

NOVEMBER 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES

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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 ARTICLE 1 PAGES 3-7

Jehovah's name and purpose were highly esteemed by King David of ancient Israel. He also appreciated the principles behind God's Law and prayed to be taught to do His will, as this article shows. The article also helps us to see why we should have Jehovah's view of matters at all times.

STUDY ARTICLES 2, 3 PAGES 10-19

As followers of Jesus, true Christians see the need for being humble. The first article examines the pattern of humility that Jesus set so that we can follow his steps closely. The second article shows how we can cultivate the spirit of a lesser one and manifest that trait in our life.

STUDY ARTICLES 4, 5 PAGES 21-30

These articles will help us to appreciate Jehovah's willingness to forgive even the most serious sins. Circumstances may sometimes make it difficult for us to be willing to extend forgiveness. However, Scriptural principles can help us to overcome such negative feelings in this regard.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

8 THEIR SURPLUS OFFSET A DEFICIENCY

20 QUESTIONS FROM READERS

31 FROM OUR ARCHIVES



COVER: Preaching in the small rural town of Albarracín in central Spain. The Teruel Congregation, which has 78 publishers, has Albarracín and another 188 towns and villages in its territory

SPAIN

POPULATION

47,042,900

PUBLISHERS

111,101

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE IN 2012

192,942



“TEACH ME TO DO YOUR WILL”

“Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.”—PS. 143:10.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

What incidents in David’s life show that he was concerned about how Jehovah viewed matters?

What helped David to discern God’s will?

What will help us to remain in Jehovah’s favor?

WHEN traveling, have you ever used a computerized mapping system that allowed you to get an aerial view of your destination? Seeing things from that vantage point may have helped you to determine the best route to take. Applying a similar principle can help us when we are making important decisions. Seeing things from the Creator’s elevated perspective will enable us to ‘walk in the way’ Jehovah approves.—Isa. 30:21.

² Throughout most of his life, King David of ancient Israel set an outstanding example of taking God’s will into account. Let us review certain incidents in David’s life with a view to learning from the conduct of a man whose heart proved to be complete with Jehovah God.—1 Ki. 11:4.

DAVID HELD JEHOVAH’S NAME IN HIGH ESTEEM

³ Consider the occasion when David confronted the Philistine champion Goliath. What moved young David to challenge a fully armed giant who was about nine and a half feet (2.9 m) tall? (1 Sam. 17:4, ftn.) Was it David’s courage? Was it his faith in God? Both qualities played a vital role in his act of valor. However, respect for Jehovah and for his great name especially motivated David to take a stand against that towering giant. Indignantly, David asked: “Who is this uncircumcised Philistine that he has to taunt the battle lines of the living God?”—1 Sam. 17:26.

⁴ Confronting Goliath, young David declared: “You are coming to me with a sword and with a

1, 2. How can taking God’s will into account benefit us, and what can we expect to learn in this regard from King David?

3, 4. (a) What moved David to stand up to Goliath? (b) How did David view God’s name?

spear and with a javelin, but I am coming to you with the name of Jehovah of armies, the God of the battle lines of Israel, whom you have taunted." (1 Sam. 17:45) Relying on the true God, David brought down the Philistine champion with a single slingstone. Not only on that occasion but throughout his life, David trusted in Jehovah and held the divine name in the highest esteem. Indeed, David urged fellow Israelites to 'boast in Jehovah's holy name.'—**Read 1 Chronicles 16:8-10.**

⁵ Are you proud to have Jehovah as your God? (Jer. 9:24) How do you react when neighbors, colleagues, classmates, or relatives speak ill of Jehovah and make fun of his Witnesses? Do you speak up when Jehovah's name is being reproached, trusting in his support? True, there is "a time to keep quiet," but we must not be ashamed of being Witnesses of Jehovah and followers of Jesus. (Eccl. 3:1, 7; Mark 8:38) Although we should be tactful and courteous in dealing with people who are not favorably disposed, let us not be like those Israelites who "became terrified and were greatly afraid" when they heard Goliath's taunting words. (1 Sam. 17:11) Instead, let us act decisively in order to sanctify Jehovah God's name. Our desire is to help people to come to know Jehovah as the God he really is. To that end, we use his written Word in an effort to help others to see the importance of drawing close to God.—Jas. 4:8.

⁶ David's encounter with Goliath teaches us another vital lesson. When

5. What situation might you face that may be comparable to Goliath's taunt?

6. What did David want to accomplish by his encounter with Goliath, and what should be our chief concern?

David came running to the battle line, he asked: "What will be done to the man that strikes down that Philistine over there and actually turns away reproach from upon Israel?" In reply, the people restated what they had said earlier: "The man who strikes [Goliath] down, the king will enrich him with great riches, and his own daughter he will give him." (1 Sam. 17:25-27) But gaining a material reward was not David's chief concern. He had a higher objective. David wanted to glorify the true God. (**Read 1 Samuel 17:46, 47.**) What about us? Is it our chief concern to make a name for ourselves by amassing riches and becoming prominent in the world? Surely we want to be like David, who sang: "O magnify Jehovah with me, you people, and let us exalt his name together." (Ps. 34:3) May we therefore trust in God, putting his name ahead of our own.—Matt. 6:9.

⁷ David's courageous stand against Goliath required complete confidence in Jehovah. Young David had strong faith. One way that he had built his faith was by relying on God when working as a shepherd. (1 Sam. 17:34-37) We too need strong faith in order to continue in the ministry, especially when we encounter people who are not favorably disposed. We can cultivate such faith by relying on God in our day-to-day activities. For instance, we can strike up conversations about Bible truth with people who happen to sit next to us when we use public transportation. And why should we hold back from talking to people we meet on the street while we are engaging in the house-to-house ministry?—Acts 20:20, 21.

7. How can we cultivate the strong faith needed as we encounter people who may not be favorably disposed?

DAVID WAITED ON JEHOVAH

⁸ Another example of David's willingness to trust in Jehovah involved Saul—Israel's first king. Three times jealous Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear, but David moved out of the way each time, refusing to retaliate. Finally, he fled from Saul. (1 Sam. 18:7-11; 19:10) Then Saul took 3,000 chosen men out of all Israel and went looking for David in the wilderness. (1 Sam. 24:2) Eventually, Saul unknowingly went into the very cave where David and his men were. David could have used this opportuni-

8, 9. In dealing with King Saul, how did David show that he kept Jehovah's will in mind?

What prevented David from taking Saul's life when he had an opportunity to do so?

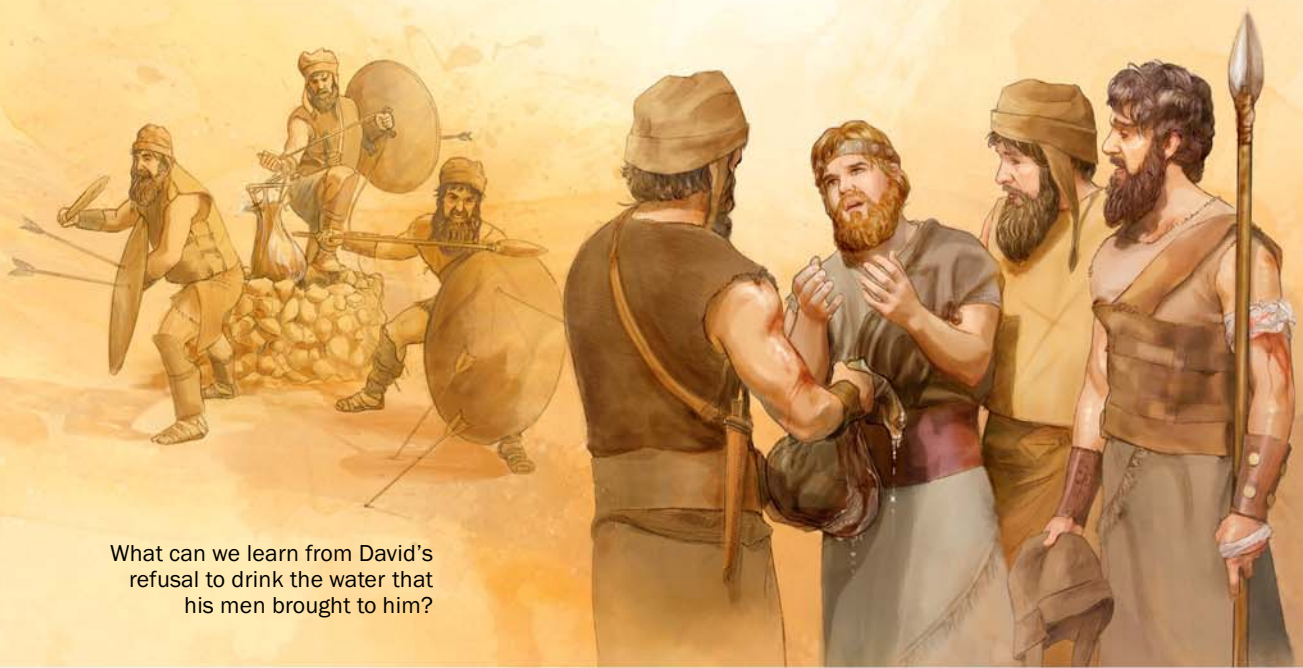


ty to eliminate the king who threatened his life. After all, it was God's will for David to replace Saul as king of Israel. (1 Sam. 16:1, 13) Indeed, if David had listened to the advice of his men, the king would have been killed. But David said: "It is unthinkable, on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, that I should do this thing to my lord, the anointed of Jehovah." (*Read 1 Samuel 24:4-7.*) Saul was still God's anointed king. David did not want to rob Saul of the kingship, since Jehovah had not yet removed him. By only cutting off the skirt of Saul's sleeveless coat, David showed that he had no intention of harming Saul.—1 Sam. 24:11.

⁹ David again showed respect for God's anointed when he last saw the king. At that time, David and Abishai arrived at a place where Saul was camping and found him asleep. Although Abishai concluded that God had surrendered this enemy into David's hand and offered to pin Saul to the earth with a spear, David did not permit this. (1 Sam. 26:8-11) Because David kept seeking God's guidance, he did not waver in his determination to act in accord with Jehovah's will despite the urgings of Abishai.

¹⁰ We too may face a challenging situation in which our associates try to pressure us into following their human reasoning instead of supporting us in doing Jehovah's will. Like Abishai, some may even encourage us to take action without considering God's will in connection with a particular matter. To stand firm, we need to have clearly in mind Jehovah's view of the matter and to be determined to stick to his ways.

10. What challenging situation might we personally face, and what will help us to stand firm?



What can we learn from David's refusal to drink the water that his men brought to him?

¹¹ David prayed to Jehovah God: "Teach me to do your will." (***Read Psalm 143:5, 8, 10.***) Rather than relying on his own ideas or giving in to another person's urgings, David was eager to be taught by God. He 'meditated on all of Jehovah's activity and willingly kept himself concerned with the work of God's own hands.' We ourselves can discern God's will by delving into the Scriptures and meditating on the many Biblical accounts of Jehovah's dealings with humans.

DAVID APPRECIATED THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND THE LAW

¹² David's appreciation for the principles reflected in the Law and his desire to live by them are also worthy of imitation. Consider what happened when David expressed his craving for "a drink of the water from the cistern of Bethle-

hem." Three of David's men forced their way into the city—then occupied by the Philistines—and brought back the water. However, "David did not consent to drink it, but poured it out to Jehovah." Why? David explained: "It is unthinkable on my part, as regards my God, to do this! Is it the blood of these men that I should drink at the risk of their souls? For it was at the risk of their souls that they brought it."—1 Chron. 11:15-19.

¹³ David knew from the Law that blood should be poured out to Jehovah and not eaten. He also understood why this should be done. David knew that "the soul of the flesh is in the blood." However, this was water, not blood. Why did David refuse to drink it? He appreciated the principle behind the legal requirement. To David, the water was as precious as the blood of the three men. Therefore, it was unthinkable for him to drink the water. Instead of drinking it, he concluded that he should pour it out on the ground.—Lev. 17:11; Deut. 12:23, 24.

11. What did you learn from David about keeping God's will uppermost in your mind?
 12, 13. Why did David pour out the water that three of his men brought to him?

¹⁴ David tried to be completely absorbed in God's law. He sang: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts." (Ps. 40:8) David studied God's law and meditated deeply on it. He trusted in the wisdom of Jehovah's commandments. As a result, David was anxious to observe not only the letter but also the spirit of the Mosaic Law. When we study the Bible, we are wise to meditate on what we read and store it in our heart so that we can determine what pleases Jehovah in a particular case.

¹⁵ David's son Solomon was greatly favored by Jehovah God. In time, however, Solomon failed to show respect for God's Law. He did not heed Jehovah's command that an Israelite king should "not multiply wives for himself." (Deut. 17:17) In fact, Solomon married many foreign women. When he grew old, "his wives themselves had inclined his heart to follow other gods." Regardless of how he may have reasoned, "Solomon began to do what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah, and he did not follow Jehovah fully like David his father." (1 Ki. 11:1-6) How important it is that we conform to the laws and principles found in God's Word! For instance, this is vital when contemplating marriage.

¹⁶ If unbelievers make romantic advances toward us, does our response reflect a viewpoint like that of David or one like Solomon's? True worshippers are told to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39) If a Christian chooses to get

married, he or she should marry a fellow believer. And if we discern the spirit of this Scriptural requirement, we will not only refrain from marrying an unbeliever but also refrain from entertaining any romantic advances from such an individual.

¹⁷ Consider, too, how David's example of earnestly seeking God's guidance can help us to resist the temptation to view pornographic images. Read the following scriptures, think about the principles they contain, and endeavor to discern Jehovah's will in this matter. (*Read Psalm 119:37; Matthew 5:28, 29; Colossians 3:5.*) Meditating on his elevated standards equips us to keep free from the snare of pornography.

HAVE GOD'S VIEW IN MIND AT ALL TIMES

¹⁸ Although David was exemplary in many ways, he committed several serious sins. (2 Sam. 11:2-4, 14, 15, 22-27; 1 Chron. 21:1, 7) Over the course of his life, however, David proved repentant when he sinned. He walked before God "with integrity of heart." (1 Ki. 9:4) Why can we say that? Because David tried to act in accord with Jehovah's will.

¹⁹ Despite our imperfection, we can remain in Jehovah's favor. With that objective in mind, let us study God's Word diligently, meditate deeply on what we learn from it, and act decisively on what we store in our heart. In effect, we will then be praying to Jehovah like the psalmist who made this humble request: "Teach me to do your will."

14. What helped David to have Jehovah's view on matters?

15. In what way did Solomon fail to show respect for God's Law?

16. How will discerning the spirit of the command to marry "only in the Lord" affect those who hope to get married?

17. What can help us to avoid becoming ensnared by pornography?

18, 19. (a) Although he was imperfect, what helped David remain in God's favor? (b) What is your determination?



Their Surplus Offset a Deficiency

THE year was 49 C.E. Peter, James, and John —“who seemed to be pillars”—gave the apostle Paul and his fellow worker Barnabas a commission. They were to keep impoverished Christians in mind as they preached to the nations. (Gal. 2: 9, 10) How was this responsibility fulfilled?

Paul’s letters reveal the attention that he gave to this matter. For example, to Christians in Corinth, he wrote: “Concerning the collection that is for the holy ones, just as I gave orders to the congregations of Galatia, do that way also yourselves. Every first day of the week let each of you at his own house set something aside in store as he may be prospering, so that when I arrive collections will not take place then. But when I get there, whatever men you approve of by letters, these I shall send to carry your kind gift to Jerusalem.”—1 Cor. 16:1-3.

In his second inspired letter to the Corinthians, Paul restated the objective of the collection. It was that “by means of an equalizing your surplus just now might offset their deficiency.”—2 Cor. 8:12-15.

When Paul wrote to the Christians in Rome about 56 C.E., the collection was almost complete. He said: “I am about to journey to Jeru-

salem to minister to the holy ones. For those in Macedonia and Achaia have been pleased to share up their things by a contribution to the poor of the holy ones in Jerusalem.” (Rom. 15:25, 26) Paul fulfilled his commission shortly thereafter, for upon returning to Jerusalem and being arrested there, he told Roman Governor Felix: “I arrived to bring gifts of mercy to my nation, and offerings.”—Acts 24:17.

The spirit shown by first-century Christians is clear from what Paul said of the Macedonians. He stated that they “kept begging us with much entreaty for the privilege of kindly giving.” The apostle urged the Corinthians to follow that example. He said: “Let each one do just as he has resolved in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver.” What moved the congregations to show such generosity? The desire behind it was not solely “to supply abundantly the wants of the holy ones but also to be rich with many expressions of thanks to God.” (2 Cor. 8:4; 9:7, 12) Our generosity may well have similar objectives. Jehovah God will surely bless such a fine and unselfish spirit—and his blessing indeed makes a person rich.—Prov. 10:22.

HOW SOME CHOOSE TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE WORLDWIDE WORK

As in the apostle Paul's day, many today "set something aside," or budget, an amount of money and place it in the congregation contribution boxes labeled "Worldwide Work." (1 Cor. 16:2) Each month, congregations forward these contributions to the office of Jehovah's Witnesses that serves their country. It is also possible for you to send donations directly to a legal entity that is used by Jehovah's Witnesses in your country. To learn the name of the primary legal entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses in your country, please contact the branch office that serves the country. The address of the branch office can be found on www.jw.org. The types of donations that you can send directly are the following:

OUTRIGHT DONATIONS

- Donations of cash, jewelry, or other valuable personal property.
- Include a letter indicating that the cash or the items are an outright donation.

CONDITIONAL DONATION ARRANGEMENT

- Donations of cash with the condition that it can be returned if needed by the donor.
- Include a letter stating that the donation is conditional.

CHARITABLE PLANNING

In addition to gifts of money and valuable personal property, there are other methods of giving to benefit Kingdom service worldwide. These are listed below. Regardless of the method or methods you would like to use, please first contact the

branch office that serves your country to see which methods are available in the country. Since legal requirements and tax laws vary, it is important to consult qualified tax and legal advisers before choosing the best way to donate.

Insurance: A donation made by specifying an entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses as the beneficiary of a life insurance policy or a retirement/pension plan.

Bank Accounts: Bank accounts, certificates of deposit, or individual retirement accounts set up as a trust or made payable on death to an entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses in accord with local bank requirements.

Stocks and Bonds: Stocks and bonds donated to an entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses as an outright gift or by means of a Transfer on Death agreement.

Real Estate: Salable real estate donated to an entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses, either by making an outright gift or, in the case of residential property, by reserving a life estate to the donor, who can continue to live in the residence during his or her lifetime.

Gift Annuity: Money or securities donated to an entity used by Jehovah's Witnesses under an arrangement where the donor, or someone designated by the donor, receives a specified annuity payment every year for life. The donor receives an income-tax deduction for the year in which the gift annuity is established.

Wills and Trusts: Property or money may be bequeathed to an entity used

by Jehovah's Witnesses by means of a legally executed will or by specifying the entity as the beneficiary of a trust agreement. This arrangement may provide certain tax advantages.

As the term "charitable planning" implies, these types of donations typically require some planning on the part of the donor. To assist individuals desiring to benefit the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses through some form of charitable giving, a brochure entitled *Charitable Planning to Benefit Kingdom Service Worldwide* has been prepared in English and Spanish. The brochure was written to provide information on a variety of ways that gifts may be made now or later, as through a bequest at death. The information covered in this brochure may not apply fully to your situation because of tax or other laws in your country. Hence, after reading the brochure, you should confer with your own legal or tax advisers. By using such methods of charitable giving, many have been able to help support our religious and humanitarian activities worldwide and maximize their tax benefits. If available in your country, the brochure may be obtained by requesting a copy from the secretary of the local congregation.

For more information, you may contact the Charitable Planning Office, either in writing or by telephone, at the address listed below, or you may contact the branch office that serves your country.

CHARITABLE PLANNING OFFICE

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JESUS SET THE PATTERN OF HUMILITY

“I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also.”—JOHN 13:15.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How did the Son of God manifest humility during his prehuman existence?

As a human, how did Jesus display humility?

What benefits have resulted from Jesus' course of humility?

IT IS the final night of Jesus' life on earth, and he spends it with his apostles in the upper room of a house in Jerusalem. During the course of the evening meal, Jesus gets up and puts aside his outer garments. He girds himself with a towel. Then he puts water into a basin and begins to wash the feet of the disciples and to dry them off with the towel. He then puts on his outer garments. Why did Jesus perform this humble act?—John 13:3-5.

² Jesus himself explained: “Do you know what I have done to you? . . . If I, although Lord and Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash the feet of one another. For I set the pattern for you, that, just as I did to you, you should do also.” (John 13:12-15) By displaying a willingness to perform such a lowly task, Jesus gave his apostles an object lesson that would be deeply engraved on their minds and would encourage them to be humble in the days ahead.

³ When Jesus washed the feet of the apostles, it was not the first time he highlighted the value of humility. On an earlier occasion when some of the apostles showed a competitive spirit, Jesus set a young child beside him, and He told them: “Whoever receives this young child on the basis of my name receives me too, and whoever receives me receives him also that sent me forth. For he that conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one that is great.” (Luke 9:46-48) Aware that the Pharisees sought prominence, Jesus said later in his ministry: “Everyone that exalts himself will be hum-

1, 2. During the last night of his life on earth, what object lesson did Jesus teach his apostles?

3. (a) On two occasions, how did Jesus stress the importance of humility? (b) What will be discussed in this article?

bled and he that humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:11) Clearly, Jesus wants his followers to be humble, that is, lowly in mind and free of pride and arrogance. With a view to imitating him, let us carefully examine his example of humility. We will also see how this quality benefits not only the one displaying it but others as well.

“I DID NOT TURN IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION”

⁴ God’s only-begotten Son showed humility even before he came to earth. In his prehuman existence, Jesus spent an untold number of years with his heavenly Father. The Bible book of Isaiah comments on the close relationship the Son had with his Father, saying: “The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has given me the tongue of the taught ones, that I may know how to answer the tired one with a word. He awakens morning by morning; he awakens my ear to hear like the taught ones. The Sovereign Lord Jehovah himself has opened my ear, and I, for my part, was not rebellious. I did not turn in the opposite direction.” (Isa. 50:4, 5) The Son of God displayed a humble attitude and paid close attention to what Jehovah taught him. He was eager and willing to learn from the true God. How closely Jesus must have observed the example of Jehovah’s humility in exercising mercy toward sinful mankind!

⁵ Not every creature in heaven had the same attitude as the only-begotten Son of God. Instead of desiring to learn from Jehovah, the angel who became Sa-

tan the Devil allowed himself to be influenced by traits opposite to humility—self-importance and pride—and actually rebelled against Jehovah. On the other hand, Jesus was neither dissatisfied with his own position in heaven nor inclined to misuse his authority. As Michael the archangel, Jesus did not go beyond his authority when he had ‘a difference with the Devil about Moses’ body.’ Instead, God’s Son showed humility and modesty. He was pleased to have Jehovah, the Supreme Judge of the universe, handle matters in His own way and time.—*Read Jude 9.*

⁶ The things Jesus learned during his prehuman existence undoubtedly included the prophecies foretelling details of his life on earth as the Messiah. Hence, he likely knew in advance that unpleasant experiences awaited him. Yet, Jesus accepted the assignment to live on earth and die as the promised Messiah. Why? Highlighting the humility of God’s only-begotten Son, the apostle Paul wrote: “Although he was existing in God’s form, [he] gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God. No, but he emptied himself and took a slave’s form and came to be in the likeness of men.” —Phil. 2:6, 7.

AS A HUMAN, “HE HUMBLLED HIMSELF”

⁷ “When [Jesus] found himself in fashion as a man,” wrote Paul, “he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake.” (Phil. 2:8) From his childhood on, Jesus

4. How did God’s only-begotten Son exhibit humility in his prehuman existence?

5. In the role of Michael the archangel, how did Jesus set an example of humility and modesty in dealing with the Devil?

6. How did Jesus manifest humility in accepting the assignment to serve as the Messiah?

7, 8. In what ways did Jesus show humility during his childhood and his earthly ministry?



How can Jesus' example of humility benefit us?

left us a pattern of humility. Although he was raised by imperfect parents—Joseph and Mary—Jesus humbly “continued subject to them.” (Luke 2:51) What a fine example that is for young ones, who will be blessed by God for their willing subjection to their parents!

⁸ As an adult, Jesus showed humility by giving priority to the doing of Jehovah’s will, not his own. (John 4:34) During his ministry, Jesus Christ used God’s personal name and helped sincere people to gain an accurate knowledge of Jehovah’s attributes and His purpose for mankind. Jesus also lived in harmony with what he taught about Jehovah. In the model prayer, for example, the first point Jesus mentioned was: “Our Father in the heavens, let *your* name be sanctified.” (Matt. 6:9) Jesus thus instructed his followers to make the sanctification of Jehovah’s name a matter of prime concern. He himself lived that way. Toward the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus could say in prayer to Jehovah: “I have made your name known to them [the apostles] and will make it known.” (John 17:26) Moreover, throughout his ministry Jesus gave Jehovah the credit for what he accomplished on earth.—John 5:19.

⁹ Regarding the Messiah, Zechariah prophetically wrote: “Be very joyful, O daughter of Zion. Shout in triumph, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king himself comes to you. He is righteous, yes, saved; humble, and riding upon an ass, even upon a full-grown animal the son of a she-ass.” (Zech. 9:9) This was fulfilled when Jesus entered Jerusalem before the Passover in the year 33 C.E. The crowd spread their outer garments as well as tree branches on the road. Indeed, the whole city was set in commotion at his entry. Even when he received public acclaim as King, Jesus was humble.—Matt. 21:4-11.

9. What did Zechariah prophesy regarding the Messiah, and how was this fulfilled by Jesus?

¹⁰ Jesus Christ's course of humility and obedience on earth culminated in his death on a torture stake. He thus proved beyond a doubt that humans can remain loyal to Jehovah even when tested to the extreme. Jesus also showed that Satan was wrong in claiming that humans serve Jehovah for selfish reasons. (Job 1:9-11; 2:4) Christ's record of perfect integrity also upheld the rightfulness and righteousness of Jehovah's universal sovereignty. Jehovah certainly rejoiced when observing the unswerving loyalty of his humble Son.—*Read Proverbs 27:11.*

¹¹ By his death on a torture stake, Jesus also paid the ransom price for mankind. (Matt. 20:28) This provided an opportunity for sinful humans to live forever, and it satisfied the demands of righteousness. "Through one act of justification the result to men of all sorts is a declaring of them righteous for life," wrote Paul. (Rom. 5:18) Jesus' death opened up the prospect of immortal life in heaven for spirit-anointed Christians and everlasting life on earth for the "other sheep."—John 10:16; Rom. 8:16, 17.

I AM "LOWLY IN HEART"

¹² Jesus invited all those "toiling and loaded down" to come to him. He said: "Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls." (Matt. 11:28, 29) The qualities of humility and mildness moved Jesus to be kind and impartial in dealing

10. What was proved by Jesus' willing obedience as far as death?

11. The ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ opened up what prospects for believing mankind?

12. In dealing with imperfect humans, how did Jesus show mildness and humility?



Jesus' compassion was exemplary

with imperfect humans. He was reasonable in what he expected of his disciples. Jesus commended and encouraged them. He did not make them feel incompetent or unworthy. Jesus certainly was not harsh or oppressive. On the contrary, he assured his followers that by drawing close to him and practicing his teachings, they would be refreshed, for his yoke was kindly and his load was light. People of both sexes and of all ages felt at ease in his presence.—Matt. 11:30.

¹³ In his association with the common people of Israel, Jesus had compassion for them because they were disadvantaged, and he gave loving attention to their needs. Near Jericho, he encountered a blind beggar named Bartimaeus and his unnamed blind companion. They persistently asked for Jesus' help, but the crowd sternly urged the men

13. How did Jesus show compassion for the disadvantaged?

to be quiet. How easy it would have been to ignore the pleas of the blind men! Instead, Jesus asked that they be brought to him, and moved with pity, he restored their sight. Yes, Jesus imitated his Father, Jehovah, by displaying humility and showing mercy to lowly sinners.—Matt. 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52.

“WHOEVER HUMBLER HIMSELF WILL BE EXALTED”

¹⁴ Jesus Christ’s life course of humility is a cause of joy and is highly beneficial. Jehovah rejoiced at seeing his beloved Son humbly subject himself to the divine will. The apostles and disciples were refreshed by Jesus’ mild temper and lowliness of heart. His example, his teachings, and his warm commendation stimulated them to progress spiritually. Common people benefited from Jesus’ humility because they became recipients of his help, his teachings, and his encouragement. Actually, all redeemable mankind will reap long-term benefits from Jesus’ ransom sacrifice.

¹⁵ What about Jesus? Did his humility benefit him? Yes, for Jesus told his disciples: “Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.” (Matt. 23:12) Those words proved to be true in his own case. Paul explains: “God exalted [Jesus] to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bend of those in heaven and those on earth and those under the ground, and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” Because of Jesus’ course of humility and faithfulness on earth, Jehovah God exalted his

Son, giving him authority over creatures in heaven and on earth.—Phil. 2:9-11.

JESUS WILL “RIDE IN THE CAUSE OF TRUTH AND HUMILITY”

¹⁶ Humility will continue to characterize the activities of the Son of God. Foretelling how Jesus will act against His enemies from an exalted heavenly position, the psalmist sang: “In your splendor go on to success; ride in the cause of truth and humility and righteousness.” (Ps. 45:4) Along with truth and righteousness, Jesus Christ will ride in the cause of humility at Armageddon. And what will happen at the end of his Thousand Year Reign when the Messianic King “has brought to nothing all government and all authority and power”? Will he display humility? Yes, for he will ‘hand over the kingdom to his God and Father.’—*Read 1 Corinthians 15:24-28.*

¹⁷ What about us? Will we follow the pattern set by our Exemplar and manifest humility? How will we fare when the King Jesus Christ comes to execute judgment at Armageddon? The cause in which he rides dictates that he will save only those who are humble and righteous. Our developing humility, then, is essential to our survival. Moreover, just as Jesus Christ’s life course of humility brought benefits to him and others, our displaying humility will be beneficial in various ways.

¹⁸ What can help us to follow Jesus’ pattern of humility? How may we strive to be humble despite the challenges we may encounter? These questions will be considered in the next article.

^{16.} What shows that humility will continue to characterize the activities of God’s Son?

^{17, 18.} (a) Why is it important for Jehovah’s servants to follow Jesus’ pattern of humility? (b) What will be discussed in the next article?

^{14.} What benefits have resulted from Jesus’ course of humility?

^{15.} How did Jesus benefit from being humble?



CULTIVATE THE SPIRIT OF A LESSER ONE

“He that conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one that is great.”

—LUKE 9:48.

CAN YOU FIND THE ANSWERS?

What can help us to cultivate the spirit of a lesser one?

In what ways is a lesser one “great”?

How can we manifest humility within marriage, within the congregation, and in our relationships with others?

THE year was 32 C.E. Jesus was in the district of Galilee when difficulties arose. A few of his apostles were arguing about who was the greatest among them. The Gospel writer Luke reports: “A reasoning entered among them as to who would be the greatest of them. Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a young child, set it beside him and said to them: ‘Whoever receives this young child on the basis of my name receives me too, and whoever receives me receives him also that sent me forth. For he that conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one that is great.’” (Luke 9:46-48) Patiently but firmly, Jesus helped the apostles to see the need for humility.

² Was Jesus’ admonition to behave as a lesser one in accord with the values of the first-century Jews? Or was it the opposite of their general spirit? Commenting on the social conditions of that time, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* explains: “In every affair, the question constantly arose who was the greater, and according to each his due honour was an important matter which caused constant concern.” Jesus was admonishing his apostles to be different from people in general.

³ The Greek word translated “lesser one” means someone who is modest, humble, lowly, insignificant, or of little esteem and influence. Jesus used a young child to make clear to his apostles that they should be humble and modest. That admonition

1, 2. Jesus gave his apostles what admonition, and why did he do so?

3. (a) Behaving as a lesser one means what, and why might it be challenging for us to act in that way? (b) What questions arise about cultivating the spirit of a lesser one?



Jehovah dignifies us with the privilege of preaching the good news

is as applicable to true Christians today as it was in the first century. We may find it challenging to conduct ourselves as lesser ones—at least in some circumstances. The human tendency toward pride may motivate us to seek prominence. The competitive environment in which we live and the spirit of the world might influence us to be egotistical, combative, or manipulative. What can help us to cultivate the spirit of a lesser one? How is ‘a lesser one among us the one that is great’? In what areas of life should we strive to manifest the spirit of humility?

“O THE DEPTH OF GOD’S RICHES AND WISDOM AND KNOWLEDGE!”

⁴ One way to cultivate humility is to ponder over the greatness of Jehovah in comparison to us. Actually, “there is no searching out of his understanding.” (Isa. 40:28) Commenting on certain aspects of Jehovah’s magnificence,

4, 5. What can move us to cultivate humility? Illustrate.

the apostle Paul wrote: “O the depth of God’s riches and wisdom and knowledge! How unsearchable his judgments are and past tracing out his ways are!” (Rom. 11:33) Although mankind’s knowledge of many things has increased greatly since Paul wrote those words some 2,000 years ago, that statement still holds true. No matter how much we know, it should humble us to realize that there is no limit to what can be learned about Jehovah, his works, and his ways.

⁵ Appreciating that it is beyond our ability to search out God’s ways helped Leo* to view himself as a lesser one. As a young man, Leo was fascinated by science. Desiring to understand as much as possible about the physical universe, he studied astrophysics and came to an important conclusion. He says: “Based on my studies, I came to realize that current scientific theories alone are not likely to enable mankind to understand the universe completely. So I switched to studying law.” In time, Leo became a district attorney and later a court judge. Eventually, he and his wife studied the Bible with Jehovah’s Witnesses, embraced the truth, and became dedicated servants of God. Despite his background, what has helped Leo to conduct himself as a lesser one? Unhesitatingly, he answers, “It is the realization that no matter how much we learn about Jehovah and the universe, there is still much more to discover.”

* Names have been changed.

⁶ Another factor that helps us to be humble is that Jehovah himself displays humility. Consider this: “We are God’s fellow workers.” (1 Cor. 3:9) Imagine that! Jehovah, the God of unmatched greatness, dignifies us in this way by giving us an opportunity to carry out our ministry using his Word, the Bible. Although Jehovah is the one who makes the seeds that we plant and water grow, he bestows upon us an honorable position of working with him. (1 Cor. 3:6, 7) Is that not an astonishing example of humility on God’s part? Surely Jehovah’s example of humility should be of great encouragement to each of us to behave as a lesser one.

⁷ God’s example of humility had a tremendous effect on the psalmist David. He sang to Jehovah: “You will give me your shield of salvation, and it is your humility that makes me great.” (2 Sam. 22:36) David attributed any greatness he had in Israel to Jehovah’s humility—to God’s condescending, or humbling himself, to pay attention to him. (Ps. 113:5-7) Is it any different with us? In the way of qualities, abilities, and privileges, what do any of us have that we “did not receive” from Jehovah? (1 Cor. 4:7) The person who conducts himself as a lesser one is “great” in that he becomes more valuable as a servant of Jehovah. (Luke 9:48, ftn.) Let us reflect on how this is so.

‘A LESSER ONE AMONG YOU IS GREAT’

⁸ Humility is essential to our being content in God’s theocratic organization and being supportive of the congregational arrangement. For example,

consider Petra, a young woman raised in a family of Witnesses. Wanting to do things her own way, Petra distanced herself from the congregation. Years later, she started to associate with the congregation once again. She is now happy to be in Jehovah’s organization and is eager to support the congregational arrangement. What has made the difference this time? “For me to feel at home in God’s organization,” she writes, “the two most important qualities I needed to understand and to cultivate were humility and modesty.”

⁹ A humble person has heartfelt gratitude for Jehovah’s provisions, including spiritual food. Hence, such an individual is a diligent student of the Bible and an avid reader of the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. Like many other faithful servants of Jehovah, he may make it a practice to read each new publication before putting it away on a bookshelf in his personal library. When we manifest humble appreciation by reading and studying our Bible-based publications, we make spiritual advancement, and Jehovah is able to use us more fully in his service.—Heb. 5:13, 14.

¹⁰ He who conducts himself as a lesser one is “great” in another way. Every congregation has qualified men appointed under the guidance of Jehovah’s holy spirit to serve as elders. They make arrangements for such spiritual matters as congregation meetings, field service, and shepherding. When we manifest the attitude of a lesser one by willingly supporting these arrangements, we

6, 7. (a) Jehovah provides what astonishing example of humility? (b) How can God’s humility make one “great”?

8. How does humility affect our attitude toward Jehovah’s organization?

9. What attitude does a humble person have toward the spiritual food we receive, and why does that make him more valuable?

10. How can we manifest the attitude of a lesser one within the congregation?

contribute to the joy, peace, and unity of the congregation. (*Read Hebrews 13:7, 17.*) If you are serving as an elder or a ministerial servant, are you not humbly grateful to Jehovah for entrusting you with such a privilege of service?

¹¹ The one behaving as a lesser one is “great,” or more valuable to Jehovah’s organization, because his humility makes him a good and useful servant of God. Jesus had to admonish his disciples to behave as lesser ones because some of them were influenced by the prevailing spirit of the day. “A reasoning entered among them as to who would be the greatest of them,” states Luke 9:46. Might we also begin to reason that we in some way are better than our fellow believers or are superior to people in general? Many in the world around us are motivated by pride and selfishness. Let us distance ourselves from the proud by acting humbly. When we do so and put Jehovah’s will to the fore, we become more refreshing associates of our brothers and sisters.

¹² Jesus’ admonition to conduct ourselves as lesser ones truly is motivating. Should we not strive to manifest the spirit of a lesser one in all aspects of life? Let us give particular attention to three areas.

STRIVE TO BE A LESSER ONE

¹³ **Within marriage.** Many people today are so concerned about their personal rights that they demand them even if doing so means infringing on the rights of others. A lesser one, though, is guided

by the attitude that Paul encourages us to have. In his letter to the Romans, he writes: “Let us pursue the things making for peace and the things that are upbuilding to one another.” (Rom. 14:19) A person who behaves as a lesser one pursues peace with everyone and especially with his or her own cherished marriage mate.

¹⁴ Consider the area of recreation. A couple may differ in their preferences when it comes to entertainment. Perhaps the husband likes to stay quietly at home during leisure time and read a book. On the other hand, the wife may prefer going out for a meal or visiting friends. Would it not be easier for the wife to respect her husband when she sees that he manifests humility and gives sincere consideration to her likes and dislikes rather than being concerned only about his own preferences? And how the husband loves and appreciates his wife when he sees that she does not just try to get her own way but considers his wishes! The marriage bond is strengthened when each partner behaves as a lesser one.—*Read Philippians 2:1-4.*

¹⁵ **Within the congregation.** In the world, many individuals live for the immediate gratification of their desires. For them, patience is in short supply and waiting is a trial. Cultivating the spirit of a lesser one helps us to wait on Jehovah. (*Read Psalm 131:1-3.*) The benefits of being humble and waiting on Jehovah are security and blessings, solace and satisfaction. No wonder David encouraged his fellow Israelites to wait patiently for their God!

11, 12. What attitude will make us more valuable to Jehovah’s organization, and why is that the case?

13, 14. How should a husband or a wife behave as a lesser one, and how can this affect a marriage?

15, 16. What attitude did David recommend in Psalm 131, and how should this affect our behavior within the congregation?



What opportunities do you have to conduct yourself as a lesser one?

¹⁶ You can experience similar comfort when you humbly wait on Jehovah. (Ps. 42:5) Perhaps you are “desirous of a fine work” and, therefore, are “reaching out for an office of overseer.” (1 Tim. 3:1-7) Of course, you should do all that you reasonably can to allow the holy spirit to develop in you the qualities needed by an overseer. But what if the process seems to take longer in your case than in the case of others? The lesser one, who waits patiently for a privilege of service, will continue to serve Jehovah joyfully and will rejoice in whatever assignment he is given.

¹⁷ **In our relationships with others.** To apologize is difficult for most people. However, servants of God cultivate the spirit of a lesser one by admitting their mistakes and asking for forgiveness. They are also ready to forgive others for their transgressions. Whereas pride fosters division and contention, forgive-

ness promotes peace within the congregation.

¹⁸ We may need to ‘humble ourselves’ by sincerely apologizing to another person if we are unable to honor an agreement because of circumstances beyond our control. Although he may be able to assign a measure of blame to the other party, the humble Christian concerns himself with his own failings and is willing to admit them.—**Read Proverbs 6: 1-5.**

¹⁹ How grateful we are for the Scriptural encouragement to cultivate the spirit of a lesser one! Although we may at times find it challenging to manifest such a spirit, having the correct view of our position in relation to our Creator and appreciating his humility can motivate us to cultivate that fine quality. By doing so, we will indeed prove to be more valuable as Jehovah’s servants. May each of us, therefore, conduct himself as a lesser one.

17, 18. (a) What benefits result when we seek forgiveness and are willing to grant it to others? (b) What course is recommended at Proverbs 6: 1-5?

19. For what reasons should each of us be grateful for the Biblical counsel to behave as a lesser one?

Do Jesus' words found at Matthew 19:10-12 suggest that those who choose to remain single have received the gift of singleness in a mysterious way?

■ Consider the setting in which Jesus made his remarks on singleness. When Pharisees came to him and brought up the subject of divorce, Jesus made clear Jehovah's standard for marriage. While the Law allowed a man to write out a certificate of divorce for his wife in case he discovered "something indecent" in her, this was not the case from the beginning. (Deut. 24:1, 2) Then Jesus stated: "Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery."—Matt. 19:3-9.

On hearing this, the disciples declared: "If such is the situation of a man with his wife, it is not advisable to marry." In reply, Jesus said: "Not all men make room for the saying, but only those who have the gift. For there are eunuchs that were born such from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs that were made eunuchs by men, and there are eunuchs that have made themselves eunuchs on account of the kingdom of the heavens. Let him that can make room for it make room for it."—Matt. 19:10-12.

Literal eunuchs were those who were born such because of birth defects or who were made that way by accident or mutilation. However, there were also those who freely made themselves eunuchs. Though eligible for marriage, they exercised self-control and remained single "on account of the kingdom of the heavens." Like Jesus, they chose the state of singleness so that they could devote themselves to Kingdom service. They were neither born with the gift of single-

ness nor granted such a gift. They actually made room for it. That is, they deliberately acquired the gift.

Building upon what Jesus said, the apostle Paul explained that while all Christians—single or married—can serve God acceptably, single ones who are 'settled in their heart' about their status "do better." How so? Married people must divide their time and energy to please and care for their mate. On the other hand, single Christians can apply themselves to the Lord's service without that obligation. They consider their position a "gift" from God.—1 Cor. 7:7, 32-38.

Thus, the Scriptures tell us that a Christian does not receive the gift of singleness in some mysterious way. Rather, he cultivates it by remaining unmarried so as to advance Kingdom interests without distraction. Many today have resolved in their heart to stay single for this reason, and others do well to be a source of encouragement to them.





WHAT DOES JEHOVAH'S FORGIVENESS MEAN FOR YOU?

*"Jehovah [is] a God
merciful and gracious,
slow to anger . . . ,
pardoning error and
transgression and sin."*

—EX. 34:6, 7.

LOOK FOR THE ANSWERS

How did Jehovah deal with the sins of David and Manasseh, and why so?

Why did Jehovah handle matters as he did when dealing with the nation of Israel as a whole?

How can we gain Jehovah's forgiveness?

IN THE days of Nehemiah, a group of Levites acknowledged in public prayer that their forefathers had repeatedly "refused to listen" to Jehovah's commandments. Again and again, however, Jehovah proved to be "a God of acts of forgiveness, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness." To those repatriated exiles in Nehemiah's time, Jehovah was continuing to show undeserved kindness.—Neh. 9:16, 17.

² On a personal level, each of us might ask, 'What does Jehovah's forgiveness mean for me?' To help answer this important question, let us examine God's dealings with two men who benefited from Jehovah's forgiveness—the two kings David and Manasseh.

DAVID'S SERIOUS SINS

³ Although David was a God-fearing man, he did commit serious sins. Two of these involved a married couple, Uriah and Bath-sheba. The consequences of those sins were painful for all involved. Nevertheless, the way that God corrected David reveals a great deal about Jehovah's forgiveness. Consider what happened.

⁴ David sent Israel's army to besiege the Ammonite capital, Rabbah. It was located some 50 miles (80 km) east of Jerusalem, beyond the Jordan River. Meanwhile, from the roof of his palace in Jerusalem, David saw Bath-sheba—a married woman—bathing. Her husband was away. David was so aroused by observing Bath-sheba that he had her brought to

1, 2. (a) What kind of God did Jehovah prove to be to the nation of Israel? (b) What question does this article address?

3-5. How did David become involved in serious sin?

his palace, where he committed adultery with her.—2 Sam. 11:1-4.

⁵ When David learned that Bath-sheba was pregnant, he had her husband, Uriah, brought back to Jerusalem in hopes that he would have sexual relations with her. But Uriah would not even enter his home—despite David’s efforts to encourage him to do so. Therefore, the king secretly wrote to his army commander to have Uriah placed “in front of the heaviest battle charges” and to have his fellow soldiers retreat from behind him. An easy target, Uriah died in the battle, just as David had planned. (2 Sam. 11:12-17) The king’s sin of adultery was thus compounded by his having an innocent man killed.

DAVID’S CHANGE OF ATTITUDE

⁶ Of course, Jehovah saw everything that happened. Nothing escapes his attention. (Prov. 15:3) Although the king subsequently married Bath-sheba, “the thing that David had done appeared bad in the eyes of Jehovah.” (2 Sam. 11:27) So how did God react to David’s serious sins? He sent his prophet Nathan to David. Being a God of forgiveness, Jehovah was apparently interested in finding a basis for extending mercy. Do you not find this approach on Jehovah’s part heartwarming? He did not force David to confess but simply had Nathan present the king with a story that illustrated the badness of his sins. (*Read 2 Samuel 12:1-4.*) How effective that way of handling that delicate situation proved to be!

⁷ Nathan’s illustration stirred up the king’s sense of justice. David became

angry at the rich man of the story and said to Nathan: “As Jehovah is living, the man doing this deserves to die!” Moreover, David stated that the victim of such an injustice should be compensated for his losses. But then came a powerful blow. “You yourself are the man!” Nathan declared. David was then told that as a consequence of his actions, “a sword” would not depart from his house and calamity would strike his family. He would also be publicly humiliated for his errors. David realized the gravity of what he had done and contritely admitted: “I have sinned against Jehovah.” —2 Sam. 12:5-14.

DAVID’S PRAYER AND GOD’S FORGIVENESS

⁸ The words of a song that King David thereafter composed reveal his heart-felt remorse. Psalm 51 contains David’s touching pleas to Jehovah and clearly shows that he did more than admit his errors. He also repented of his sins. David was primarily concerned about his relationship with God. “Against you, you alone, I have sinned,” he confessed. He pleaded with Jehovah: “Create in me even a pure heart, O God, and put within me a new spirit, a steadfast one. . . . Do restore to me the exultation of salvation by you, and may you support me even with a willing spirit.” (Ps. 51:1-4, 7-12) Are you as earnest and as open with Jehovah when you speak to him about your failings?

⁹ Jehovah did not eliminate the painful consequences of David’s sins. Their effects were to continue with him for the rest of his life. However, in recognition of David’s repentant spirit—he had

6. What was God’s reaction to David’s sins, and what does this reveal about Jehovah?

7. How did David respond to Nathan’s illustration?

8, 9. How does Psalm 51 reveal David’s inmost thoughts, and what does it teach us about Jehovah?

“a heart broken and crushed”—Jehovah forgave him. (*Read Psalm 32:5*; Ps. 51: 17) Almighty God understands the true attitude and motive behind sins. Rather than have the adulterers condemned to death by human judges according to the Mosaic Law, Jehovah mercifully intervened, dealing with David and Bathsheba himself. (Lev. 20:10) God even made their son Solomon Israel’s next king.—1 Chron. 22:9, 10.

¹⁰ Perhaps another factor in Jehovah’s forgiveness is the way David himself had shown mercy to Saul. (1 Sam. 24: 4-7) As Jesus explained, Jehovah treats us the way we treat others. “Stop judging that you may not be judged,” said Jesus, “for with what judgment you are judging, you will be judged; and with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you.” (Matt. 7: 1, 2) What a relief it is to know that Jehovah will forgive our sins—even sins as serious as adultery or murder! He will do so if we have a *forgiving spirit*, if we *confess our sins* before him, and if we manifest a *changed attitude* toward our bad actions. “Seasons of refreshing” come from Jehovah when sinners *sincerely repent*.—*Read Acts 3:19*.

MANASSEH SINS GRAVELY BUT REPENTS

¹¹ Consider another Scriptural account that illustrates the extent of Jehovah’s willingness to forgive. Some 360 years after David began to rule, Manasseh became king of Judah. His 55-year-long reign was infamous for wickedness, and his detestable practices brought

10. (a) What basis might Jehovah have found for forgiving David? (b) What factors move Jehovah to extend forgiveness?

11. In what ways did King Manasseh do what was bad in God’s eyes?

condemnation from Jehovah. Among other things, Manasseh set up altars to Baal, worshipped “all the army of the heavens,” made his sons pass through fire, and promoted spiritistic practices. Yes, “he did on a grand scale what was bad in the eyes of Jehovah.”—2 Chron. 33:1-6.

¹² Eventually, Manasseh was taken from his homeland and thrown into a Babylonian prison. There he may have recalled these words of Moses to Israel: “When you are in sore straits and all these words have found you out at the close of the days, then you will have to return to Jehovah your God and to listen to his voice.” (Deut. 4:30)

12. How did Manasseh return to Jehovah?



Manasseh did return to Jehovah. How? He “kept humbling himself greatly” and “kept praying” to God (as depicted on page 21). (2 Chron. 33:12, 13) We have no record of the exact words Manasseh uttered in those prayers, but we can imagine that they may in some ways have paralleled those of King David, as recorded in Psalm 51. In any case, Manasseh underwent a complete change of heart.

¹³ What was Jehovah’s response to Manasseh’s prayers? “He let himself be entreated by [Manasseh] and He heard his request for favor.” Like David before him, Manasseh recognized the seriousness of his sins and was truly repentant. That is why God forgave Manasseh and restored him to the kingship in Jerusalem. As a result, “Manasseh came to know that Jehovah is the true God.” (2 Chron. 33:13) How heartening it is to

13. Why did Jehovah forgive Manasseh?

have this further evidence that our merciful God forgives those who are genuinely repentant!

IS JEHOVAH’S FORGIVENESS UNLIMITED?

¹⁴ Few among God’s people today will ever have to seek forgiveness for sins as serious as those of David and Manasseh. Yet, the fact that Jehovah forgave these two kings helps us to realize that our God is willing to forgive even gross sins if the sinner is truly repentant.

¹⁵ Of course, we cannot rightly conclude that Jehovah automatically forgives all humans for their sins. In this regard, let us compare the attitude of David and Manasseh with that of the wayward people of Israel and Judah. God sent Nathan to confront David and give him an opportunity to change his attitude. David gratefully accepted this

14. What determines whether Jehovah will grant sinners forgiveness?

15. How do we know that Jehovah’s forgiveness is not automatic?

Because of Jehovah’s forgiveness, Manasseh was restored to his kingship in Jerusalem



offer. When Manasseh found himself in sore straits, he was moved to sincere repentance. Often, however, the inhabitants of Israel and Judah did not repent. Therefore, Jehovah did not forgive them. Instead, he repeatedly had his prophets declare how he viewed their disobedient conduct. (***Read Nehemiah 9:30.***) Even after the exiles returned from Babylon to their homeland, Jehovah continued to raise up faithful messengers, such as the priest Ezra and the prophet Malachi. When the people acted in harmony with Jehovah's will, they experienced great joy.—Neh. 12:43-47.

¹⁶ After Jesus was sent to the earth and the one perfect ransom sacrifice was provided, Jehovah no longer accepted Israel's animal sacrifices. (1 John 4:9, 10) As a man, Jesus reflected his Father's viewpoint when he spoke these moving words: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the killer of the prophets and stoner of those sent forth to her,—how often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks together under her wings! But you people did not want it." So Jesus declared: "Look! Your house is abandoned to you." (Matt. 23:37, 38) Thus, the sinful and unrepentant nation was replaced by spiritual Israel. (Matt. 21:43; Gal. 6:16) But what about individual members of natural Israel? They are welcome to benefit from Jehovah's forgiveness and mercy by exercising faith in God and in the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. That opportunity will also be open to people who died without repenting of their sins but who are resurrected on a cleansed earth.—John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.

16. (a) For the nation of Israel as a whole, what were the consequences of their being unrepentant? (b) What outcome can there be for individual descendants of the ancient Israelites?

BENEFITING FROM JEHOVAH'S FORGIVENESS

¹⁷ How should we respond to Jehovah's willingness to forgive? Surely we ought to act as did David and Manasseh. We should recognize our sinfulness, repent of our errors, earnestly beseech Jehovah for forgiveness, and ask him to create in us a pure heart. (Ps. 51:10) If we have sinned seriously, we should also seek the spiritual assistance of the elders. (Jas. 5:14, 15) Regardless of our circumstances, it is comforting to bear in mind that Jehovah is as he described himself to Moses—"a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abundant in loving-kindness and truth, preserving loving-kindness for thousands, pardoning error and transgression and sin." Jehovah has not changed.—Ex. 34:6, 7.

¹⁸ Using a powerful comparison, Jehovah promised repentant Israelites the complete removal of the stain of their sins, making what was "scarlet" as white as "snow." (***Read Isaiah 1:18.***) What, then, does Jehovah's forgiveness mean for us? A complete pardon for our sins and errors, provided that we manifest a grateful and repentant attitude.

¹⁹ As the recipients of Jehovah's forgiveness, how can we imitate him in our dealings with one another? How can we avoid adopting an unforgiving attitude toward those who sin seriously but manifest genuine repentance? The next article will help us examine our own hearts so that we can become more like our Father, Jehovah, who is "good and ready to forgive."—Ps. 86:5.

17, 18. How can we receive Jehovah's forgiveness?

19. What will we consider in the article that follows?



FORGIVE ONE ANOTHER FREELY

“Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely.”—COL. 3:13.

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

Why must we be willing to forgive?

How did Jesus illustrate the need to be forgiving?

What blessings do we receive because of freely forgiving one another?

JEHOVAH’S written Word enables us to learn how he views sin and how he reacts when we commit sins. His Word also reveals much about forgiveness. In the preceding article, we focused on how the attitudes of David and Manasseh elicited Jehovah’s forgiveness. Their contrite, heartfelt sorrow over what they had done led them to confession, rejection of their wicked acts, and genuine repentance. In turn, Jehovah restored them to his favor.

² Let us examine forgiveness from a different perspective. How do you think you would have felt toward Manasseh if his innocent victims had included one of your relatives? Would you have been able to forgive Manasseh? That is a pertinent question today because we live in a lawless, violent, and selfish world. So why should a Christian want to cultivate a forgiving attitude? And if you suffer an affront or an injustice, what can help you to keep your emotions under control, react as Jehovah would want you to, and be willing to forgive?

WHY WE NEED TO BE FORGIVING

³ A willingness to forgive those who offend us—whether they are members of the Christian congregation or not—is essential if we are to maintain peaceful relations with family members, friends, fellow humans, and Jehovah. The Scriptures indicate that a willingness to forgive others regardless of how often they offend us is a Christian requirement. In

1, 2. Why is it appropriate to consider your willingness to forgive?

3-5. (a) What illustration did Jesus use to help his listeners think about the need to be forgiving? (b) What is the point of Jesus’ illustration recorded at Matthew 18:21-35?

order to illustrate the reasonableness of this requirement, Jesus used an illustration about a slave who was a debtor.

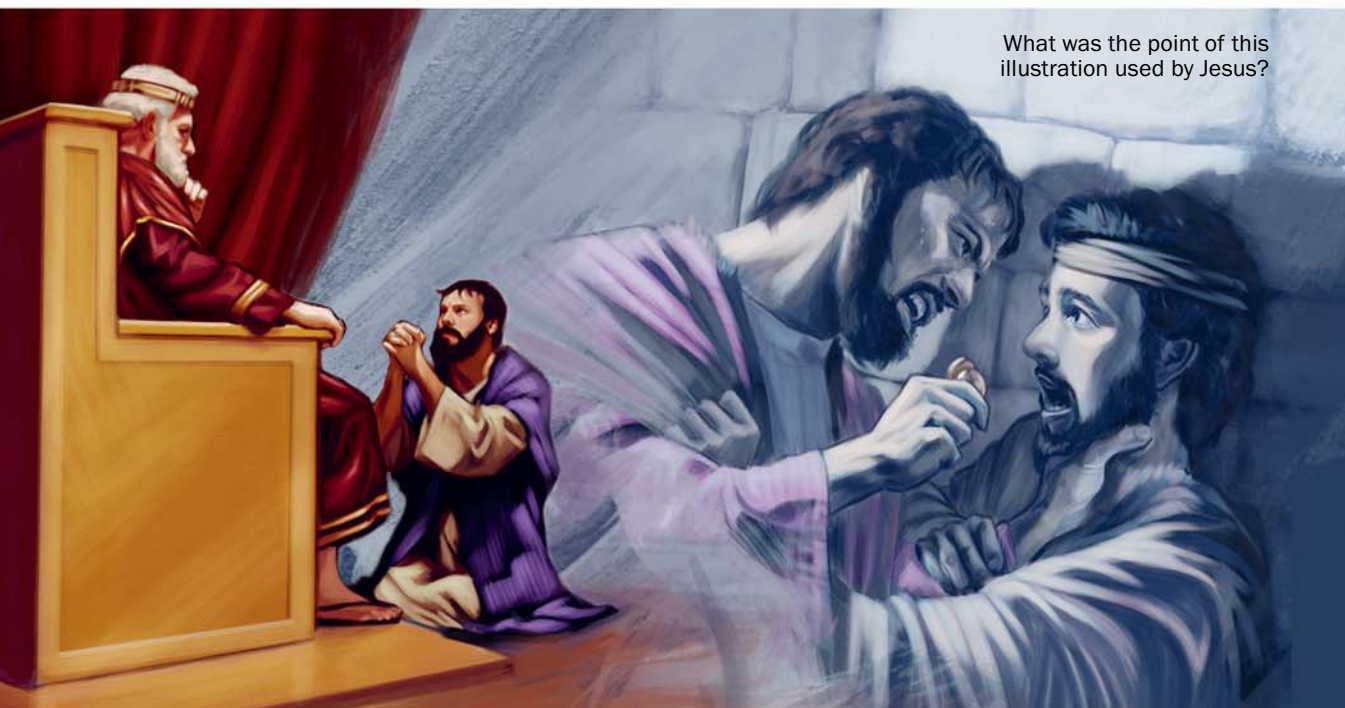
⁴ The slave owed his master the equivalent of a laborer's wages for 60,000,-000 days; yet, his master canceled the debt. Thereafter, the slave went out and found a fellow slave who owed him a sum that amounted to only 100 days' wages. The debtor pleaded for patience, but the slave who had been forgiven a huge debt had his fellow slave thrown into prison. That attitude angered their master. "Ought you not . . . to have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I also had mercy on you?" the master asked. "With that his master, provoked to wrath, delivered [the unforgiving slave] to the jailers, until he should pay back all that was owing."—Matt. 18:21-34.

⁵ What point did Jesus make with this illustration? His conclusion was: "In like manner my heavenly Father will also deal with you if you do not forgive each one his brother from your hearts." (Matt.

18:35) Jesus' point is clear. The sins we have committed during a lifetime of imperfection give evidence that we are hopelessly unable to meet Jehovah's standards. Yet, he is willing to forgive us and to wipe the slate clean, as it were. Hence, anyone who desires Jehovah's friendship is obliged to forgive the shortcomings of his fellow human. Or as Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: "If you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; whereas if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." —Matt. 6:14, 15.

⁶ 'That all sounds fine in theory,' you might say, 'but it is easier said than done.' That is because reactions to personal offenses are often emotional. A person may feel anger, a sense of betrayal, the desire for justice or even revenge. In fact, some feel that they will *never*

6. Why is it not always easy to forgive?



What was the point of this illustration used by Jesus?

be able to forgive the offender. If you feel similarly, how can you cultivate the forgiving attitude that Jehovah requires?

ANALYZE YOUR EMOTIONS

⁷ Emotional responses to real or supposed offenses can be very strong. Consider the following reaction of one young man, as described in a study on anger: “Once . . . in an angry fit, I walked out of the house vowing I would never return. It was a beautiful summer day, and I walked far along lovely lanes, till gradually the stillness and beauty calmed and soothed me, and after some hours I returned repentant and almost melted.” As this experience illustrates, giving yourself time to calm down and view the situation more dispassionately may help you to avoid responding in an unforgiving way that you may later regret.—Ps. 4:4; Prov. 14:29; Jas. 1:19, 20.

⁸ What, though, if a negative emotion persists? Try to determine *why* you are upset. Is it because you have been treated unfairly, perhaps discourteously? Or is it because you feel that the other person deliberately attempted to hurt you? Was his or her action really so bad? Analyzing and understanding the reason for your reaction will allow you to consider what would be the best and Scripturally proper response. (***Read Proverbs 15:28; 17:27.***) Such reasoning may help you to be more objective and willing to forgive. By adopting such an approach, difficult though it may be, you permit God’s word to examine the “thoughts and intentions of [your] heart” and guide you in imitating Jehovah’s forgiving attitude.—Heb. 4:12.

7, 8. What can help you to respond in a forgiving way if you have been upset by the unkind conduct of others?

SHOULD YOU TAKE IT PERSONALLY?

⁹ Many situations in life provoke negative reactions. While you are driving your automobile, for instance, suppose another car nearly collides with your vehicle. How will you react? You have read about episodes of road rage in which an individual became so angry that he attacked the other driver. As a Christian, however, you certainly would not want to do such a thing.

¹⁰ How much better it would be to take a moment to analyze matters. Perhaps you were partly to blame for what took place because you were distracted in some way. Or the other driver may have had a mechanical problem with his car. The point of this scenario is that we can lessen anger, disappointment, and other negative emotions with understanding, open-mindedness, and a willingness to forgive. “Do not hurry yourself in your spirit to become offended,” says Ecclesiastes 7:9, “for the taking of offense is what rests in the bosom of the stupid ones.” Do not take things so personally. On many occasions, what may be thought of as a deliberate personal offense is nothing of the sort; it is just a result of imperfection or a misunderstanding. Try to be open-minded regarding what seem to be unkind acts or words, and be willing to forgive out of love. You will be happier if you succeed. —***Read 1 Peter 4:8.***

‘MAY YOUR PEACE RETURN TO YOU’

¹¹ How can you maintain self-control if someone is rude to you while you are engaging in field service? When Jesus

9, 10. (a) How might you react to a perceived offense? (b) How can adopting a positive, forgiving spirit change your outlook on life?

11. The reactions of people to the good news should elicit what response in us as Kingdom proclaimers?

sent out 70 preachers, he told them to wish peace upon every house they visited. “If a friend of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him,” Jesus said. “But if there is not, it will turn back to you.” (Luke 10:1, 5, 6) We are happy when people respond favorably to our ministry, for then they may benefit from the message we bear. Sometimes, however, the response is anything but peaceable. What then? Jesus said that the peace we wished on the household should remain with us. In any case, we should be able to leave each door with peace in our hearts, regardless of how people treat us. If we were to respond to a provocation by getting upset, we could not maintain our peace.

¹² Strive to maintain your peace in all situations, not just in the Christian ministry. Naturally, willingness to forgive others does not mean that you have to approve of their wrong behavior or minimize the damage it does. Forgiving, though, does mean letting go of any resentment for such wrongs and maintaining your own peace. By dwelling on negative thoughts and mulling over how badly they have been treated, some people let the behavior of others rob them of happiness. Do not let such thoughts control you. Remember that you cannot be happy when you harbor resentment. Therefore, be forgiving!—*Read Ephesians 4:31, 32.*

REACT IN A WAY THAT PLEASES JEHOVAH

¹³ There may be times when you feel that you can help someone who has wronged you to appreciate Christian

12. According to Paul’s words at Ephesians 4: 31, 32, how should we act?

13. (a) How does a Christian “heap fiery coals” on his enemy’s head? (b) What may result from a mild response to provocation?

standards. The apostle Paul wrote: “‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by doing this you will heap fiery coals upon his head.’ Do not let yourself be conquered by the evil, but keep conquering the evil with the good.” (Rom. 12: 20, 21) By your graciousness in the face of provocation, you may soften even the hardest of attitudes and bring out the good in people. By showing understanding, empathy—even compassion—for the offender, you might be able to help him learn Biblical truths. Whatever the case, a mild response gives the individual an opportunity to reflect on your fine conduct.—1 Pet. 2:12; 3:16.

¹⁴ Under some circumstances, it would be inappropriate to have fellowship with certain people. This would include those who were once part of the congregation but who sinned, were unrepentant, and were disfellowshipped. If such an individual has hurt you, it might be extremely difficult to forgive him even if he repents, since emotional wounds take time to heal. Under such circumstances, you might keep on asking Jehovah to help you cultivate a forgiving spirit toward the repentant wrongdoer. After all, how can you know what is in the other person’s heart? Jehovah knows. He examines a person’s innermost inclinations and is patient with wrongdoers. (Ps. 7:9; Prov. 17:3) That is why the Scriptures state: “Return evil for evil to no one. Provide fine things in the sight of all men. If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men. Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,

14. Regardless of how badly a person has treated you, why should you refrain from harboring resentment?

says Jehovah.'” (Rom. 12:17-19) Can you rightly condemn another person? No. (Matt. 7:1, 2) But you can be confident that justice lies in God’s hands.

¹⁵ If you feel that you have been the victim of an injustice and find it difficult to forgive a wrongdoer who has repented, it would be good to realize that the offender too is a victim. He or she also suffers the effects of inherited imperfection. (Rom. 3:23) Jehovah feels compassion toward all imperfect mankind. Therefore, it is appropriate to pray for the offender. It is unlikely that we would continue being angry with someone for whom we are praying. And that we should avoid harboring resentment toward even those who mistreat us is clear from Jesus’ words: “Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you.”—Matt. 5:44.

¹⁶ In accord with Jehovah’s will, Christian elders have been entrusted with the responsibility of handling cases of wrongdoing in the congregation. These brothers do not have the full insight that God does, but they aim to make their decision harmonize with the direction given in God’s Word under the guidance of holy spirit. Hence, what they decide in such matters after seeking Jehovah’s help in prayer will reflect his point of view.—Matt. 18:18.

¹⁷ Here is where loyalty matters. Will you forgive and confirm your love for those judged to be repentant? (2 Cor. 2: 5-8) This may not be easy, especially if you are a victim of the wrongdoing or are related to a victim. However, by placing your trust in Jehovah and his way of deal-

15. What realization regarding offenders should affect our attitude toward them?

16, 17. How should you respond when Christian elders judge a sinner as repentant, and why?



Willingness to forgive is a Christian requirement

ing with matters through the congregation, you will act wisely. You will demonstrate that you really do forgive freely.—Prov. 3:5, 6.

¹⁸ Mental-health experts recognize the benefits of being willing to forgive. It releases pent-up and even debilitating emotions that cause ill health, and it fosters healthier and happier relationships. Contrast that with the costs of an unwillingness to forgive—poor health, broken relationships, stress, and difficult communication. By far the most important blessing of being willing to forgive is a good relationship with our heavenly Father, Jehovah.—**Read Colossians 3:12-14.**

18. What benefits can you experience because of forgiving freely?

'It Was the Best Message Ever Heard'



"WHAT are all of those for?" asked George Naish, pointing to a heap of 60-foot (18 m) logs at the armory in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, Canada. The timber, he was told, had been used to build signal towers during World

War I. "It occurred to me that we could use those logs to build radio towers," Brother Naish later related, "and thus the idea for a theocratic radio station was born." Just one year later—in 1924—CHUC went on the air. It was one of the first radio stations broadcasting religious subjects in Canada.

Roughly the same size as Europe, Canada was an ideal place to witness over the radio. "Thanks to our radio broadcasts, the truth reached many people whom we could not personally contact," said Florence Johnson, who worked at the station in Saskatoon. "And since radio was then a novelty, people were eager to hear anything that was

broadcast." By 1926, the Bible Students (as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called) were operating their own radio stations in four Canadian cities.*

What would you have heard had you tuned in to one of these broadcasts? Singers from the local congregation often performed musical numbers along with instrumentalists and even small orchestras. Of course, the brothers also delivered sermons and conducted Bible discussions. Amy Jones, who participated in the discussions, recalled, "While in the field ministry, I would introduce myself and the householder would sometimes say, 'Oh, yes, I heard you on the radio.'"

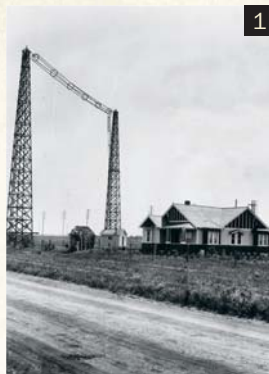
Bible Students in Halifax, Nova Scotia, employed what was then an innovative radio format—a talk show to which listeners could phone in and ask Bible questions. "The response to this type of program was tremendous," wrote one brother. "The number of phone calls almost paralyzed the station."

* To witness over the air, brothers in Canada also purchased time on commercial radio stations.

Like the apostle Paul, the Bible Students received a mixed response to the message. (Acts 17:1-5) Some listeners liked the message. For example, when Hector Marshall heard the Bible Students mention *Studies in the Scriptures* on the radio, he ordered six volumes. "I thought the books would help me to teach Sunday school," he later wrote. By the time he finished reading Volume I, however, Hector decided to leave his church. He became a zealous evangelizer, and until his death in 1998, he served Jehovah faithfully. In eastern Nova Scotia, the day after the talk "The Kingdom, the Hope of the World" was broadcast, Colonel J. A. MacDonald told a local brother: "The people of Cape Breton Island heard a message yesterday that was the best that was ever listened to in this part of the world."

On the other hand, the clergy were angry. Some Catholics in Halifax threatened to blow up the station that hosted the Bible Students' programs. Urged on by religious leaders, in 1928 the government abruptly announced that it would not renew broadcasting licenses for stations owned by the Bible Students. In response, brothers and sisters distributed *Who Owns the Air?*—a printed message that protested such unjust action. Nevertheless, government officials refused to renew the Bible Students' broadcasting licenses.

Did this dampen the spirits of the small group of Jehovah's servants in Canada? "At first, it certainly seemed like a great victory for the enemy," admitted Isabel Wainwright. "But I knew that Jehovah could have prevented it had it suited his purpose. So it must have meant that we should adjust to another and more outstanding way to publish the good news of the Kingdom." Instead of relying heavily on the radio in order to witness, the Bible Students in Canada began to focus on personal visits at the homes of people. In its time, however, the radio certainly played a mighty role in broadcasting 'the best message ever heard.'—From our archives in Canada.



1



2



3

(1) Station in Edmonton, Alberta
(2) A brother handling the power tubes of the transmitter in Toronto, Ontario
(3) CHUC studio in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

"The number of phone calls almost paralyzed the station"

