better?
2. Why may we find it challenging to examine Jehovah's creation?
3. What shows that Jehovah wanted Adam to enjoy creation?

Jehovah wanted Adam  
to enjoy His creation and  
to name the animals

(See paragraph 3)



paradise to explore and assigned him to cultivate and expand that paradise. (Gen. 2:8, 9, 15) Imagine Adam's excitement as he watched seeds germinate and flowers blossom. What a privilege Adam had to care for the garden of Eden! Jehovah also invited Adam to name the different animals. (Gen. 2:19, 20) Jehovah could have chosen each name himself; instead, he delegated the task to Adam. No doubt before deciding what to call them, Adam studied the animals carefully, observing their specific traits and behaviors. Adam must have enjoyed this experience. It surely gave him an opportunity to increase his appreciation for his Father's wisdom, artistry, and creativity.

<sup>4</sup> One reason why we should examine creation is that Jehovah wants us to do so. "Lift up your eyes to heaven and see," he invites us. Then he asks: "Who has created these things?" The answer is clear. (Isa. 40:26) Jehovah filled not only the heavens but also the earth and the sea with a number of amazing creative works that we can learn from. (Ps.

104:24, 25) And just think of the way God made us. He instilled in us an appreciation for natural beauty. He also made it possible for us to enjoy the variety of his creation by means of our five senses—sight, hearing, touch, taste, and smell.

<sup>5</sup> The Bible reveals another important reason why we should examine creation. It teaches us about Jehovah's qualities. **(Read Romans 1:20.)** For instance, consider the designs that are so obviously present in nature. Do they not reveal God's wisdom? And think about the variety of foods we can enjoy. That is clear proof of his love for mankind. When we perceive Jehovah's personality from the things he made, we come to know him better and we are moved to draw closer to him. Now let us look at some ways in which Jehovah has used creation to teach humans important lessons.

#### GOD USES CREATION TO TEACH US ABOUT HIMSELF

<sup>6</sup> *Jehovah has a timetable.* Every year between the end of February and mid-

4. (a) What is one reason why we should examine creation? (b) What creative works do you especially appreciate?

5. According to Romans 1:20, how do we benefit from studying Jehovah's creation?

6. What lesson can we learn from observing migrating birds?



May, the Israelites would see storks flying over the land as they migrated northward. “The stork in the sky knows its seasons,” God told the Israelites. (Jer. 8:7) Just as Jehovah has set a timetable for these birds, he has set a time to execute his judgments. Today as we observe migrating birds, we are reminded that we can trust that Jehovah has an “appointed time” to bring an end to this wicked world.—Hab. 2:3.

<sup>7</sup> ***Jehovah empowers his servants.*** Through Isaiah, Jehovah promised that He would strengthen His people to “soar on wings like eagles” when they felt weak or downhearted. (**Read Isaiah 40:31.**) The Israelites were used to seeing eagles soaring upward on rising air currents with minimal effort. What a wonderful reminder that just as Jehovah has given power to those birds, he can also empower his servants! When you see a mighty bird soaring higher and higher in the sky with hardly a beat of its wings, remember that Jehovah can give you strength to rise above your problems.

<sup>8</sup> ***Jehovah is worthy of our trust.*** Jehovah helped Job to increase his trust in Him. (Job 32:2; 40:6-8) In conversation with Job, God referred to many aspects of creation, including the stars, the clouds, and the lightning bolts. Jehovah also spoke about the animals, such as the wild bull and the horse. (Job 38:32-35; 39:9, 19, 20) All these things provided evidence not only of God’s awesome power but also of his love and great wis-

dom. Thanks to this conversation, Job came to trust in Jehovah as never before. (Job 42:1-6) Similarly, when we study creation, we are reminded that Jehovah is infinitely wiser and more powerful than we are. He also can and will put an end to all our trials. This fact can help strengthen our trust in him.

#### JESUS USED CREATION TO TEACH ABOUT HIS FATHER

<sup>9</sup> Jesus was well-acquainted with nature. As “a master worker,” he had the privilege of sharing with his Father in the creation of the universe. (Prov. 8:30) Later, while Jesus was on earth, he used creation to teach his disciples about his Father. Consider a few lessons he taught.

<sup>10</sup> ***Jehovah extends his love to everyone.*** In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus drew the attention of his disciples to two aspects of creation that many people take for granted: sunshine and rain. Both of these are essential for the preservation of life. Jehovah could have withheld these from undeserving humans. Instead, he lovingly provides the sun and the rain for all. (Matt. 5:43-45) Jesus used this lesson to teach his disciples that Jehovah wants us to show love toward everyone. Whenever we enjoy a stunning sunset or see a refreshing rain shower, we can reflect on Jehovah’s impartial love. His example can move us to show similar love by preaching to all.

<sup>11</sup> ***Jehovah provides for our physical needs.*** In the same sermon, Jesus also

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7. What assurance can watching the flight of a bird give us? (Isaiah 40:31)

8. What did Job learn from considering God’s creative works, and what can we learn?

9-10. What do the sun and the rain tell us about Jehovah?

11. What encouragement can we draw from observing the birds of heaven?

said: “Observe intently the birds of heaven; they do not sow seed or reap or gather into storehouses, yet your heavenly Father feeds them.” Possibly, Jesus’ audience could see birds flying overhead when he asked them: “Are you not worth more than they are?” (Matt. 6:26) What a loving way to assure us that Jehovah will care for our physical needs! (Matt. 6:31, 32) This lesson drawn from creation continues to encourage faithful servants. A young pioneer sister in Spain was feeling discouraged because she could not find a suitable place to live. But after seeing birds feeding on seeds and berries, she felt more positive. She says, “Those birds reminded me that Jehovah cares for them and that he will also take care of me.” Sure enough, the sister soon found accommodations.

<sup>12</sup> **Jehovah values us as individuals.** Before sending out his apostles to preach, Jesus helped them to overcome their fear of opposition. **(Read Matthew 10:29-31.)** He did so by talking about one of the most common birds in Israel: the sparrow. Those birds had little value in Jesus’ day. But he told his disciples: “Not *one* of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge.” Then he added: “You are worth more than many sparrows.” Jesus thus assured his disciples that Jehovah valued them *as individuals*, so they had no reason to fear persecution. The disciples surely recalled Jesus’ words when they saw sparrows while preaching in towns and villages. Whenever you see a lit-

12. According to Matthew 10:29-31, what do sparrows reveal about Jehovah?



Taking note of the creation around him, David meditated on what it taught him about Jehovah

(See paragraph 14)

tle bird, remember that Jehovah values you as an individual because you too “are worth more than many sparrows.” With his support, you can face opposition with confidence.—Ps. 118:6.

#### HOW CAN WE LEARN MORE ABOUT GOD THROUGH CREATION?

<sup>13</sup> We can learn many other lessons about Jehovah from creation. How? First, we need to make time to observe creation. Next, we need to think about what it teaches us regarding Jehovah. We may not always find it easy to take these steps. Géraldine, a sister from Cameroon, says, “I grew up in the city, so I realize that it takes a conscious effort to observe nature.” An elder named Alfonso explains, “I have learned that I need to schedule time to be alone to observe Jehovah’s creation and to meditate on what it teaches me about him.”

13. What will help us to draw lessons from creation?

<sup>14</sup> David thought deeply about God's creation. He said to Jehovah: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man that you keep him in mind?" (Ps. 8:3, 4) Yes, as David gazed up at the night sky, he did more than just appreciate the majesty of the universe. He also meditated on what the stars taught him about God. He learned how great Jehovah is. At other times, David reflected on how his body had developed in his mother's womb. As he meditated on these amazing details, his appreciation for Jehovah's wisdom grew.—Ps. 139:14-17.

<sup>15</sup> Like David, you do not have to look very far to find an aspect of creation on which to meditate. If you look around, you can perceive many of Jehovah's qualities. For example, discern Jeho-

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14. What did David learn when he meditated on God's creation?

15. Give examples of how you have seen Jehovah's qualities in creation. (Psalm 148:7-10)

vah's power when you feel the warmth of the sun on your skin. (Jer. 31:35) Wonder at God's wisdom when you spot a bird building a nest. Think of Jehovah's sense of humor when you see a puppy chasing its tail. And thank Jehovah for his love whenever you see a mother playing with her baby. We have so many opportunities to learn about Jehovah because all his creation—large and small, near and far—praises him.—**Read Psalm 148:7-10.**

<sup>16</sup> Our God is supremely intelligent, caring, artistic, and strong. These qualities and many more are obvious in nature if we just look for them. May we all regularly make time to enjoy creation and to think about what it teaches us about Jehovah. By doing so, we will draw ever closer to our Creator. (Jas. 4:8) In the following article, we will see how parents can use creation to help their children draw close to Jehovah.

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16. What should we be determined to do?

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| ■ Why should we take time to observe creation? | ■ What are some examples of how Jehovah and Jesus used creation to teach important lessons? | ■ How can we draw further lessons from creation? |
|--|---|--|

## SONG 11

Creation Praises God

## PREVIEW

Many brothers and sisters have fond memories of time spent enjoying creation with their Christian parents. They have not forgotten how their parents used those occasions to teach them about Jehovah's personality. If you have children, how can you use creation to teach them about God's qualities? This article will address that question.

## Use Creation to Teach Your Children About Jehovah

*“Who has created these things?”—ISA. 40:26.*

PARENTS, we know that you want to help your children come to know and love Jehovah. But God is invisible. How can you help your children to see him as a real Person and to draw close to him?—Jas. 4:8.

<sup>2</sup> An important way to help children draw close to Jehovah is by studying the Bible with them. (2 Tim. 3:14-17) Yet, the Bible reveals another way that young ones can learn about Jehovah. In the book of Proverbs, a father evidently reminds his son never to lose sight of Jehovah's qualities, which are revealed in **creation**. (Prov. 3:19-21) We will consider some ways that parents can use creation to help their children learn about Jehovah's personality.

### USE CREATION TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN—HOW?

<sup>3</sup> The Bible says that God's “invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world's creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made.” (Rom. 1:20) Parents, you likely enjoy spending time outdoors with your young ones. Use that time to help your children see the connection between “the things made” and Jehovah's marvelous qualities. In this regard, let us see what parents can learn from Jesus' example.

1. What do parents desire for their children?
2. How can parents teach their children about Jehovah's qualities?
3. What help should parents give their children?



<sup>4</sup> Note how Jesus used creation to teach. On one occasion, he asked his disciples to observe the ravens and the lilies. **(Read Luke 12:24, 27-30.)** Jesus could have mentioned any animal or plant, but he chose a bird and a flower that his disciples knew well. The disciples might have seen ravens flying overhead and flowers blooming in the field. Can you imagine Jesus gesturing toward these things as he spoke? And what did he do after mentioning these examples? He taught his disciples a powerful lesson about their heavenly Father's generosity and kindness: Jehovah will feed and clothe his faithful servants as he does the ravens and the flowers in the field.

<sup>5</sup> Parents, will you imitate Jesus' way of teaching? You might tell your child about an aspect of creation that you personally appreciate, such as your favorite animal or plant. As you do, be sure to explain what that example reveals about Jehovah. You might then ask your child about his favorite animal or plant. If you use an aspect of creation that already appeals to him, he will probably pay even closer attention when you talk about Jehovah's qualities.

<sup>6</sup> Do parents have to spend a lot of time researching a particular animal or plant before discussing what that creative work reveals about Jehovah? Not necessarily. Jesus did not give a long

explanation regarding the feeding habits of ravens or the cellular composition of lilies. Granted, your child may occasionally enjoy a deeper discussion about nature, but sometimes a simple observation or question is enough to make the point. Note what a brother named Christopher remembers from his childhood: "My mom would make simple comments to help us appreciate the creation around us. For example, when we were near mountains, she might say: 'Look at how huge and beautiful those mountains are! Isn't Jehovah amazing?' Or when we were near the ocean, she might say: 'Look at the power of those waves! Isn't God powerful?'" Christopher says: "Those simple, thought-provoking comments had a big impact on us."

<sup>7</sup> As your children grow older, you can train them to give more thought to creation and to draw conclusions about Jehovah's personality. You can highlight one of God's creative works and ask your children, "What does this teach you about Jehovah?" You may be surprised to hear what they have to say. —Matt. 21:16.

#### WHEN CAN YOU USE CREATION TO TEACH YOUR CHILDREN?

<sup>8</sup> Israelite parents were urged to teach their children the words of Jehovah's commandments when walking "on the road." (Deut. 11:19) Roads ran through the countryside of Israel. A variety of

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4. How did Jesus use creation to teach his disciples? (Luke 12:24, 27-30)

5. What examples found in creation can parents use to teach their child about Jehovah?

6. What can we learn from the example set by Christopher's mother?

7. How can you train your children to reflect on creation?

8. What opportunity did Israelite parents have as they traveled "on the road"?



Even in a city, you may find aspects of creation that you can use to teach your children about Jehovah

(See paragraph 10)

animals, birds, and flowers could be seen. As Israelite families traveled on roads, the parents had the opportunity to spark their children's interest in Jehovah's creation. You parents likely have similar opportunities to use creation to teach your children. Consider how some parents have done that.

<sup>9</sup> A mother named Punitha, who lives in a large city in India, says: "When we visit family in the countryside, we view it as an opportunity to help our children learn about Jehovah's marvelous creation. I feel that my children understand creation better when they are away from the crowded streets and the city traffic." Parents, your children will likely never forget the time they spend with you in a beautiful setting. Katya, a sister from Moldova, says: "My most viv-

9. What can you learn from Punitha and Katya?

id childhood memories are those spent with my parents in the countryside. I am grateful to them for teaching me from a young age to stop and observe what Jehovah has made and to see him through his creation."

<sup>10</sup> What if it is not possible for you to travel to the countryside? Amol, who also lives in India, says: "Where I live, parents have to work long hours, and a trip to the countryside can be expensive. However, a small park or rooftop terrace can serve as a place to observe creation and talk about Jehovah's qualities." When you look carefully, you will likely also discover near your home many features of creation that you can show your children. (Ps. 104:24) You

10. What can parents do if they find it difficult to travel away from the city? (See the box "Help for Parents.")

## Help for Parents

You can make good use of the following resources on [jw.org](http://jw.org)

- The articles and videos from the series "Was It Designed?"
- The brochure *Was Life Created?*
- The video *The Wonders of Creation Reveal God's Glory*
- The video series *Viewpoints on the Origin of Life*



You can highlight the marvelous design of our body to teach your children about God's wisdom  
(See paragraph 12)

will probably find birds, insects, plants, and more. Karina, from Germany, says: “My mom loves flowers, so when I was a young girl, she would point out pretty flowers whenever we took a walk together.” Parents, you can also use the many videos and publications about creation that our organization has produced to teach your children. Yes, whatever your circumstances, you can help your children to observe what God has made. Now let us consider some of Jehovah’s qualities that you could point out to your children.

#### JEHOVAH’S “INVISIBLE QUALITIES ARE CLEARLY SEEN”

<sup>11</sup> To help your children perceive Jehovah’s *love*, you could point out the tender way in which many animals care for their young. (Matt. 23:37) You could also highlight the wonderful variety that we enjoy so much in creation. Karina, quoted earlier, says: “When we were out

on walks, my mom would encourage me to stop and observe how each flower is unique and how its beauty reflects Jehovah’s love. Years later, I still look carefully at flowers—at their variety, design, and color. They continue to remind me of how much Jehovah loves us.”

<sup>12</sup> Help your children discern God’s *wisdom*. Jehovah is certainly far wiser than we are. (Rom. 11:33) For example, you could point out how the water that forms clouds floats effortlessly from one place to another. (Job 38:36, 37) You could also highlight the amazing design of the human body. **(Read Psalm 139:14.)** Consider how a father named Vladimir did so. He says: “One day, our son fell off his bike and hurt himself. After a few days, the wound healed. My wife and I explained that Jehovah created our cells with the ability to repair themselves. We pointed out that we don’t see anything like this in the things that humans make. For example, a car does

11. How can parents help their children discern Jehovah’s love?

12. How can parents help their children discern God’s wisdom? (Psalm 139:14) (See also picture.)

not repair itself after an accident. This experience helped our son understand Jehovah's wisdom."

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah invites us to lift up our eyes to the heavens and think about how his amazing **power** keeps the universe in place. **(Read Isaiah 40:26.)** You can encourage your children to look up at the sky and reflect. Note what Ting-ting, a sister from Taiwan, recalls from her childhood: "Once, my mom took me camping, and we looked at the night sky undisturbed by city lights. That was at a period when I was worried about peer pressure and wondered if I would be able to keep serving Jehovah faithfully. My mom encouraged me to think about the power Jehovah used to create all those stars and to remember that He can certainly use that power to help me face any test. After observing creation on that trip, I was moved to get to know

13. How can parents help their children discern God's power? (Isaiah 40:26)

Jehovah better, and I strengthened my resolve to serve him."

<sup>14</sup> Jehovah's creation reveals his joy as well as his sense of humor. Scientists have observed that most animals play, including birds and fish. (Job 40:20) Have your children ever laughed as they watched an animal play? Perhaps they have seen a kitten chasing a ball of yarn or puppies wrestling together. The next time your children laugh as they watch the antics of an animal, why not remind them that we serve a happy God? —1 Tim. 1:11.

#### ENJOY JEHOVAH'S CREATION AS A FAMILY

<sup>15</sup> At times, parents may find it hard to get their children to talk about the problems they face. If that is your

14. How can parents use creation to help their children see Jehovah as a happy God?

15. What can help parents to draw out their children's thoughts? (Proverbs 20:5) (See also picture.)

Your children may feel more relaxed and willing to talk about their feelings when they are enjoying nature with you

(See paragraph 15)





situation, you may need to draw out your children's thoughts. **(Read Proverbs 20:5.)** Some parents find it easier to do so when they are enjoying nature with their children. Why? One reason is that there are fewer distractions for children and for parents. A father in Taiwan named Masahiko mentions another reason: "When we spend time outdoors with our children—hiking in the mountains or walking along the beach—they usually feel more relaxed. We thus find it easier to draw them out and learn what is on their mind." Katya, quoted earlier, says: "After school, my mother would take me to a beautiful park. In such a relaxed atmosphere, I found it easier to tell her what happened at school or what worried me."

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah's creation can also provide families with a means to relax and have fun, thus strengthening family ties. The Bible says that there is "a time to laugh" and "a time to skip about." (Eccl. 3:1, 4,

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16. How can families relax and have fun when enjoying Jehovah's creation?

ftn.) Through his handiwork, Jehovah has given us wonderful settings to enjoy wholesome activities. Many families like being together at a nature reserve, in the countryside, in the mountains, or at the beach. Some children love to run and play in a park, to observe animals, or to swim in a river, a lake, or the sea. What excellent opportunities we have for recreation when we are out in the open, surrounded by what Jehovah has made!

<sup>17</sup> In God's new world, parents and children will enjoy Jehovah's creation as never before. Unlike today, we will have no reason to fear animals; nor will they fear us. (Isa. 11:6-9) We will have endless time to enjoy what Jehovah has made. (Ps. 22:26) But parents, do not wait until then to help your children to begin enjoying creation. As you use creation to teach your children about Jehovah, they will likely come to agree with what King David said: "O Jehovah, there are no works like yours."—Ps. 86:8.

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17. Why should parents help their children to enjoy God's creation?

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

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|--|--|--|
| ■ What can we learn from the way Jesus used creation to teach? | ■ When and where can parents teach their children about Jehovah's qualities? | ■ How do families benefit by enjoying nature together? |
|--|--|--|

## SONG 106

Cultivating the  
Quality of Love

## PREVIEW

Many people are attracted to the truth because of the genuine love that they see among us. However, we are not perfect, so at times we may find it challenging to deal with a fellow believer in a loving way. Let us examine why love is so important and how we can imitate Jesus' example when we deal with the imperfections of one another.

## “By This All Will Know That You Are My Disciples”

*“By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.”—JOHN 13:35.*

IMAGINE a married couple attending their first meeting at a Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses. They are deeply impressed by the warm welcome they receive and the love among those in the congregation. On the way home from the meeting, the wife says to her husband, 'There is something different about Jehovah's Witnesses—in a good way.'

<sup>2</sup> The love that exists among those in the Christian congregation is indeed remarkable. Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses are not perfect. (1 John 1:8) So the more we get to know those in the congregation, the more likely we are to see some of their flaws. (Rom. 3:23) Sadly, some have allowed the imperfections of others to stumble them.

<sup>3</sup> Look again at the theme text for this article. (**Read John 13:34, 35.**) What is the identifying mark of Christ's true followers? It is love, not perfection. Notice, too, that Jesus did not say: 'By this *you* will know that you are my disciples.' He said: "By this *all* will know that you are my disciples." Jesus thus indicated that not only his followers but also those outside the Christian congregation would recognize his true followers by

1. What impresses many interested people who attend our meetings? (See also picture.)
2. Why have some been stumbled?
3. What identifies Jesus' true followers? (John 13:34, 35)



What has been the impact on many non-Witnesses as they observe the love among Jehovah's people?  
(See paragraph 1)

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the unselfish love they have for one another.

<sup>4</sup> Some who are not Jehovah's Witnesses might wonder: 'How does love identify Jesus' true followers? How did Jesus demonstrate love toward his apostles? And how is it possible to imitate Jesus' example today?' Witnesses do well to reflect on the answers to those questions. Doing so may help us to display love more fully, especially when dealing with the imperfections of one another. —Eph. 5:2.

#### WHY DOES LOVE UNIQUELY IDENTIFY JESUS' TRUE FOLLOWERS?

<sup>5</sup> Jesus made clear that a special kind of love would identify his followers.

4. What might some want to know about true Christians?

5. Explain Jesus' words found at John 15:12, 13.

**(Read John 15:12, 13.)** Notice that Jesus commanded them: "Love one another *just as I have loved you.*" What does that mean? As Jesus went on to explain, this is self-sacrificing love—love that moves a Christian even to die for a fellow believer if necessary.\*

<sup>6</sup> God's Word places a lot of emphasis on love. Many people include among their favorite Bible verses the following: "God is love." (1 John 4:8) "You must love your neighbor as yourself." (Matt. 22:39) "Love covers a multitude of sins." (1 Pet. 4:8) "Love never fails." (1 Cor. 13:8) These verses and others should make it plain to anyone how important it is to cultivate and display this beautiful quality.

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\* See the book "Come Be My Follower," chap. 17, pars. 10-11.

6. How does God's Word emphasize the importance of love?

<sup>7</sup> Many people ask: ‘How is it possible to identify the true religion? All religions claim to teach the truth, but each one teaches something different about God.’ Satan has managed to confuse people by creating a multitude of counterfeit religious organizations. But he can never create a worldwide brotherhood of Christians who love one another. Only Jehovah can do that. That is reasonable because genuine love comes from Jehovah—from having his spirit and blessing on a group of worshippers. (1 John 4:7) Is it any wonder, then, that Jesus said that unselfish love would identify his true followers?

<sup>8</sup> Just as Jesus foretold, many have recognized his true followers by the genuine love they show among themselves. For example, a brother named Ian recalls the first convention he attended, which was held at a sports stadium near his home. Ian had been to that stadium a few months earlier for a sporting event. He says: “The contrast with this convention was enormous. The Witnesses were polite and well-dressed, and their children were well-behaved.” He adds: “Above all, these people seemed to have a feeling of contentment and peace—something I yearned for. I don’t remember any of the talks that were given that day, but the conduct of the Witnesses made a lasting impression.”\* Such

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\* See the article “At Last, My Life Has a Purpose,” in *The Watchtower*, November 1, 2012, pp. 13-14.

7. Why can Satan never unite people in genuine love?

8-9. How have many individuals been affected by the love they observed among Jehovah’s Witnesses?

conduct, of course, is a result of the genuine love we have for one another. Because we love our brothers and sisters, we treat them with kindness and respect.

<sup>9</sup> A brother named John had a similar first impression when he started attending congregation meetings: “I was impressed by the friendliness . . . of everyone there—they seemed like saints. Their genuine love convinced me that I had found the true religion.”\* Time and again, such experiences underscore that Jehovah’s people are proving to be true Christians.

<sup>10</sup> As noted at the outset, none of our fellow believers are perfect. At times, they will say or do things that upset us.<sup>#</sup> (Jas. 3:2) On such occasions, we especially have an opportunity to demonstrate Christian love by the way we react. In that regard, what can we learn from the example set by Jesus?—John 13:15.

#### HOW DID JESUS SHOW LOVE TO HIS APOSTLES?

<sup>11</sup> Jesus did not expect perfection from his followers. Rather, he lovingly helped them to correct their undesirable personality traits so that they could gain Jehovah’s approval. On one occasion, two of the apostles, James and

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\* See the article “My Life Seemed Good,” in *The Watchtower*, May 1, 2012, pp. 18-19.

<sup>#</sup> This article is not discussing serious sins that should be handled by the elders, such as those listed at 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10.

10. When especially do we have an opportunity to demonstrate Christian love? (See also footnote.)

11. What bad traits did James and John display? (See also picture.)





Jesus dealt lovingly with the apostles when they manifested undesirable traits  
(See paragraphs 11-13)

John, had their mother ask Jesus to give them prominent positions in the Kingdom. (Matt. 20:20, 21) James and John were thus displaying the traits of pride and ambition.—Prov. 16:18.

<sup>12</sup> James and John were not the only ones who displayed bad traits on that occasion. Note how the other apostles reacted: “When the ten others heard about it, they became indignant at the two brothers.” (Matt. 20:24) We can imagine that sharp words were exchanged among James, John, and the other apostles. Perhaps the others said

12. Were James and John the only ones who displayed bad traits? Explain.

something like this: ‘Who do you think you are to ask for positions of prominence in the Kingdom? You are not the only ones who have worked hard with Jesus. We are just as qualified as you are for special privileges!’ Whatever the case, the apostles temporarily allowed this situation to disrupt their brotherly affection for one another.

<sup>13</sup> How did Jesus deal with the situation? He did not become indignant. He did not say that he was going to look for better apostles, men who had greater humility and who would always treat

13. How did Jesus react to the shortcomings of his apostles? (Matthew 20:25-28)



one another with love. Rather, Jesus patiently reasoned with these sincere men. **(Read Matthew 20:25-28.)** He continued to deal with them in a loving way, even though this was neither the first nor the last time that the apostles tried to determine who among them was the greatest.—Mark 9:34; Luke 22:24.

<sup>14</sup> No doubt Jesus took into consideration the apostles' background. (John 2:24, 25) They had grown up in an environment where the religious leaders placed great emphasis on prominence and position. (Matt. 23:6; compare the video *The Front Seats in the Synagogue* in study note on Matthew 23:6.) The Jewish religious leaders were also self-righteous.\* (Luke 18:9-12) Jesus understood that such an environment could affect the apostles' view of themselves and others. (Prov. 19:11) He was realistic in what he expected of his disciples and did not overreact when they fell short. He knew that they had good hearts, so he patiently helped them overcome their pride and ambition and replace those with love.

#### HOW CAN WE IMITATE JESUS' EXAMPLE?

<sup>15</sup> We can learn much from the incident involving James and John. They

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\* It is reported that much later a rabbi said: "The world possesses not less than thirty men as righteous as Abraham. If there are thirty, my son and I are two of them; if ten, my son and I are two of them; if five, my son and I are two of them; if two, they are my son and I; if there is but one, it is I."

14. In what kind of environment did Jesus' apostles grow up?

15. What can we learn from the incident involving James and John?

were wrong to ask for positions of prominence in the Kingdom. But the other apostles were also wrong to allow the situation to disrupt their unity. Jesus, though, dealt with all 12 apostles in a kind and loving way. The lesson for us? What matters is not only what other people do but also how we *react* to their mistakes and shortcomings. What can help us? When we are upset with a fellow believer, we can ask ourselves: 'Why does what he did bother me so much? Does it reveal a negative trait that I need to work on? Could it be that the person who upset me is dealing with a difficulty? Even if I feel that I am justified for being upset, can I show unselfish love by overlooking the offense?' The more we deal with others in a loving way, the more we prove to be Jesus' true followers.

<sup>16</sup> Jesus' example also teaches us to try to understand our fellow believers. (Prov. 20:5) Granted, Jesus could read hearts. We cannot. But we can make allowances for the imperfections of our brothers and sisters. (Eph. 4:1, 2; 1 Pet. 3:8) It is easier to do so if we learn about their background. Consider an example.

<sup>17</sup> A traveling overseer serving in East Africa recalls a brother who he felt had an abrasive personality. How did the circuit overseer respond? He says: "Instead of avoiding the brother, I resolved to get to know him better." In doing so, the circuit overseer learned some things

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16. What else can we learn from Jesus' example?

17. How did one traveling overseer benefit from getting to know a fellow believer better?

about the brother's background that had influenced his personality. The circuit overseer continues: "Once I understood how hard the brother had struggled to overcome his background and how far he had come, I admired him. We became good friends." Indeed, when we try to understand our brothers and sisters, we often find it easier to show them love.

<sup>18</sup> We may at times feel the need to approach a fellow believer who has offended us. First, though, we do well to ask ourselves such questions as: 'Do I have enough facts?' (Prov. 18:13) 'Could it be that the offense was not intentional?' (Eccl. 7:20) 'Have I ever made a similar mistake?' (Eccl. 7:21, 22) 'By approach-

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18. What questions might we ask ourselves if we have been offended by a fellow believer? (Proverbs 26:20)

ing the person, will I create a bigger issue than the one I am trying to resolve?' **(Read Proverbs 26:20.)** When we take time to consider such questions, we may conclude that our love for our brother can move us simply to overlook the offense.

<sup>19</sup> As a group, Jehovah's Witnesses are proving to be Jesus' true disciples. We individually prove that we are real followers of Jesus when we show unselfish love toward our brothers and sisters despite their imperfections. In the process, we may help others to recognize the true religion and to join us in worshipping Jehovah, the God of love. Let us be determined to continue demonstrating the love that identifies true Christians.

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19. What are you determined to do?

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## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |   |  |                                      |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| ■ How does love identify Jesus' true followers? | ■ How did Jesus show love to his apostles? | ■ How can we imitate Jesus' example? |
|---|--|--------------------------------------|

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