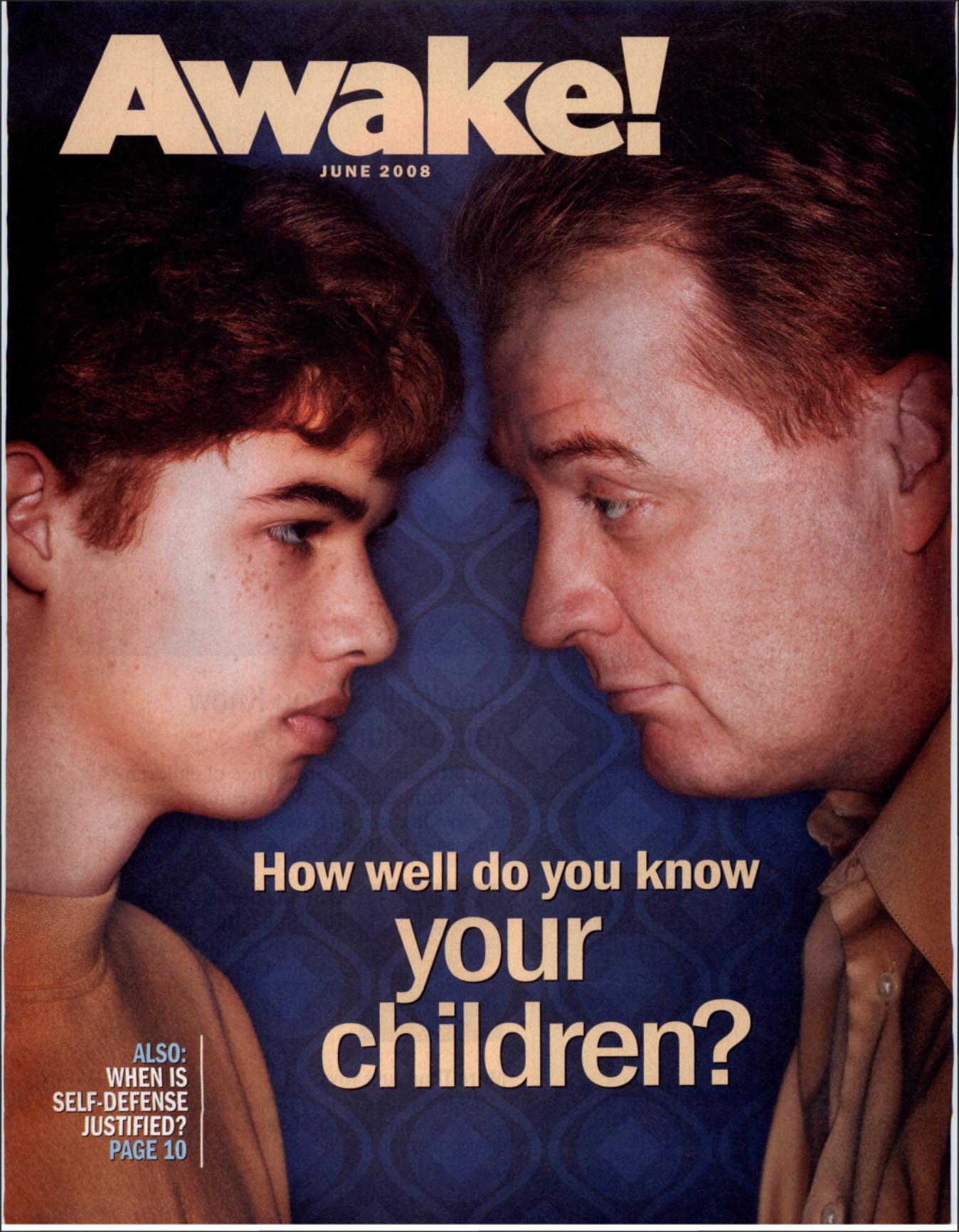


Awake!

JUNE 2008

A close-up photograph of a father and son looking at each other with concern. The father, on the right, has short brown hair and is wearing a light-colored shirt. The son, on the left, has dark, wavy hair and is wearing an orange shirt. They are both looking directly at each other with serious expressions.

How well do you know
your
children?

ALSO:
WHEN IS
SELF-DEFENSE
JUSTIFIED?
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How Well Do You Know Your Children? 3-9

The attitudes and appearance of children often change quickly. What can parents do to provide them with wholesome direction? How can the Bible help?



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When a person is threatened by an assailant, what action is appropriate? What is the best protection?

More Than Just Toys 26

Many, if not most, young girls have dolls. Learn the history of dolls and also the moral dangers they can present.



“What Happened to My Child?”

Scott and Sandra* were stunned as their 15-year-old daughter entered the living room. Her hair, once blond, was now bright red! Even more baffling was the conversation that ensued.

“Did we give you permission to dye your hair?”

“Well, you never said I *couldn’t*.”

“Why didn’t you ask us?”

“Because I knew you’d say no!”

AS Scott and Sandra will readily attest, adolescence is a time of upheaval—not just for youths but also for their parents. Indeed, many fathers and mothers are utterly unprepared for the dramatic changes that take place when their child reaches puberty. “Without warning, our daughter became different,” recalls Barbara, a mother in Canada. “I wondered, ‘What happened to my child?’ It was as if she were taken away while we were sleeping and replaced with someone else!”

Barbara’s experience is certainly not unique. Consider what parents from around the world told *Awake!*

“When he became an adolescent, my son suddenly seemed more opinionated

and more inclined to question our authority.”—Lia, Britain.

“Our daughters became more self-conscious, especially about their appearance.”—John, Ghana.

“My son wanted to make his own decisions. He didn’t want to be told what to do.”—Celine, Brazil.

“Our daughter wasn’t so keen on being hugged or kissed by us anymore.”—Andrew, Canada.

“Our boys became more aggressive. Rather than accept our decisions, they challenged and debated them.”—Steve, Australia.

“My daughter hid her feelings. She was shut up in her own little world, and she’d get annoyed at me when I’d try to enter it.”—Joanne, Mexico.

“Our children tended to be secretive and wanted to have more privacy. Often, they preferred to be with their friends rather than with us.”—Daniel, Philippines.

As the parent of an adolescent, you may find that some of the above comments could be your very own. If so, be assured that you are not helpless in your quest to understand this “stranger” in your midst, your teenage son or daughter. The Bible can help. How?

Wisdom and Understanding

A Bible proverb says: “Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding.” (Proverbs 4:5) Both qualities are essential when dealing with an adolescent. You need *understanding* to look beyond the behavior and perceive just what your child is going through. You also need

* Names in this series have been changed.

wisdom to respond in a way that continues to guide your teen toward responsible adulthood.

Do not be fooled by what appears to be an ever-widening gap in the relationship be-

tween you and your son or daughter. The fact is, adolescents need—and even want—their parents' involvement during this challenging stage of life. How can understanding and wisdom help you to provide such guidance?

R A I S I N G A D O L E S C E N T S

The Role of Understanding

Suppose you were visiting a foreign land and you did not speak the native tongue. No doubt, communication would be difficult—but not impossible. For example, a phrase book could help you to learn the basic expressions of the language. Or perhaps someone could translate for you so that you would be able to understand others—and be understood by them.

PARENTS raising teenagers may sometimes feel that they are in a similar situation. Much like a foreign language, the behavior of adolescents may be difficult—but not impossible—to comprehend. The key is for parents to try to interpret just what is happening during this sometimes exciting, but often confusing, stage of growth.

Behind the Behavior

A youth's desire for independence is not always a sign of rebellion. Remember, the Bible acknowledges

Awake!®

THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today's problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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that in time, “a man will leave his father and his mother.” (Genesis 2:24) To prepare for greater responsibilities in adulthood, youths need at least some experience in making decisions.

Consider what could be behind the behavior observed by parents who were quoted in the previous article.

Lia, in Britain, lamented: “**My son suddenly seemed more opinionated and more inclined to question our authority.**”

Like little children, teenagers repeatedly ask, “Why?” Now, however, a brief, simple reply may not end the discussion. What has changed? The apostle Paul wrote: “When I was a babe, I used to . . . reason as a babe.” (1 Corinthians 13:11) As youths develop their ability to reason, they need more extensive explanations so that their “perceptive powers” can be trained.—Hebrews 5:14.

John, in Ghana, said: “**Our daughters became more self-conscious, especially about their appearance.**”

Whether it occurs early, late, or right on time, the growth spurt of puberty makes many youths overly aware of how they look. Girls may greet their new curves with excitement or with apprehension—or with a mixture of both. Add the discovery of acne—and makeup—and it is easy to see why teens may seem to spend more time in front of the mirror than in front of a school textbook.

Daniel, in the Philippines, explained: “**Our children tended to be secretive and wanted to**

■ As youths develop their power of reason, they need more extensive explanations for family rules

have more privacy. Often, they preferred to be with their friends rather than with us.”

Secrecy can be dangerous. (Ephesians 5:12) Privacy, however, is different. Even Jesus saw the value of seeking out “a lonely place for isolation.” (Matthew 14:13) As they grow, youths too need some personal space—and they need for adults to respect that space. A degree of privacy helps youths to think things through—a vital skill that will serve them well in adulthood.

Similarly, learning to establish friendships is a part of growing up. True, “bad associations spoil useful habits.” (1 Corinthians 15:33) At the same time, however, it is as the Bible says: “A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress.” (Proverbs 17:17) Learning how to form and maintain healthy friendships is a vital skill that will last into adulthood.

When confronted with any of the above situations, parents would do well to acquire understanding so that they do not misinterpret the behavior of their teens. Of course, understanding needs to be coupled with wisdom, the ability to respond to a situation in a way that will produce the best result. How can parents of adolescents do that?

Languages: Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese, Chinese (Simplified), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech, [#]⁺ Danish, [#]⁺ Dutch, ⁺ English, [#]⁺ Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish, ^o French, [#]⁺^o Georgian, German, [#]⁺^o Greek, Gujarati, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian, [#]⁺^o Japanese, [#]⁺ Kannada, Kirghiz, Korean, [#]⁺^o Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian, ^o Polish, [#]⁺ Portuguese, [#]⁺^o Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian, [#]⁺^o Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish, [#]⁺^o Swahili, Swedish, [#]⁺ Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

[#] Audiocassettes also available.

⁺ CD also available.

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The Role of Wisdom

"We try hard to guide our son and daughter, but it seems that we're forever reprimanding them for something. We sometimes wonder whether we're building their self-confidence or destroying it. Finding a balance is a real challenge."—George and Lauren, Australia.

Raising an adolescent is no easy task. Besides dealing with the new set of challenges their child presents, parents may have to confront their own misgivings about the fact that their son or daughter is growing up. "Just realizing that our children will be gone one day is a sad thought," admits a father in Australia named Frank. "It is not easy to accept that you are no longer in control of their lives."

Lia, quoted earlier in this series, would agree. "It's difficult to treat my son as a young adult, because I still view him as my little boy," she says. "It seems like only yesterday that he was off to his first day at school!"

Hard as it may be to accept, adolescents are no longer little children. They are 'adults in training,' and parents are their teachers and their cheerleaders. However, as George and Lauren noted above, parents have the power both to build and to destroy a child's self-confidence. How can parents find the right balance? The Bible contains helpful advice. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Let us consider some examples.

Good Communication Is Vital

The Bible tells Christians to be "swift about hearing" and "slow about speaking." (James 1:19) While this is good advice when one is dealing with children of *any* age, hearing—or listening—is particularly important with adolescents. And it may require great effort.

"I had to expand my communication skills when my sons became teenagers," says Peter, a father in Britain. "When the boys were younger, my wife and I *told* them what to do, and they listened. But now that they're older, we have to reason with them, talk things through, and let them use their own thinking abilities to resolve matters. In short, we have to reach the heart."—2 Timothy 3:14.

Listening is especially vital when there is a conflict. (Proverbs 17:27) Danielle, in Britain, found this to be true in her case. She relates: "I had an issue with one of my daughters over the way she talked back when I asked her to do anything. But she told me that I was always shouting at her and ordering her around. We resolved this conflict by sitting down and really listening to each other. She described the way I spoke to her and how it made her feel, and I described my impressions and feelings to her."

Danielle found that being "swift about hearing" helped her to discern a deeper issue. "Now I try to be patient with my daughter," she says, "and I try to speak to her only when I'm not angry." She added, "Our relationship is improving."

Proverbs 18:13 states: "When anyone is replying to a matter before he hears it, that is foolishness on his part and a humiliation." Greg, a father in Australia, found that to be true. "Conflicts with our children sometimes arise when instead of listening first and ac-



Allow them to express their feelings before you provide any needed correction or advice

knowledging our children's feelings, my wife and I are quick to lecture," he says. "Even if we disagree totally with their attitudes, we have found it very important to allow them to express their feelings *before* we provide any needed correction or advice."

How Much Freedom?

Perhaps the most frequent cause of conflict between parents and adolescents has to do with the issue of independence. How much freedom should be given to a teenager? "Sometimes I feel that if I give my daughter an inch, she wants a mile," says one dad.

Obviously, granting youths *unrestricted* freedom will reap bad results. Indeed, the Bible warns that "a boy let on the loose will be causing his mother shame." (Proverbs 29:15) Youths of any age need firm guidelines, and parents should be loving but consistent in their enforcement of family rules. (Ephesians 6:4) At the same time, youths need to be accorded a degree of independence so that they will be better prepared to make wise decisions later in life.

Think, for example, of how you learned to walk. At first, as an infant, you had to be carried. In time, you began to crawl and then to walk. Of course, becoming mobile can be dangerous for a small child. Thus, your parents kept a close watch on you and may even have put up barriers to restrict you from hazardous areas, such as stairways. Still, they allowed you to move about on your

■ Gaining independence is like learning to walk
—it is a gradual process

"Reaffirming Your Authority"

The fact that your teenager may be upset by your restrictions does not mean that you should relinquish your authority. Remember, adolescents are inexperienced in life and they still need guidance.—Proverbs 22:15

In his book *New Parent Power!* John Rosemond writes: "It is easy for parents to let themselves be intimidated by their children's emotional upheavals and begin allowing them more responsibility than they can handle in order to avoid confrontations. Exactly the opposite is called for. This is a time for reaffirming your authority rather than allowing your children to dismantle it. Although they will surely reject the notion, it's also a time for children to know that hands other than their own are ready to take the wheel."

Parents need to teach their children to be responsible

own so that in time—after a number of inevitable falls—you would learn to walk with ease.

Attaining independence involves a similar process. At first, parents, in effect, carry their small children. They do this by making decisions for them. Later, as their children demonstrate a degree of maturity, parents allow them to crawl, so to speak. They permit them to make certain choices for themselves. All the while, barriers are kept in place, and these protect youths from harm. As their children mature, parents allow them to “walk” on their own. Then, when they become adults, they will be fully able to ‘carry their own load.’—Galatians 6:5.

Learning From a Bible Example

Evidently, as a preteen, Jesus was granted a measure of independence by his parents, but he did not abuse the trust that was accorded him. On the contrary, he “continued subject” to his parents as he “went on progressing in wisdom and in physical growth and in favor with God and men.”—Luke 2:51, 52.

■ As a preteen, Jesus was granted a measure of independence

As a parent, you can learn from this example and grant your young ones increased freedom as they show themselves capable of handling it. Note what some parents have to say about their experiences in this regard.

“I used to interfere with my children’s activities far too much. Later, I taught them principles and let them make decisions according to what they had learned. After that, I noticed that they began weighing their decisions more carefully.”—Soo Hyun, Korea.

“My husband and I are always a bit apprehensive, but we have not let this keep our



children from exercising in a responsible way the freedom that they have rightly earned.”—Daria, Brazil.

“I have found it important to praise my teenage son for the good way he uses the independence that I grant him. I also do what I ask him to do. For example, I tell him where I’m going and what I’m doing. If I’m running late, I let him know.”—Anna, Italy.

“In our home we emphasize that independence isn’t something our sons are entitled to but something they have to prove they can be trusted with.”—Peter, Britain.

Bearing the Consequences

The Bible states: “Good it is for an able-bodied man that he should carry the yoke during his youth.” (Lamentations 3:27) One of the best ways a youth can bear the yoke of responsibility is to learn by experience the truthfulness of the statement: “Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”—Galatians 6:7.

Likely with good intentions, some parents shield their teens from the consequences



Extending Freedom

Often teenagers want more freedom than they should have. At the same time, some parents tend to extend less freedom than they could. Somewhere between the two extremes, there is a balance. How can you find it? For a start, you may want to consider the list below. In which areas is your son or daughter demonstrating responsible behavior?

- Choice of friends**
- Choice of clothing**
- Budgeting money**
- Adhering to curfew**
- Finishing chores**
- Completing schoolwork**
- Apologizing for errors**
- Other**

If your adolescent is already demonstrating maturity in a number of the above areas, why not think of some ways you can extend further trust?

of unwise actions. For instance, suppose through frivolous spending a son gets himself into debt. What lesson will be taught if Dad and Mom simply pay it off for him? On the other hand, what lesson would be taught if the boy's parents helped him to work out a plan to pay off the debt himself?

Parents do their children no favor when they fail to allow them to learn the consequences of irresponsible behavior. Rather than prepare them for adulthood, this only teaches them that someone will always be there to bail them out, clean up their messes, and cover up their mistakes. It is far better to give teens the opportunity to reap what they have sown and to learn how to work through their problems. This is an important aspect of having their "perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong."—Hebrews 5:14.

"A Changing, Developing Person"

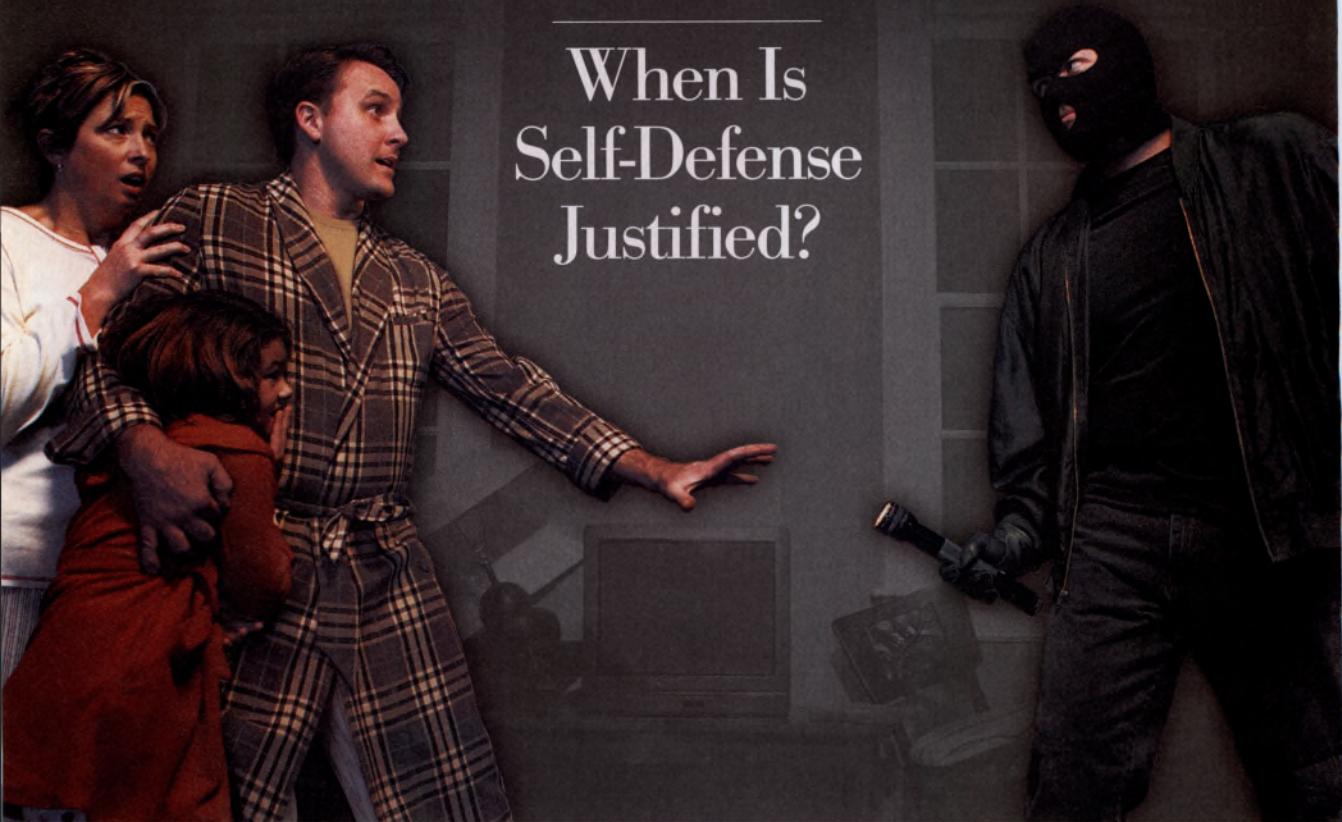
There is no doubt that parents of adolescents face a daunting task. At times, they will

likely shed tears of frustration as they strive to bring up their children "in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah."—Ephesians 6:4.

In the end, effective parenting is, not about controlling, but about teaching and instilling proper values. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9) Easier said than done? Absolutely. "We are dealing with a changing, developing person," says Greg, quoted earlier. "This means that we must continually get to know and adjust to that new person."

Strive to apply the Bible principles discussed in this article. Be reasonable in what you expect from your children. But never relinquish your place as the primary role model in their life. The Bible says: "Train up a boy according to the way for him; even when he grows old he will not turn aside from it."—Proverbs 22:6.

When Is Self-Defense Justified?



A SUDDEN noise awakens you in the middle of the night. You hear footsteps. Someone has broken into your home. With your heart beating like a hammer in your chest, you fearfully wonder what you should do next.

This is a situation that anyone could face. Crime—even violent crime—is no longer limited to certain countries or big cities. In the resultant climate of fear, many people seek protection by purchasing weapons or learning martial arts. Some governments have enacted laws that give citizens the right to use deadly force to defend themselves. But what does the Bible say? Is a person ever justified in using force to defend himself or his family?

God Hates Violence

The Bible condemns violence and those who resort to it. The psalmist David said regarding Jehovah God: “Anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates.” (Psalm 11:5) God pronounced judgment against several ancient nations, including his own people, because of their violence and bloodshed. (Joel 3:19; Micah 6:12; Nahum 3:1) Even unintentional manslaughter resulting from carelessness was a serious crime under the Law given to Israel.—Deuteronomy 22:8.

The Bible exhorts individuals to avoid potential conflicts by pursuing peace every day. Violent struggles often begin with a heated exchange of words. The Bible observes: “Where there is no wood the fire goes out,

The Bible indicates that a person may defend himself or his family if physically assaulted

and where there is no slanderer contention grows still." (Proverbs 26:20) Calmness often defuses anger and deflects violent confrontation. The apostle Paul wrote: "If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men."—Romans 12:18.

When You Are Threatened

Pursuing peace does not guarantee that you will never face violent attack. Faithful worshippers of God throughout history have been victims of violent crime. (Genesis 4:8; Job 1:14, 15, 17) If a person is confronted by an armed robber, what should he do? Jesus instructed: "Do not resist him that is wicked." (Matthew 5:39) He also said: "From him that takes away your outer garment, do not withhold even the undergarment." (Luke 6:29) Jesus did not condone use of physical weapons to defend material possessions. If confronted by an armed robber, a wise person will not resist giving up his valuables. Surely, life is far more precious than belongings!

On the other hand, what if a person's *life* is threatened by an assailant? A law that God gave to ancient Israel sheds light on this. If a thief was caught in the daytime and was killed, the assailant would be charged with murder. This was evidently because thievery did not carry the death penalty and the thief could have been identified and brought to justice. However, if an intruder was fatal-

ly struck at night, the householder could be exonerated because it would be difficult for him to see what the intruder was doing and to ascertain the intentions of the intruder. The householder could reasonably conclude that his family was under threat of harm and take defensive action.—Exodus 22:2, 3.

The Bible thus indicates that a person may defend himself or his family if physically assaulted. He may ward off blows, restrain the attacker, or even strike a blow to stun or incapacitate him. The intention would be to neutralize the aggression or stop the attack. This being the case, if the aggressor was seriously harmed or killed in such a situation, his death would be accidental and not deliberate.

The Best Protection

Clearly, there are circumstances under which reasonable self-defense is justified. People have a right to protect themselves and their loved ones from aggression and deadly harm. When escape is not possible, there is no Biblical injunction against reasonably defending ourselves. Still, the course of wisdom would be to do our best to avoid situations with a potential for violence.—Proverbs 16:32.

The Bible encourages us to "seek peace and pursue it" in all avenues of our life. (1 Peter 3:11) This is a practical formula that really contributes to peaceful living.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- Why should we avoid violence?—Psalm 11:5.
- What is the course of wisdom when defending material possessions?
—Proverbs 16:32; Luke 12:15.
- What attitude toward conflict can avert danger?—Romans 12:18.

Where I First Heard the Name Jehovah

AS TOLD BY PAVOL KOVÁR

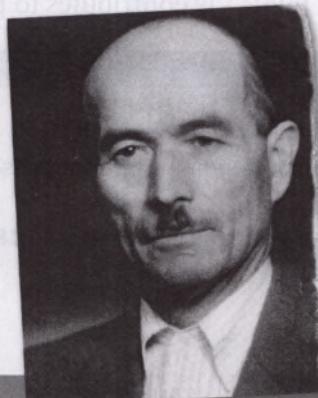
During the heavy bombing, we barely made our way to a makeshift shelter. As the bombing intensified and our shelter shook, a fellow prisoner prayed aloud: "O Jehovah, save us! For the sake of your holy name, please save us!"

IT WAS January 8, 1945, and I was a prisoner of war in the Austrian city of Linz.

Some 250 of us were in that shelter, and we all survived the bombing. After we exited, we saw devastation all around. The heartfelt prayer I had heard was deeply engraved on my mind, even though I never knew who uttered it. Before I relate how I eventually learned who Jehovah is, let me tell a little about my background.

I was born on September 28, 1921, in a house near the village of Krajné, in western Slovakia, then part of Czechoslovakia. My parents were Protestants who took their religion seriously. Father read the family Bible on Sunday mornings, and Mother and we four children listened attentively. Yet, I don't remember my father ever using the name Jehovah. Life in our region was simple, but we were content with the little we had.

My father read the Bible to us on Sunday mornings



In 1942 when I was in the Slovak army

Later, I was imprisoned at Gusen (shown in the background)

© ČTK

When World War II began in 1939, people were scared. Many well remembered the suffering that World War I had caused some 20 years earlier. In 1942, I was called up for service in the Slovak army. Although officially Slovakia sided with Germany, in August 1944 an attempt was made to restore democracy. When it failed, I was among thousands of captured Slovak soldiers transferred to territories controlled by the Germans. I ended up in Gusen, a subcamp adjoining the infamous Mauthausen concentration camp, near Linz.

Prisoner of War

We were assigned to work at the airplane plant not far from the village of Sankt Georgen an der Gusen. There I worked in a sawmill. We had

little to eat, and in January 1945 our rations were reduced further, as the Nazi armies were losing on all fronts. The only warm meal we received was a little soup. Every morning workers from the main camp in Mauthausen arrived. The guards often beat to death the prisoners too weak to work. Later, fellow prisoners would throw the corpses in a wagon and transport them to the crematorium.

Despite the misery, we had hopes that the war would soon be over. On May 5, 1945, four months after the bombing described at the outset, I woke up to great turmoil and ran to the yard. The guards were gone, the guns were piled up, and the gates were wide open. We could see the other camp across a meadow. Freed inmates were running from it like bees from a burning hive. Along with the liberation, there came cruel retribution. The slaughter that took place is still etched in my mind.

Prisoners were taking revenge by beating to death the *kapos*, inmates who had collaborated with the prison guards. Often the *kapos* had been even more cruel than the Nazi guards themselves. I watched as a prisoner clubbed a *kapo* to death, yelling: "He killed my father. We had survived together here, and just two days ago he killed him!" By evening the meadow was filled with the dead bodies of *kapos* and other inmates—hundreds of them. Later, before leaving, we toured the camp, examining the execution devices—particularly the gas chambers—and the furnaces.

Learning About the True God

I was home by the end of May 1945. In the meantime, not only had my parents learned God's name, the name I had heard in the bunker, but they had also become Jehovah's Witnesses. Shortly after returning, I met Olga, a spiritually-minded girl, and a year later we were married. Her zeal for Bible truth prompted me to continue learning about Jehovah. During one of our last assemblies before the new Communist regime banned our

preaching work in 1949, Olga and I, along with some 50 others, were baptized in the Váh River in Piešťany. In time, we had two daughters, Olga and Vlasta.

Ján Sebin, a Witness who had helped reorganize the preaching work following World War II, was our frequent guest and my close companion in the ministry. Despite growing persecution from the Communists, we



Our wedding day in 1946

continued our preaching. We would discreetly talk to people about Bible truths, and soon we had many Bible studies. When Ján left our area, my wife and I continued these studies. Later, at our assemblies, we often met such dear ones, along with their children and grandchildren. What joy that brought us!

Special Service

By 1953 many Witnesses who had taken a lead in the preaching work were imprisoned. So I was asked to help with the ministry in an area about 100 miles from our home. Every second week, after finishing my secular work on Saturday afternoon, I took a train from the town of Nové Mesto nad Váhom and traveled to Martin, in north-central Slovakia. There I engaged in Bible teaching till late evening and for the whole day Sunday. On Sunday

evening I took a train back to Nové Mesto. I usually arrived about midnight and enjoyed the hospitality of an elderly couple who let me stay with them till morning. Then I went directly to my secular job and returned to my family, in the village of Krajné, on Monday night. During weekends when I was away from home, Olga cared for our daughters.

Then, in 1956, I was invited to serve as a circuit overseer, a work that involved visiting congregations in our area to strengthen them spiritually. Since many who had served in that capacity had been imprisoned, I saw the need to accept this responsibility. My wife and I were confident that Jehovah would assist our family.

According to Communist law, all citizens had to be employed. The government viewed those without jobs as parasites and sent them to prison. So I continued my secular work. I spent two weekends of each month at home with my family, sharing in spiritual and other activities; but the other two weekends, I visited one of the six nearby congregations in the circuit.

Literature Production While Under Ban

Circuit overseers had the responsibility to arrange for each congregation in the circuit to have Bible literature. At first, magazines were mainly copied by hand or were typewritten. Later we were able to obtain film negatives of *The Watchtower* and send them to congregations. Magazines were then duplicated on photographic paper. Since buying large quantities of such paper could give rise to suspi-

cion, those who did the purchasing had to exercise boldness and discretion.

Štefan Hučko developed a passion for this work, and he was very good at it. To illustrate: On one occasion, Štefan returned to a photo shop in a city far from his hometown to buy photographic paper but was about to leave because none was available. However, then he saw the friendly shop assistant who had earlier promised to order paper for him. As Štefan was about to approach her, he caught sight of a policeman entering the shop. At the same moment, the shop assistant saw Štefan and happily exclaimed: "Sir! You are fortunate. We have the shipment of photographic paper you needed."

Thinking quickly, Štefan replied: "I am sorry, Madam, but you must have mistaken me for someone else. I want a single negative film."

After returning to his car, Štefan could not bring himself to leave without that valuable shipment of photographic paper that he had come for. So later, after removing his coat and cap and endeavoring to change his appearance, he reentered the shop and went directly to the shop assistant. "I was here a week ago," he explained, "and you promised to order some photographic paper for me. Do you have it?"

"Oh yes, we do," she replied. "But you know, Sir, only a few minutes ago a man who looked just like you was here. It's unbelievable—he was like your twin brother!" Štefan quickly obtained the large supply of paper and left, thanking Jehovah for providing it.

During the 1980's we started using mimeograph machines and small offset presses to produce Bible literature in basements and other hard-to-find places. In time, the number of copies of each issue of our magazines—as well as the number of books and booklets—approached and even exceeded the number of Witnesses.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

- How Can You Make Your Marriage a Success?
- Why You Should Beware of Spiritism
- How Can I Make Worship of God Enjoyable?

Unwelcome Visits

One day during the 1960's, I was instructed to report to the military department of the company I worked for. Three men in civilian clothes questioned me, asking: "How long have you been meeting with Jehovah's Witnesses? And with whom do you meet?" When I did not give specifics, I was told that I would be contacted later. That was my first encounter with State Security, the secret police.

Soon thereafter, I was taken from my workplace to the police station. A blank sheet of paper was placed in front of me, with the request that I write down the names of other Witnesses. When the man returned after an hour or so, the paper was blank, and I explained that I could not provide any names. The following week, the same thing happened. But then I was beaten, and as I departed, I was kicked all the way down the corridor.

After that, I was left alone for a year. Then the police sent a man to visit me. He had been a fellow prisoner in the Nazi concentration camp. He told me: "We have to change our approach to you people. When we put one Witness into prison, five come out." What the government wanted to do was to achieve at least a measure of control over our work. However, I was determined not to provide any information that might enable them to do so.

For many years, I was among those periodically involved in such encounters with the secret police. Sometimes they would treat us as friends, but at other times they would send one of us to prison. Thankfully, I was never imprisoned, but those unwanted meetings with the police lasted right up until 1989, the year that Communism collapsed in Czechoslovakia.

A few weeks after the collapse, a high-ranking member of State Security from Bratislava paid me a visit. He apologized: "If it had been up to me, we would never have bothered



With Ol'ga shortly before her death

"you." Then he pulled two bags of canned fruit out of his car as a gift.

Jehovah, a Strong Tower

Although my first 40 years as one of Jehovah's Witnesses were spent serving under ban, I have enjoyed a happy, rewarding life. The things we experienced during those years drew our faithful fellow believers ever closer together. We grew to treasure our friendships and to depend upon each other's trustworthiness.

In March 2003, I suffered the grievous loss of my dear wife, Ol'ga. She was a loyal companion throughout our marriage. We were busy together in the Christian ministry all those years. Now I continue to serve as a Christian elder in our congregation and to look for deserving ones with whom I can share Bible truths. The name Jehovah, which I first heard in a bunker during World War II, has remained a strong tower for me.*—Proverbs 18:10.

* Brother Pavol Kovár passed away on July 14, 2007, as this article was being prepared. He was 85.

The Siberian Tiger

WILL IT SURVIVE?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN RUSSIA

On a clear winter day in Russia's far east, a huge cat races across the glittering snow, chased by a helicopter. As a sharpshooter with rifle in hand leans out of the helicopter, the tiger leaps up a tree and roars a challenge. The man fires. The helicopter lands, and its occupants cautiously approach the stricken beast.

ARE the men poachers? No, they are researchers who use tranquilizer darts. They have come to study one of the most endangered animals on earth, the elusive Siberian tiger.*

A Magnificent Creature

Siberian tigers once roamed Korea, northern China, Mongolia, and as far west as Lake Baikal, in Russia. But over the past century, their numbers have dwindled. Their last retreat is a remote range of mountains north of Vladivostok, Russia, by the Sea of Japan.

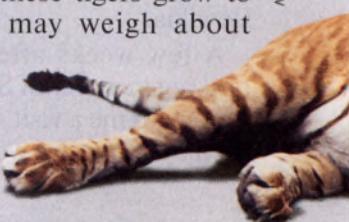
Tigers get to know each other well by their scent, and this allows male tigers to seek out females when it is time to mate. Tiger cubs are born two or three at a time, blind and squirming. Unlike kittens, however, Siberian

tigers never learn to purr. Growling softly, they drink their mother's milk for five or six months and then begin to eat meat. Initially they go on hunting trips with their mother but are not ready to hunt on their own until 18 months of age. Young tigers may stay with their mother for up to two years. Then they leave and establish their own territory.

In the wild, some of these tigers grow to be very large. Males may weigh about 600 pounds and reach a length of more than ten feet, including the tail. The tigers are well-

* The Siberian tiger is sometimes called the Amur tiger, since these animals are now found mainly in the Amur River basin of the Russian far east.

Top: © photodisc/age fotostock; bottom: Hobbs, courtesy Sierra Safari Zoo, Reno, NV



equipped for cold, snowy winters. Thick fur covers their body, and the tiger's huge feet are padded with fur that serves as a snowshoe.

Siberian tigers have a pattern of dark stripes on orange fur. Unique to each tiger, their stripes make it possible to distinguish one tiger from another as surely as fingerprints distinguish people. In the forest the tiger's markings and colors often make a stationary tiger undetectable. But if a tiger comes out in the open in winter, it shows up clearly against the snow. This visibility in winter does not escape the notice of the tiger's only predator, man.

Its Survival Threatened

To survive, the Siberian tiger must bring down large animals, including deer, elk, and boars. But such prey have become few in the wilds of eastern Siberia. A forest area of 500 square miles might provide enough game for only four or five tigers. So if Siberian tigers are to survive in the wild, they must have sufficient territory.

For many years Siberia's immense and inaccessible forests provided ideal territory for these great tigers. Humans, who pose the only serious threat to the cats' existence, seldom ventured there. In recent times, however, lumber companies from abroad have been clear-cutting much of the forest cover.

As the trees disappear, so do the deer, elk, and boars, as well as the Siberian tigers. To

help stop their decline, the Russian government maintains large wildlife preserves, such as the Sikhote Alin Nature Reserve. But when the tigers travel outside these areas, they expose themselves to poachers involved in the trade of exotic souvenirs. Tiger teeth, claws, bones, and pelts, including those of young cubs, all fetch a high price.

Saving the Tiger

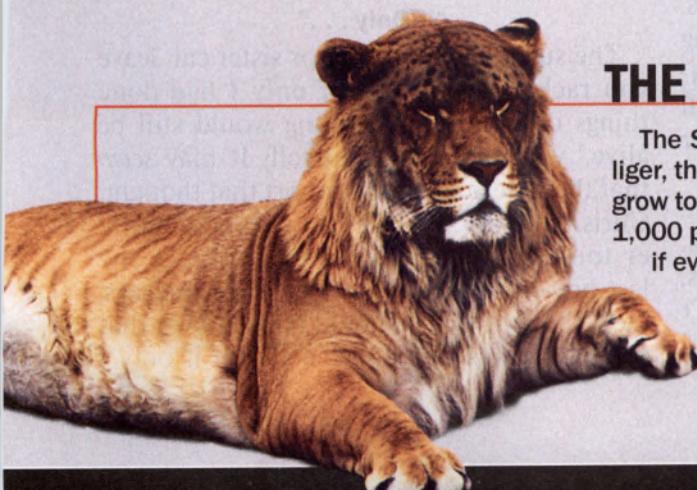
Greater efforts are being made to save the Siberian tiger, and local inhabitants have taken the lead in these. As a result, the Siberian tiger has made a modest recovery. A census carried out in 2005 found that between 430 and 540 tigers live in Siberia.

On the other hand, Siberian tigers in captivity breed readily and do relatively well. There are more than 500 Siberian tigers in zoos around the world. So why not release some of these and replenish the number of tigers in the wild? Scientists hesitate to do that. "There is little point in releasing an animal into the wild," one researcher explained, "unless its future safety can be assured."

All living things, including the great cats, are evidence of God's wisdom and power, and he views them as worthy of his attention and care. (Psalm 104:10, 11, 21, 22) Many people who deeply appreciate the works of the Creator have confidence that a time will come when the Siberian tiger will no longer be in danger of extinction.

THE LARGEST CAT

The Siberian tiger is exceeded in size by the liger, the offspring of a lion and a tigress. Ligers may grow to exceed 10 feet in length and can weigh over 1,000 pounds. The liger is bred in zoos and is rarely, if ever, found in the wild.



What if my sibling has committed suicide?

*Karen's life changed the day her father broke the news. "Sheila's gone" was all he could say. Karen and her dad fell into each other's arms, both trying to make sense out of an utterly senseless act. Karen's sister had taken her own life.**



WHEN a young person dies, well-meaning comforters often focus attention on the parents. They ask the brothers or sisters of the deceased, "How are your dad and mom coping?" but they might forget to ask, "How are *you* coping?" It's for good reason, then, that surviving siblings have been called forgotten mourners.

Research shows that the death of a sibling has a profound impact on young ones. "Such a major loss adversely affects surviving children's health, behavior, schoolwork, self-esteem, and development," writes Dr. P. Gill White in her book *Sibling Grief—Healing After the Death of a Sister or Brother*.

Older youths are affected too. Karen, mentioned above, was 22 years old when Sheila, her younger sister, took her life. Nevertheless, at times her grief seemed unbearable. "I can't

claim that I suffered more than my parents," she says, "but I think I was less able to deal with the suffering than they were."

Have you, like Karen, lost a sibling in death? If so, you may feel as did the psalmist David, who wrote: "I have become disconcerted, I have bowed low to an extreme degree; all day long I have walked about sad." (Psalm 38:6) How can you cope with your grief?

"If Only . . ."

The suicide of a brother or sister can leave you racked with guilt. 'If only I had done things differently, my sibling would still be alive,' you might tell yourself. It may seem that there's evidence to support that thought. Chris, who was 21 when his 18-year-old brother took his life, believed that. "I was the last person to speak to my brother," he says, "so I thought that I should have known that something was up. I reasoned that if only I

* Names in this article have been changed.

had been more approachable, he might have opened up and talked to me."

The despair Chris felt was intensified by the fact that he and his brother had had a strained relationship. "The note he left said that I could have been a better brother," Chris recalls with great pain. "Even though I know he wasn't well, that thought continues to plague me." Often, such guilt is further fueled by memories of bitter words that were exchanged with a sibling before he or she died. "Many bereaved siblings have told me that the guilt they feel over a fight they had months or even years ago continues to torment them," Dr. White, quoted earlier, told *Awake!*

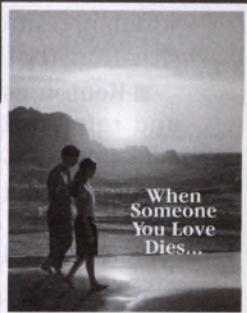
If you suffer from guilt over a sibling's suicide, ask yourself this, 'What human is granted full control over the actions of another human?' Says Karen, "The suffering that the person was trying to escape—and the horrible way that he or she ended it—were not yours to prevent."

But what if you cannot seem to forget insensitive or harsh remarks you once made to your sibling? The Bible can help you to put things in perspective. It states: "We all stumble many times. If anyone does not stumble in word, this one is a perfect man." (James 3:2; Psalm 130:3) Really, dwelling on incidents in which you feel you spoke to or treated your sibling harshly will only intensify your grief. Painful as those memories may be, the fact remains that *you did not cause your sibling to die.**

* It is similar when death results from illness or accident. No matter how much you loved your sibling, you have little or no control over "time and unforeseen occurrence."—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Comfort for Those Who Are Grieving

For more information on coping with the death of a loved one, see the brochure *When Someone You Love Dies*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.



Coping With Grief

No two people grieve in precisely the same way. Some shed tears openly, and there's nothing wrong with that. The Bible reports that David "wept with a very great weeping" after the death of his son Amnon. (2 Samuel 13:36) Even Jesus "gave way to tears" when he saw the distress caused by the death of his friend Lazarus.—John 11:33-35.

On the other hand, some do not mourn immediately—especially when death has occurred suddenly. "My feelings seemed frozen," recalls Karen. "I pretty much stopped functioning for a while." Such a reaction is quite common when a sibling takes his or her life. "Suicide is traumatic," Dr. White told *Awake!*, "and you have to deal with the trauma before the grief. Some professional caregivers try to get survivors to cry and mourn when they're not ready. They're still numb with shock."

Coming to terms with your sibling's death will take time, and that's understandable considering what has happened. "Our family is like a vase that has been shattered and then glued back together," says Chris. "We now seem more prone to 'crack' under

TO THINK ABOUT

- Who could you talk to if your feelings seem overwhelming?
- How could you be of support to a youth who is grieving?

softer pressure." To help you cope with the situation, try the following:

■ **Keep a list of comforting Bible passages, and refer to them at least once each day.**
—**Psalm 94:19.**

■ **Reach out to a compassionate confidant.** Talking things out may well lighten your load.
—**Proverbs 17:17.**

■ **Meditate on the Bible's promise of a resurrection.**—**John 5:28, 29.**

You might also find that keeping a journal—at least for a time—will help you put your grief in perspective. Why not use the box below as an exercise?

Be assured that "God is greater than our

hearts and knows all things." (1 John 3:20) He knows better than any human the factors and circumstances that may have contributed to your sibling's distressed state. He also knows *you*—better than you know yourself. (Psalm 139:1-3) Thus, you can be confident that he understands what you are going through. When your grief seems overwhelming, recall the words of Psalm 55:22: "Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter."

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site
www.watchtower.org/ype

Putting your thoughts in writing can be a great aid in coping with grief. With that in mind, complete the statements and answer the questions that follow.

❖ **These are three pleasant memories I have of my sibling:**

1

.....

2

.....

3

.....

❖ **This is what I wish I could have said to my sibling while he or she was alive:**

.....

❖ **What would you tell a younger child who blames himself (or herself) for a sibling's death?**

.....

.....

❖ **Which of the following scriptures do you find most comforting, and why?**

"Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves."—**Psalm 34:18.**

"He has neither despised nor loathed the affliction of the afflicted one; and he has not concealed his face from him, and when he cried to him for help he heard."—**Psalm 22:24.**

"The hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus'] voice and come out."—**John 5:28, 29.**

IS HIV-SCREENED BLOOD SAFE?

BY AWAKE! WRITER IN NIGERIA

■ THIS question came to the fore in Nigeria when it was found that a baby girl was infected with HIV through a blood transfusion she received at one of Nigeria's leading hospitals.

According to the hospital's medical director, soon after Eniola's birth, she was found to be jaundiced. An exchange blood transfusion was prescribed, and the father donated some units of blood. But the father's blood was found to be incompatible, so blood from the hospital's blood bank was administered. Before long, the baby tested positive for HIV, though both parents tested negative. According to the hospital, "the blood transfused into the baby was screened and found to be HIV-negative at the time it was transfused into the baby."

How, then, did the baby get infected? The Nigerian government investigated the controversy and concluded that the likely source of the infection was the transfused blood. The *Nigerian Tribune* newspaper quoted a virologist as saying: "At the time of donating the blood, the donor was at the window period of HIV infection."

This is but a single case, yet it highlights the fact that blood transfusions are not risk free. Describing the HIV window period, the U.S. Centers for Dis-

ease Control and Prevention says: "It can take some time for the immune system to produce enough antibodies for the antibody test to detect and this time period can vary from person to person. This time period is commonly referred to as the 'window period'. Most people will develop detectable antibodies within 2 to 8 weeks (the average is 25 days). Even so, there is a chance that some individuals will take longer to develop detectable antibodies. . . . In very rare cases, it can take up to 6 months."

So, the fact that blood has been screened for HIV is no guarantee that it is safe. The San Francisco AIDS Foundation warns: "Although HIV may not be detected by a test during the window period, HIV can be transmitted during that time. In fact, individuals are often most infectious during this time (shortly after they have been exposed to HIV)."

Jehovah's Witnesses have long followed the Bible's direction to "keep abstaining from . . . blood." (Acts 15:29) The protection this has afforded them underscores the wisdom of obeying God's instructions. To learn more about alternatives to blood transfusion, please see the brochure *How Can Blood Save Your Life?**

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

Trees THAT LIVE IN WATER

They provide refuge for many endangered species of mammals, birds, and reptiles. They also preserve the environment by filtering pollutants from the water. In south Florida, U.S.A., some 75 percent of game fish and 90 percent of fish caught for commercial purposes depend on them. And they create a barrier that protects coastal areas from storms and tides. What are they? *Mangroves!*

FOUND along more than half the world's tropical seashores, mangroves are a type of tree, or shrub, that includes members of several families. They generally grow in the intertidal area between land and sea where the water is a mixture of seawater and freshwater. Although the water there is much saltier than most plants can stand, mangroves handle the conditions with ease. How? By using several fascinating methods—sometimes in combination.

Surrounded by Salt

Some mangroves, known as salt-excluders, have filters that prevent the entry of salt through the root surface. They are so effective at excluding salt that a thirsty traveler can obtain freshwater by breaking open the root of such a mangrove. In other species, the mangrove lets the salt into its system and accumulates it, depositing the salt in old leaves

or other parts of the plant, which then drop away.

Still others are salt-secreters, letting the salt into the plant but then quickly secreting it, usually through special salt glands on the leaves. If you were to lick the leaf of such a mangrove, it would taste very salty. But be careful which mangrove you choose! The latex from the leaves of the blind-your-eye mangrove can cause temporary blindness if it gets into your eye. However, the latex has medicinal properties and has been used to treat sores and stings.

How They Survive

In order to survive and thrive, most plants need well-aerated soil. Yet, the soil where mangroves live is generally waterlogged. The secret to their survival is their aerial roots, which develop above the ground and are thus able to take in air directly from the atmosphere. These roots come in a variety of shapes. Some, called knee roots, grow out of and then back into the soil, forming knobbly humps that look a little like bent knees.

Snorkel, peg, or pencil roots protrude vertically out of the soil. Prop roots, which later become stilt roots, branch off the mangrove's lower trunk. Plank, or ribbon, roots radiate from the base of the tree in curving upright ridges, with the top portion above the soil. These different root systems not only allow the plants to breathe but also provide stability in the soft soil.

How They Reproduce

The cannonball mangrove has a large round fruit packed with irregularly shaped seeds. On ripening, the fruit explodes, dispersing its seeds into the water. Some float away with the tides, eventually finding an area in which to germinate.

Seeds of other mangroves germinate while still attached to the parent tree. This is something extremely unusual in the plant world. These mangroves bear seedlings that drop



Mangroves and their saplings thrive in an environment that would kill most other plants

from the tree into the water and may then drift for several months or even up to a year in search of a home.

The way the seedling floats maximizes its chances of settling in a brackish spot, which is its ideal environment. It floats horizontally in the more buoyant salty water, but when it enters brackish water, it floats vertically and is thus more likely to lodge in the mud.

A World Within a World

Mangroves form the basis of a complex food web. Leaf litter and disintegrating vegetation from the mangroves are a source of food for microorganisms, which, in turn, serve as food for other animals in the food chain. Many living things make the mangrove

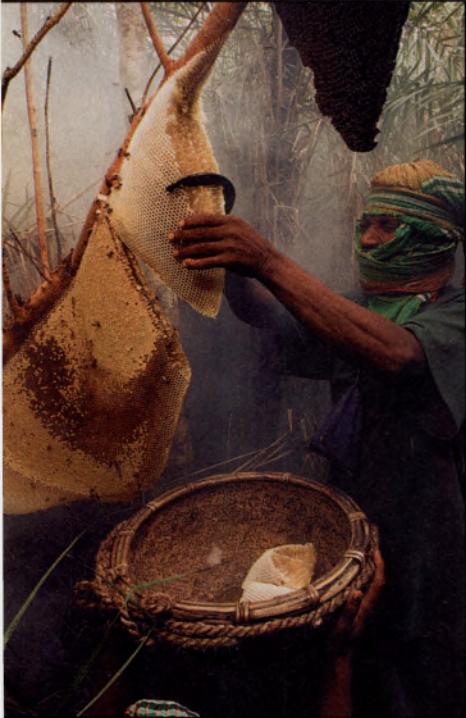
forest their home, their feeding ground, their breeding habitat, or their nursery.

For example, hundreds of species of birds use the mangrove habitat as nesting or feeding sites and as resting spots during migration. The country of Belize alone hosts more than 500 different bird species in its mangroves. Many fish either commence life in the mangroves or depend upon the mangrove ecosystem for food. Over 120 species of fish have been caught in the Sundarbans mangrove forest, between India and Bangladesh.

Plant life also thrives in the mangrove community. On the east coast of Australia, 105 different lichen species have been found growing on mangrove trees. Many ferns, orchids, mistletoes, and other plants also

Top right: Zach Holmes Photography (www.spragshots.com) / Photographers Direct; lower right: Martin Spragg Photography (www.spragshots.com) / Photographers Direct

HUNTING FOR WILD HONEY IN THE Mangroves



The largest of the world's mangrove forests is in the Sundarbans, part of the vast Ganges Delta, which straddles India and Bangladesh. Among the people living there are the Mowalis, who depend upon mangroves for their livelihood. Theirs is one of the highest-risk professions in the country.

Mowalis are honey hunters. In April and May each year, they venture into the shifting landscape of the mangroves to search for the honeycombs of the giant honeybee. The bees are large, growing to about an inch and a half in length. And they are aggressive, having been known to kill elephants!

So honey hunters carry torches made of mangrove vegetation, the smoke from which disperses the bees. Wise honey hunters leave part of the hive behind so that the bees can rebuild it, thereby sustaining the honey yield from year to year.

The bees are not the only threat to the honey hunters. Others include crocodiles and poisonous snakes, which inhabit the mangroves. Also, thieves may wait to ambush honey hunters as they leave the forest with their honey and wax. While these are a threat, the greatest peril is the Royal Bengal tiger. Every year, these animals kill between 15 and 20 honey hunters.

▲ Zafer Kizilkaya / Images & Stories

prosper in the habitat. Indeed, the mangroves of the world provide an indispensable service for flora and fauna—from lichens to tigers—and also for humans.

A Myriad of Benefits to Man

Apart from helping to preserve the environment, mangroves are a direct or indirect source of many products, including firewood, charcoal, tannin, fodder, and medicine. The habitat also provides food delicacies, such as fish, crustaceans, mollusks, and honey. Some sailors, in fact, once thought that oysters grew on trees because they could be gathered from the mangroves easily when the roots were exposed at low tide.

Mangroves also provide products for such industries as paper, textile, leather, and construction. Other industries that benefit from them include fishing and tourism.

Though there is growing appreciation for

their importance, mangrove forests are diminishing at an estimated rate of 400 square miles a year. Often they are destroyed to make way for seemingly more profitable projects, such as agricultural and housing developments. Many people view a mangrove swamp simply as a muddy, malodorous, and mosquito-ridden place that is better avoided.

The truth is, however, that mangroves serve valuable, even lifesaving, purposes. Their special adaptive aerial roots and salt-filtering tap roots have established rich and complex ecosystems. They are vital to inshore fisheries, wood-products industries, and wildlife. And they protect areas of coastline from erosion by absorbing the force of powerful hurricanes that might otherwise kill thousands of people. Surely we should be grateful for mangroves!

WAS IT DESIGNED?

Termite-Mound Ventilation



■ Termite mounds have been called marvels of engineering, and for good reason. These imposing structures, made of soil and saliva, can stand as high as 20 feet. Their 18-inch walls are baked by the sun until they are as hard as concrete. Some mounds have literally been built overnight.

Near the center of the mound resides the queen, which may lay several thousand eggs each day. Wingless and blind "worker termites" carry off the eggs to specially constructed cells. There they care for the larvae as they hatch. Perhaps the greatest marvel of the mound, though, is its ventilation system.

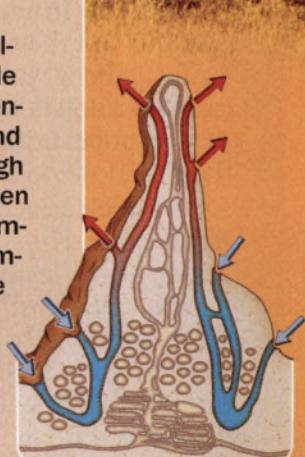
Consider: A series of chambers and galleries keep the interior of the mound at a constant temperature—despite varying conditions outside. For example, in Zimbabwe, Africa, the outside temperature can fluctuate from about 35 degrees Fahrenheit at night to over 100 degrees during the day. Yet, the temperature inside the

mound remains constant at 87 degrees. Why?

Strategically placed ventilation holes at the bottom of the mound allow fresh air to enter, while hot stale air is forced out the top. Cooler air enters the mound from an underground chamber and then circulates through the passages and cells. Termites open and close the holes to adjust the temperature as needed. A constant temperature is essential in order for the termites to farm the fungus that is their primary food.

So impressive is the design of the termite mound that a similar technology was employed by the architects of an office building in Zimbabwe. The building uses just 10 percent of the energy required by conventional buildings of the same size.

What do you think? Did the termite's ability to regulate the temperature inside its mound come about by chance? Or is this evidence of design?



MORE THAN JUST

TOYS

EGYPTIANS made them out of flat pieces of wood, Japanese from folded paper, Germans with porcelain, and Eskimos from sealskin. Adults collect them. Children cherish them. What are they? Dolls.

The World Book Encyclopedia states: "Most doll-like figures from earlier periods were magical or religious objects, not toys." Ancient Egyptians painted patterned clothing onto small pieces of paddle-shaped wood and adorned them with strings of clay beads representing hair. They placed these "paddle dolls" in the tombs of their dead in the belief that the dolls would act as servants in the afterlife. Vengeful people in the West Indies stuck pins into voodoo dolls in the hope of causing harm to their enemies.

In many cultures, dolls were associated with fertility rites. For instance, in ancient Greece, shortly before girls were married, they left their dolls on an altar to Artemis, the goddess of fertility. Today women from the Ashanti tribe in Ghana, Africa, carry a doll in their waistbands in the hope that it will help them bear beautiful children. Some girls in Syria hang dolls in their windows to advertise that they are of marriageable age.

On March 3 each year, dolls feature in a celebration held in Japan called Hina Matsuri, or the Doll Festival. This is also known as the festival for girls, which "derives from several different customs," says *Japan—An Illustrated Encyclopedia*. "One is a Chinese purificatory rite that was held along a river early in the third lunar month. During the Heian period (794-1185) courtiers called in diviners on the third day of the third month to exorcise their impurities, transferring them to paper images . . . , which were thrown into the river or ocean."



▲
Japanese
tea-serving
doll



◀
French
Bru doll



Top: © SHOBEI
Tamaya IX;
middle: Courtesy,
Strong National
Museum of Play,
Rochester,
New York;
bottom:
© Christie's
Images Ltd

Dolls as Toys

During the Edo period in Japan (1603-1867), dolls made specially for children were modeled after real people and came with different costumes. Other types of dolls were made to move by the use of cables, springs, pulleys, and wooden gears. One model could even carry a cup of tea to a guest and return with the empty cup!

In Western lands prior to the 1700's, "childhood as we know it did not really exist," says one encyclopedia. "Youngsters were regarded as little adults and were expected to act like them." Dolls were made for adults as much as for children. During the 1800's, though, the importance of playtime in a child's development gained recognition. As a result, the doll-making industry prospered in Europe.

As early as 1824, German dollmakers invented a device that allowed their dolls to say "mama" and "papa." Later during that century, they produced walking dolls. The American inventor Thomas Edison even manufactured a miniaturized record player that made some dolls appear to talk. Meanwhile, the French made a doll called Bébé Gourmand, which could eat food. The French were also noted for their fashionable dolls, which were sold dressed in elaborate costumes. For these dolls the owner could buy such accessories as combs, furs, fans, and furniture.

The 20th century witnessed an unprecedented boom in doll manufacturing. In the 1940's, the use of plastic allowed dollmakers to produce cheap yet intricately crafted dolls.

The plastic Barbie doll has dominated the doll industry since its release in 1959. Over one billion of them have been sold, and in the year 1997 alone, they earned their maker \$1.8 billion (U.S.).

Dolls as Teachers

To teach their children about their tribal gods, the Pueblo Indians of the southwestern United States used kachina dolls, carved from cactus roots or pine. During a special ceremony, a member of the tribe dressed and acted like one of the gods. Afterward, parents gave a doll fashioned like that god to their children so that as they played with it, they became familiar with the god.

Dolls "provide an outlet for a child's hurt feelings, anger, and other emotions," says *The World Book Encyclopedia*. "Playing with dolls enables children to rehearse the roles they hope to perform after they grow up." One doll displayed during the Children's Day Festival held in Japan each May shows a young man dressed in the full armor of a traditional warrior. The doll is used as a role model to encourage young boys to grow up to be—according to local culture—strong, respectable members of society.

Because of the emotional bond formed between children and their dolls, wise parents will take seriously the influence dolls may have on their child's development. For example, some charge that the physical appearance and the endless wardrobe of certain dolls might have a harmful effect on girls.

Renewed Interest in OLD DOLLS

Doll collecting has become a very popular hobby. In the 1970's, it gained impetus, spawning an international market. Collectors seek cheap plastic dolls worth as little as a few dollars or rare dolls such as the Kämmer and Reinhardt dolls. Made in Germany in the early

1900's, one of these dolls was sold at auction for \$277,500! One of the largest collections—held at the Strong National Museum of Play in the city of Rochester, New York, U.S.A.—contains about 12,000 dolls.

One critic claims that such dolls can corrupt "young girls with shallow messages that promote style over substance."

What is obvious to anyone who has ever seen children play with a doll is that whether

it is made of cloth, paper, wood, plastic, or some other material, it is more than just a toy. It is a friend, a playmate, and even a confidant with whom they share their childhood.

DOLLS Basis for Parental Concern

How can parents protect their children from the potentially harmful influence of some dolls? *The Washington Post* lamented: "Like the tobacco industry of old, the entertainment and toy industries generally deny any responsibility and are unlikely to make changes on their own." Clearly, parents need to assume responsibility.

The Bible commands parents to provide children with wholesome daily instruction. (Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Proverbs 22:6) How might that be given in a way that addresses the potential harmful influence of some dolls? One mother says that she read to her daughter about modest dress, as described at 1 Timothy 2:9, and reasoned with her on the matter. Their conversations went something like this:

Mother: Whom do these dolls look like, a child or a woman?

Daughter: A woman.

Mother: Why do you say that?

Daughter: Because they have bodies like women, and their clothes and shoes are those of women.

Mother: That's right. And after reading what we did in the Bible, do you think the clothing these dolls are wearing is the kind Christians should wear?

Daughter: No.

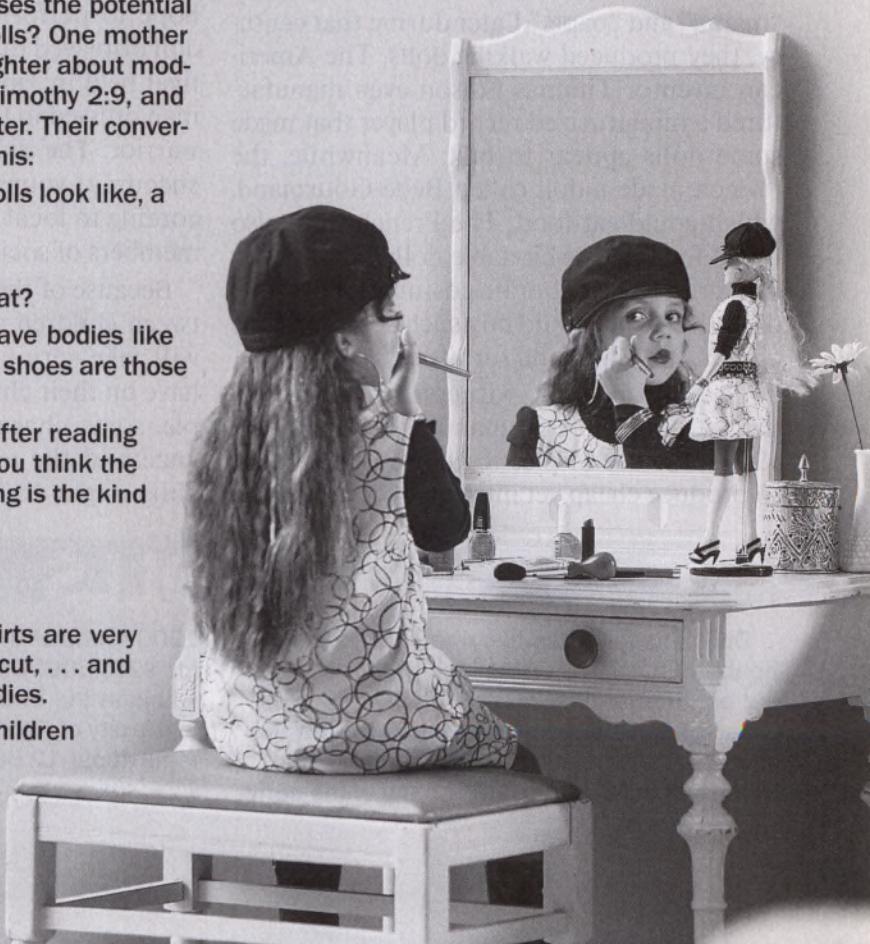
Mother: Why not?

Daughter: Because the skirts are very short, . . . the blouses are low-cut, . . . and the material sticks to their bodies.

Admittedly, teaching your children godly principles so that they reach such conclusions

takes effort. But it is worth it! Many parents have benefited from the help provided by the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses to help parents inculcate godly principles in their children.

You are invited to obtain a copy of this 256-page illustrated book by writing to Jehovah's Witnesses, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Indicate that you would like to receive a copy of *Learn From the Great Teacher*.



Awake!**IS RELIGION LOSING ITS INFLUENCE?**

What Does the Future Hold for Christianity? (February 2007) Much of what you say is true to God's Word, and I do concur with you. There are, however, two issues in your magazine that make me feel uncomfortable. One is how you put the Christian churches down, and the other is the way you seem to lift yourselves up above the rest. It would be wonderful if we all agreed and were of one faith, but that isn't the case. I don't consider any one church or denomination better than the other.

S. S., United States

"Awake!" responds: Jehovah's Witnesses are not against people of other religions as individuals, nor do we view ourselves as being better than others. We recognize that "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) With that in mind, we expend ourselves and our resources, devoting much time to calling at homes to share Bible truths, including the wonderful hope the Bible contains. However, just as Jesus and his disciples boldly spoke out to expose hypocrisy and religious error, Jehovah's Witnesses do likewise.

How Would You Answer? In the past I seldom went through this section with my two children. Now I see it as a mighty tool that I can use to implant Bible truth in the hearts of my children. Moreover, I enjoy it myself as a tool to strengthen my faith.

I. H., Czech Republic

I am very grateful for this fascinating feature, which gives me topics for personal study. Everything is so well thought out, even to the smallest detail! It brings me even closer to my wise Father, Jehovah.

A. S., Russia

"Jehovah, Please Let Me Serve You"

(July 2007) My faith in Jehovah was strengthened by reading the life story of Danielle Hall. As a young child, she was not afraid to tell all in her school that she was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. I am sure that many Witness schoolchildren will do the same.

A. R., Madagascar

I am nine years old. My mother and I have just finished reading Danielle's experience. It made me realize that I'm fortunate because my parents are in the truth and it's not difficult for me to serve Jehovah. I really liked the point that "no matter where we may live, Jehovah is always near to us." I also appreciated that when Danielle got back from school, she would sit on her bed and talk to Jehovah about her day, as if he were her dad. I want to learn from this!

A. D., Italy

"Young People Ask . . . Why Am I Always Left Out?" (July 2007) This article was so great because I felt like it was written just for me. I also enjoyed the questions it asked and the spaces left for writing an answer. Thank you. It helped me very much.

C. A., Canada

1. Lot's wife. 2. Lot's first daughter. 3. Lot's second daughter. 4. Perez.—Luke 3:33. 5. Salmon.—Luke 3:32. 6. Boaz.—Luke 3:32.

ANSWERS TO PAGE 31

Freshwater From the Sea

In an effort to deal with water shortages on islands in the Aegean Sea, Greek scientists have built the "world's first autonomous, floating, ecological desalination platform," reports the Athens News Agency. Powered by wind turbines and onboard solar cells, the platform produces enough potable water for the daily needs of about 300 people. The unit is fully operational under adverse weather conditions, can be remotely monitored and operated, and can be moved to wherever it is needed.

Ancient Bones Revealed

"In Siberia's northernmost reaches . . . , the changing temperature is thawing out the permafrost to reveal the bones of prehistoric animals like mammoths, woolly rhinos and lions," says a Reuters news report from Cherskiy, Sakha, in Russia. Since collectors and scientific institutes are willing to pay huge sums for good specimens, prospectors, helped by local tribesmen, are scouring the tundra for valuable ones. Says the report: "The permafrost is thawing and breaking up so rapidly that in certain places . . . every few meters bones poke out through the soil."

Confiscated Alcohol Put to Good Use

Until just a few years ago, Swedish customs officers used to pour alcohol confiscated from smugglers "down the drain." Now

■ During 2007, Arctic sea ice shrank to "the lowest levels since satellite measurements began." The ice measured 1.65 million square miles, a 23 percent drop beyond the previous low, recorded in 2005.—NATIONAL SNOW AND ICE DATA CENTER, U.S.A.

■ With 90 guns for every 100 citizens, the United States is the most heavily armed country in the world. The country owning the "second largest civilian gun-arsenal" is India, with "just 4 guns per 100 people."—TIME, U.S.A.

■ Born at 21 weeks and 6 days, a baby weighing just under 10 ounces at her birth, in Miami, Florida, U.S.A., is "possibly the most premature baby on record to survive." "Babies born at less than 23 weeks and 14.11 ounces (400 grams) in weight are not considered viable."

—REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, U.S.A.

such contraband is "helping fuel the country's public transport system," says an Associated Press report from Stockholm. Nearly all the 185,000 gallons of liquor seized in 2006 was converted into biogas, an alternative fuel, and "used to power buses, trucks and a biogas train." This fuel "is good business," explains the report, "because the material to make it is free." It is also good because using it helps reduce Sweden's greenhouse emissions.

Epidemic of Shyness

"E-mail, text messaging and iPods are causing a global epidemic of shyness," reports Australia's *Sunday Telegraph*. According to psychologist and researcher Robin Abrahams, shyness in social situations now affects about half the population, which represents a significant rise over past levels. "Technology is enabling us to opt out of difficult situations and causing people to become more insular," says Abrahams. "People . . . e-mail or text one another rather than talk."





What Is Missing From This Picture?

Read Genesis 19:15-17, 23-26. Now look at the picture. What elements are missing? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by drawing the missing items.

1.

2.

3.

FOR DISCUSSION: What happened to Lot's wife, and why did this happen to her? What lesson have you learned from this account?

From This Issue

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

PAGE 6 What should parents be swift about?

James 1:_____

PAGE 7 What will a boy let on the loose do?

Proverbs 29:_____

PAGE 10 How does God feel about anyone who loves violence? Psalm 11:_____

PAGE 20 We can be assured that God is greater than what? 1 John 3:_____



Children's Picture Search

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

Who Is Part of Jesus' Family Tree?

Consider the clues. Look up the scriptures. Then write the correct names in the spaces provided.

4.

CLUE: I am the twin son of Judah born to Tamar, and I did not have the scarlet piece tied on my hand. Read Genesis 38:24-30.



5.

CLUE: My wife was a former prostitute from the city of Jericho.

Read Joshua 2:1; Matthew 1:5.

6.

CLUE: A Moabite widow became my wife.

Read Ruth 4:9, 10.



“GUIDED BY GOD’S SPIRIT”

District Convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses

■ THOUSANDS of these three-day conventions, which began in the United States on the weekend of May 23-25, will be held in the months to come in thousands of cities throughout the world. In 2007, more than 12 million people attended over 3,200 of such conventions!

In most places this year, the sessions will begin each day at 9:20 a.m. with a music program. Friday’s theme, based on John 16:13, is “**The Spirit . . . Will Guide You Into All the Truth.**” Among the first talks are “Why Be Guided by God’s Spirit?” and “Holy Spirit—At Work in Creation!” The symposium “**Faithful Ones of Old—Guided by God’s Spirit**” will include the parts “In Moses’ Time,” “In the Days of the Judges,” and “In the First Century.” The keynote address, “Holy Spirit’s Role in the Outworking of Jehovah’s Purpose,” will conclude the morning session.

The first part on Friday afternoon is “Answers to Questions About Holy Spirit,” followed by the talks “The Spirit Searches Into . . . the Deep Things of God” and “Become Hearers and Doers of God’s Word.” The symposium “**Young People—Walk by Holy Spirit!**” consists of the parts “At School,” “At Work,” “In the Family,” “In the Congregation,” “During Social Activities,” and “When Alone.” The session will conclude with a convention highlight, the talk “Young People—Safeguard Your Relationship With Jehovah!” which will help them to do so.

The theme for Saturday’s program is “**Sowing With a View to the Spirit**,” based on Galatians 6:8. A feature of the morning session is the three-part symposium “**Directed by God’s**

Spirit in Our Ministry.” The session concludes with a talk on baptism, after which opportunity will be provided for baptism of those who qualify.

Saturday afternoon’s first talk, “Bible Writers—‘Borne Along by Holy Spirit,’” will be followed by the five-part symposium “**Empowered by Holy Spirit**” “To Fight Temptation,” “To Cope With Tiredness and Discouragement,” “To Withstand Persecution,” “To Resist Harmful Peer Pressure,” and “To Endure Adversity.” The day will end with another convention highlight “Keep Yourselves in God’s Love.”

Sunday morning’s program develops the theme “**Keep Walking by Spirit**,” based on Galatians 5:16. The nine-part symposium “**Cultivate ‘the Fruitage of the Spirit’**” discusses each aspect of the spirit’s fruitage mentioned at Galatians 5:22, 23. The public talk “Reap Blessings Through Jehovah’s Spirit-Guided King!” completes the morning session. The feature of the afternoon program is the full-costume drama “Do Not Leave ‘the Love You Had at First.’” It depicts attitudes and situations that likely existed among Christians at the end of the first century. The convention concludes with the talk “Loyally Serving with Jehovah’s Spirit-Directed Organization.”

Make plans now to attend. To find the location nearest you, contact the local Kingdom Hall of Jehovah’s Witnesses or write to the publishers of this magazine. The March 1 issue of *The Watchtower*, our companion magazine, has a list of all the convention locations in the United States.