

NOVEMBER 15, 2006

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

## Why Do What Is Right?

# THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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

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# Why Do What Is Right?

A LEARNED man once observed: "Ability to wish is present with me, but ability to work out what is fine is not present. For the good that I wish I do not do, but the bad that I do not wish is what I practice." Why did this man find it difficult to practice the good that he wished? He explained: "I find, then, this law in my case: that when I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me. I really delight in the law of God according to the man I am within, but I behold in my members another law warring against the law of my mind and leading me captive to sin's law that is in my members."—Romans 7:18, 19, 21-23.

These words of the apostle Paul, recorded nearly 2,000 years ago, explain why doing what is right is a challenge for imperfect humans. Adhering to right principles, especially under trialsome circumstances, requires moral strength. So we do well to ask, What is the most important reason for doing what is right?

Consider what the Scriptures say about the future of a morally upright person. At Psalm 37:37, 38, we read: "Watch the blameless one and keep the upright one in sight, for the future of that man will be peaceful.

But the transgressors themselves will certainly be annihilated together; the future of wicked people will indeed be cut off." Proverbs 2:21, 22 tells us: "The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it."

Although these promises and others found in the Bible provide us with an incentive to pursue a course that pleases God, they do not constitute the fundamental reason for doing so. That reason is related to an issue that involves all intelligent creatures personally. The following article discusses what that issue is and how it affects us.

# An Issue That Involves You

DO YOU have a friend or a family member you are especially close to? What if someone were to accuse you of maintaining that relationship purely for selfish reasons? Would you not feel hurt, perhaps even indignant? That is precisely the accusation that Satan the Devil has brought against all who have a close relationship with Jehovah God.

Reflect on what occurred when Satan succeeded in getting the first human couple, Adam and Eve, to break God's law and join him in his rebellion against God. Did what happened mean that people would remain obedient to Jehovah only as long as doing so was to their advantage? (Genesis 3:1-6) Some 2,500 years after Adam's deflection, Satan brought up this very matter—this time in connection with a man named Job. Since the accusation that the Devil made clearly identifies the issue involved, let us carefully examine that Bible account.

## "I Shall Not Take Away My Integrity"

Job is "a man blameless and upright, fearing God and turning aside from bad." Satan, however, gives Job's uprightness an ugly twist. "Is it for nothing that Job has feared God?" he asks Jehovah. Then, the Devil maligns both God and Job by charging that Jehovah has bought Job's loyalty by protecting and blessing him. "For a change," Satan challenges, "thrust out your hand, please, and touch everything he has and see whether he will not curse you to your very face."—Job 1:8-11.

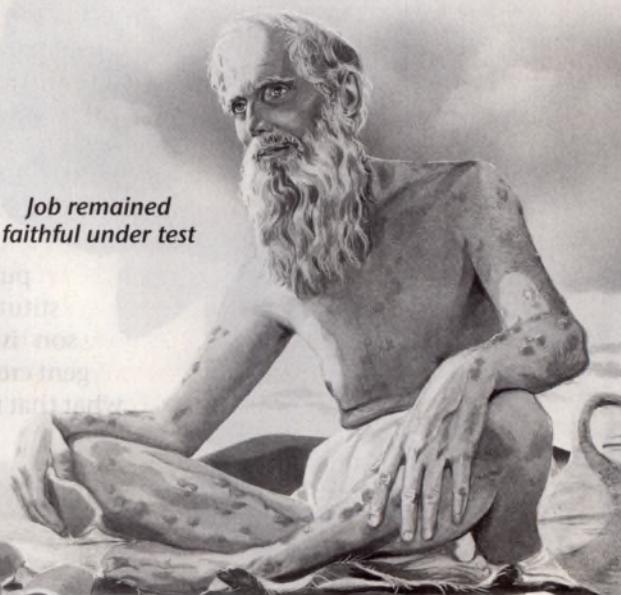
To answer these claims, Jehovah permits Satan to test Job. In an effort to turn him away from serving God, the Devil brings one

calamity after another upon that faithful man. All of Job's livestock is either stolen or destroyed, his attendants are murdered, and his children are killed. (Job 1:12-19) But is Satan successful? No, indeed! Although unaware that the Devil is the cause of his trials, Job says: "Jehovah himself has given, and Jehovah himself has taken away. Let the name of Jehovah continue to be blessed."—Job 1:21.

Afterward, Satan comes before Jehovah, who says to him: "[Job] is holding fast his integrity, although you incite me against him to swallow him up without cause." (Job 2:1-3) The vital issue is that of Job's integrity—a quality that calls for uncompromising loyalty to God and close adherence to righteousness. Job has thus far come out victorious on the issue of integrity. However, the Devil does not give up.

Next, Satan makes a sweeping claim that affects all mankind. "Skin in behalf of skin," he says to Jehovah, "and everything that a man has he will give in behalf of his soul. For

*Job remained  
faithful under test*



a change, thrust out your hand, please, and touch as far as his bone and his flesh and see whether he will not curse you to your very face." (Job 2:4, 5) By using the general term "a man" instead of the name Job, the Devil brings into question the integrity of every human. In effect, he asserts: 'A man will do anything to save his life. Give me a chance, and I can turn anyone away from God.' Will no human remain loyal to God under all conditions and at all times?

Jehovah permits the Devil to afflict Job with a malignant disease. Job suffers so much that he prays that he might die. (Job 2:7; 14:13) Yet, Job states: "Until I expire I shall not take away my integrity from myself!" (Job 27:5) Job says this because he loves God, and nothing can change that. Job proves himself to be a man of integrity. "As for Jehovah," states the Bible, "he blessed the end of Job afterward more than his beginning." (Job 42:10-17) Have there been others like Job? What has the passing of time revealed?

### How the Challenge Has Been Answered

In chapter 11 of the Bible book of Hebrews, the apostle Paul names a number of faithful men and women of pre-Christian times, including Noah, Abraham, Sarah, and Moses. The apostle then declares: "The time will fail me if I go on to relate about [others]." (Hebrews 11:32) These faithful servants of God were so numerous that Paul refers to them as 'a great cloud of witnesses,' comparing them to a huge cloud mass that stretches across the sky. (Hebrews 12:1) Yes, down through the centuries, unnumbered multitudes of people have exercised their free will and chosen to give their allegiance to Jehovah God.—Joshua 24:15.

The ultimate answer to Satan's claim that he can turn humans away from Jehovah came from God's own Son, Jesus Christ. Not

even the excruciating pain of death on a torture stake broke his integrity to God. As Jesus took his last breath, he cried out: "Father, into your hands I entrust my spirit."—Luke 23:46.

The passing of time has clearly shown that the Devil has not been able to turn everyone away from serving the true God. Countless humans have come to know Jehovah and 'to love him with their whole heart and with their whole soul and with their whole mind.' (Matthew 22:37) Their unwavering loyalty to Jehovah has proved Satan wrong on the issue of human integrity. You too can prove the Devil wrong by being a man or woman of integrity.

### What Must You Do?

It is God's will that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) How can you do that? Make time to study the Bible and 'take in knowledge of the only true God and of the one whom he sent forth, Jesus Christ.'—John 17:3.

Satan challenged man's integrity by questioning man's motives for serving God. If knowledge is to influence your motives, it must reach your heart. And for this to happen, you need to do more than merely seek information from the Bible. Cultivate the practice of meditating on what you learn. (Psalm 143:5) When reading the Bible or a Bible-based publication, be sure to take time to reflect on such questions as these: 'What does this teach me about Jehovah? What qualities of God do I see expressed here? In what areas of my life do I need to be like this? Of what does God approve or disapprove? How does that affect the way I feel about God?' Such pondering will fill your heart with love and appreciation for the Creator.

Integrity to God is not restricted to the realm of religious belief. (1 Kings 9:4) Maintaining your integrity to Jehovah God

requires moral soundness in all areas of life. However, maintaining integrity will not deprive you in any way. Jehovah is “the happy God,” and he wants you to enjoy life. (1 Timothy 1:11) Consider now certain practices you need to avoid in order to remain morally clean and thus to enjoy a happier life and God’s approval.

### Avoid Sexual Misconduct

Jehovah himself set the standard for marriage in his Word, the Bible, which says: “A man will leave his father and his mother and he must stick to his wife and they must become one flesh.” (Genesis 2:21-24) Since marriage mates have become “one flesh,” they honor God’s marital arrangement if they confine their sexual relations to each other. The apostle Paul stated: “Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers.” (Hebrews 13:4) The expression “marriage bed” denotes sexual intercourse between a man and a woman legally married to each other. For either of them to engage in sexual relations outside of marriage is to commit adultery and can bring adverse judgment from God.—Malachi 3:5.

What about premarital sex? That too is against the moral standards set out by Jehovah. “This is what God wills . . . that you abstain from fornication,” says the Bible. (1 Thessalonians 4:3) Homosexuality, incest, and bestiality are also sins against God. (Leviticus 18:6, 23; Romans 1:26, 27) Anyone wanting to please God and enjoy a truly happy life must keep away from immoral practices.

What about premarital passion-arousing sexual behavior? This practice displeases Jehovah. (Galatians 5:19) The mind must also be kept clean of immoral thoughts. Jesus said: “Everyone that keeps on looking at a

woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:28) Those words apply equally to viewing pornographic images on paper, a screen, or the Internet; to reading accounts of sexual activities; and to listening to suggestive lyrics of songs. Avoiding such material pleases God and has an upbuilding influence on one’s life.

What about flirting? Flirtation is defined as “frivolously amorous or sexually enticing” behavior. For a married man or woman to direct such attention to a person outside his or her marriage is against Bible principles and is a sign of disrespect for Jehovah. (Ephesians 5:28-33) How inappropriate it is for single people to send romantic signals to each other just for amusement! What if such flirting is taken more seriously than intended? Think of the emotional pain that it can cause. Sobering too is the fact that flirting can lead to adultery or fornication. On the other hand, treating members of the opposite sex with chasteness increases one’s self-respect.—1 Timothy 5:1, 2.

### Pleasing God in Other Areas of Life

Alcoholic beverages are readily available in many lands. Is it wrong to partake of them? Drinking wine, beer, or other alcoholic drinks in moderation is not forbidden in the Scriptures. (Psalm 104:15; 1 Timothy 5:23) However, heavy drinking and drunkenness are wrong in God’s eyes. (1 Corinthians 5:11-13) Surely you do not want overdrinking to ruin your health and disrupt your family life.—Proverbs 23:20, 21, 29-35.

Jehovah is “the God of truth.” (Psalm 31:5) “It is impossible for God to lie,” states the Bible. (Hebrews 6:18) If you want God’s approval, you will avoid lying. (Proverbs 6:16-19; Colossians 3:9, 10) “Speak truth each one of you with his neighbor,” the Bible admonishes Christians.—Ephesians 4:25.

There is also the practice of gambling. Though popular among many, gambling is a form of greed, since it is an attempt to make money through the losses of others. Jehovah does not approve of those who are "greedy of dishonest gain." (1 Timothy 3:8) If you wish to please Jehovah, then, you will refrain from any form of gambling, including lotteries, bingo, and betting on horse races. In turn, you may well find that you actually have more money on hand to meet the needs of your family.

Stealing, that is, taking something that does not belong to you, is another form of greed. "You must not steal," says the Bible. (Exodus 20:15) It is wrong to buy stolen property knowingly and to take things without permission. "Let the stealer steal no more," says the Bible, "but rather let him do hard work, doing with his hands what is good work, that he may have something to distribute to someone in need." (Ephesians 4:28) Rather than stealing time from their employer, lovers of Jehovah do an honest day's work. They 'wish to conduct themselves honestly in all things.' (Hebrews 13:18) And a clear conscience certainly contributes to one's peace of mind.

How does God view someone who has a violent temper? The Bible warns: "Do not have companionship with anyone given to anger; and with a man having fits of rage you must not enter in." (Proverbs 22:24) Uncontrolled anger often leads to acts of violence. (Genesis 4:5-8) As for taking revenge, the Bible states: "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, says Jehovah.'" (Romans 12:17-19) When we follow such counsel, our

life will be more peaceful—and that will increase our happiness.

### You Can Succeed

Can you succeed in maintaining your integrity to God despite pressures to do otherwise? Yes, you can. Recognize that God wants you to succeed in proving Satan wrong on the issue of integrity, for His Word says: "Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me."—Proverbs 27:11.

You can pray to Jehovah to strengthen you to do what is right in his eyes. (Philippians 4:6, 7, 13) So put forth determined effort to increase your knowledge of God's Word, the Bible. Appreciatively reflecting on what you learn from the Bible will help you deepen your love for God and will move you to please him. "This is what the love of God means," says 1 John 5:3, "that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." Jehovah's Witnesses in your community will be happy to assist you in studying the Bible. You are invited to contact them locally, or you can write to the publishers of this magazine.

*Increasing your knowledge of God's Word will strengthen your resolve to do what is right*



## Giving a Thorough Witness With "Good Courage"

A VIOLENT mob is ready to beat to death an obedient servant of God. In the nick of time, Roman soldiers snatch the man from the attackers and detain him. This sets in motion a series of events spanning some five years. As a result, many high-ranking Roman officials hear about Jesus Christ.

The sufferer is the apostle Paul. About 34 C.E., Jesus revealed that Paul (Saul) would bear His name before "kings." (Acts 9:15) By the year 56 C.E., this has not yet happened. As the apostle nears the end of his third missionary trip, however, things are about to change.

### Mobbed but Undeterred

Paul is continuing his journey to Jerusalem, and "through the spirit" certain Christians warn him that intense persecution awaits him in that city. Courageously, Paul says: "I am ready not only to be bound but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus." (Acts 21:4-14) As soon as Paul visits the temple in Jerusalem, Jews from Asia who are familiar with the apostle's evangelizing success there stir up a mob in order to kill him. Roman soldiers quickly come to his aid. (Acts 21:27-32) That rescue gives Paul rare opportunities to declare the truth about the Christ to hostile audiences and high-ranking individuals.

### Preaching to Hard-to-Reach Audiences

Paul is dragged to safety up the steps of the fortress known as the Tower of Antonia.\* From those steps, the apostle gives a



forceful witness to the religious mob. (Acts 21:33-22:21) But as soon as he mentions his commission to preach to Gentiles, violence erupts again.

The military commander Lysias orders that Paul be examined under scourging to learn why the Jews accuse him. The scourging is prevented, however, when Paul makes it known that he is a Roman citizen. The next day, Lysias takes Paul before the Sanhedrin to learn why the Jews accuse him.—Acts 22:22-30.

Standing before this high court, Paul has another fine opportunity to witness to his fellow Jews. The fearless evangelizer declares his belief in the resurrection. (Acts 23:1-8) The murderous hatred of the Jews remains unabated, and Paul is taken into the soldiers' quarters. The following night, he receives this heartening assurance from the Lord: "Be of good courage! For as you have been giving a thorough witness on the things about me in Jerusalem, so you must also bear witness in Rome."—Acts 23:9-11.

A plot to kill Paul is forestalled when the apostle is secretly hurried to Caesarea, the Roman administrative capital of Judaea. (Acts 23:12-24) In Caesarea, further valuable opportunities are presented, and Paul witnesses to "kings." First, though, the apostle shows Governor Felix that there is no evidence to support the charges against him. Later, Paul preaches to him and his wife Drusilla about Jesus, self-control, righteousness, and the coming judgment. Paul, however, is kept in prison for two years, as Felix hopes to receive a bribe that never comes.—Acts 23:33-24:27.

\* See the 2006 Calendar of Jehovah's Witnesses, November/December.



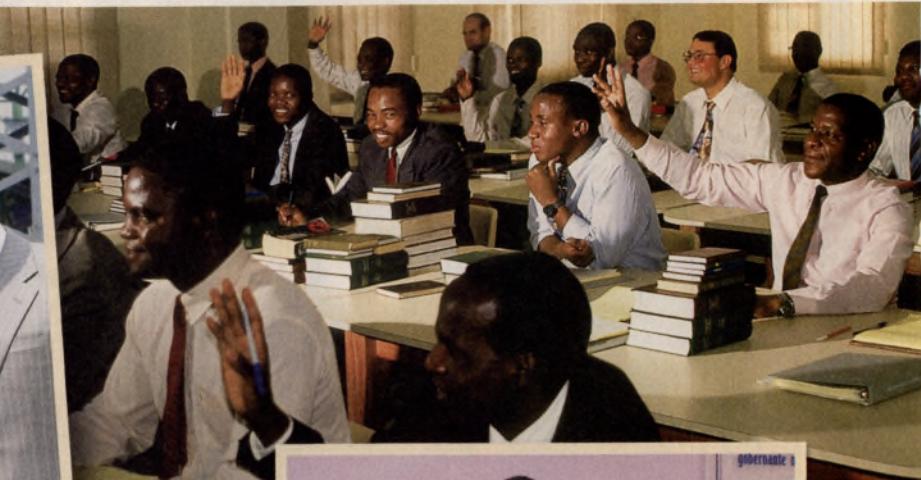
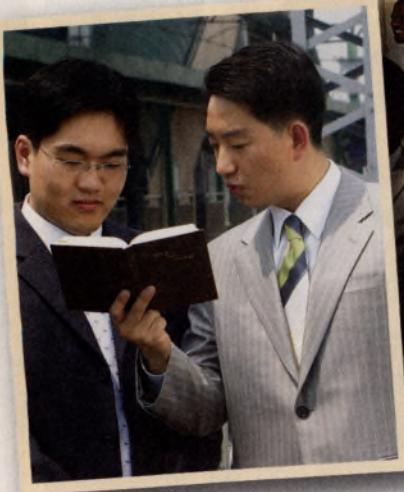
### WAS PAUL INTERESTED MERELY IN DEFENDING HIMSELF?

Commenting on this question, author Ben Witherington III writes: "From Paul's . . . point of view, the crucial thing is not so much for Paul to defend himself, but rather for him to bear witness about the gospel to the authorities, both Jewish and Gentile. . . . In effect it is the gospel that is really on trial."

When Felix is replaced by Festus, the Jews renew their efforts to have Paul condemned and executed. The case is heard again at Caesarea, and to prevent a transfer of the trial to Jerusalem, Paul states: "I am standing before the judgment seat of Caesar . . . I appeal to Caesar." (Acts 25:1-11, 20, 21) Some days later, after the apostle presents his case before King Herod Agrippa II, that king says: "In a short time you would persuade me to become a Christian." (Acts 26:1-28) In about 58 C.E., Paul is sent to Rome. As a prisoner there, the resourceful apostle continues for two more years to find ways to preach about Christ. (Acts 28:16-31) It seems that Paul did eventually stand before Emperor Nero, was declared innocent,

and was finally able to renew his missionary activity as a free man. There is no record that any other apostle had the opportunity to reach such notables with the good news.

As the above shows, the apostle Paul lived in harmony with the significant principle expressed before the Jewish tribunal by his fellow Christians: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 5:29) What a fine example he set for us! Despite persistent human efforts to stop him, the apostle fully obeyed the command to give a thorough witness. As a result of such unwavering obedience to God, Paul measured up to his assignment as "a chosen vessel" to bear Jesus' name "to the nations *as well as to kings* and the sons of Israel."—Acts 9:15.



# A School Whose Graduates Benefit People Worldwide

IN OVER 98,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in more than 200 lands, people from all walks of life are being taught by God. The main textbook is the Bible, and the objective of this education is to help individuals advance spiritually by learning what God's will is and how to live in accord with it. Those who accept this education are greatly benefited. What they learn, they also share with others, in harmony with Jesus Christ's instruction to make disciples.—Matthew 28:19, 20.

In addition to the ongoing teaching program in their congregations, Jehovah's Witnesses have established a number of specialized schools. One of these is the Ministerial Training School. It was inaugurated in Octo-

*The Ministerial Training School is promoting Kingdom interests worldwide*

ber 1987 in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. The first class was composed of 24 English-speaking students. Courses have since been held in 21 languages in 43 lands. So far, single elders and ministerial servants from more than 90 countries have been enrolled. Upon completion of the eight-week course, graduates are assigned to serve where there is a need, either in their own country or abroad. By the end of 2005, over 22,000 Christian ministers had completed the course. Their humble efforts to promote Kingdom interests and benefit others have been richly blessed.—Proverbs 10:22; 1 Peter 5:5.

## Arranging to Attend

In order to attend the Ministerial Training School, most students have to request time off from their part-time or full-time secular work. This sometimes presents a challenge. In Hawaii, two Christian men who were invited to attend the school had to ask for time away from their work as schoolteachers. In faith, they submitted their requests, explaining why they wanted to attend and how they would benefit. Both were granted time off.

In a number of cases, Witnesses who asked for time away from work were told that they would have no employment upon their return. They chose to receive training from Jehovah's organization, even though it meant losing their jobs. Some of these individuals later received invitations from their employers to return to work upon completion of the school. Such determination to attend the school might be summed up in this way: Submit your request, pray for Jehovah's help, and let him do the rest.—Psalm 37:5.

## "Taught by Jehovah"

The school's eight-week course features an in-depth study of the Bible. Students learn how Jehovah's people are organized to do God's will and how they can personally use the Bible more effectively in their field ministry, at congregation meetings, and at assemblies.

One appreciative graduate wrote this to a student who had not yet attended: "Believe me, you are in for the best educational experience you've ever had. The scripture that mentions being 'taught by Jehovah' really takes on added meaning. The whole experience is a molding, shaping, and refining of the heart and personality to conform more closely to the example of Christ Jesus. You are in for the greatest experience of your life."—Isaiah 54:13.

## Evangelizers, Shepherds, and Teachers

Ministerial Training School graduates presently serve in 117 lands. These include islands in the Atlantic, Caribbean, and Pacific areas as well as most of the countries where there are branch offices of Jehovah's Witnesses. Branches report that the fine training received by the students is reflected in their evangelizing, shepherding, and teaching activities. Their training equips them to make better use of the Bible in the field ministry. (2 Timothy 2:15) When answering householders' questions, they also make frequent reference to the book *Reasoning From the Scriptures*\* and train other Kingdom publishers to do the same. The zeal of the graduates is contagious, and their activities strengthen congregations.

Congregation elders are privileged to "shepherd the flock," helping to care for the spiritual needs of others. (1 Peter 5:2, 3) One elder said regarding the arrangement: "We appreciate that the branch office sends out well-trained brothers to help us carry the load of shepherding the flock of God." A branch in the Far East similarly observed: "The graduates are very compassionate. They work hard and earn the respect of the congregation. Their humility, warmth, and eagerness are well-known and highly appreciated. They willingly sacrifice themselves and gladly move to congregations that need shepherds." (Philippians 2:4) Such men refresh their fellow believers and deserve commendation.—1 Corinthians 16:18.

Among other things, Ministerial Training School instructors help students to improve their skills as public speakers. By applying suggestions and counsel that they receive, many of the graduates can soon be used on circuit assembly and district

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

convention programs. One circuit overseer observed that the graduates give "excellent talks and apply the material by using good reasoning."—1 Timothy 4:13.

The quality of teaching at congregation meetings greatly improved in an African country after the Ministerial Training School was conducted there and graduates were assigned to the field. Elders sent out from the school render assistance in evangelizing, shepherding, and teaching, thereby building up the congregations spiritually.  
—Ephesians 4:8, 11, 12.

### Improved Congregation Oversight

In numerous places, there is a need for more elders and ministerial servants. Some congregations would have no elders at all if a Ministerial Training School graduate had not been sent to them. Many graduates are therefore assigned to serve where such needs exist.

A number of branches report that these men "know organizational arrangements well," "take their responsibilities seriously," "help others to appreciate and respect Jehovah's organization," and "contribute to the warmth and spirituality of their congregations." This is because the graduates of the school follow what is written in God's Word and do not rely upon their own understanding or become wise in their own eyes. (Proverbs 3:5-7) Such men become spiritual blessings in the congregations to which they are assigned.

### Serving in Isolated Territories

Some graduates appointed as special pioneers assist isolated groups to become congregations. Expressing appreciation for their help, an elder in a remote area of Guatemala said: "For 20 years I worried about how this huge territory would be cared for. I often prayed about the matter. The brothers

from the Ministerial Training School are well-trained in speaking as well as in organizational matters, and I am grateful to see that the area is now receiving loving attention."

Graduates have learned to be effective in territories where they must travel long distances over mountainous terrain to reach scattered hamlets. There they quickly establish and organize isolated groups, even when others have been unable to do so. For instance, an elder in Niger requested the help of graduates because he felt that they could do excellent work in the area where he lived. Especially in remote areas, it may be easier for unmarried men to serve as special pioneers and circuit overseers. Like the apostle Paul, they must deal with 'dangers from rivers and highwaymen, dangers in the wilderness,' and personal discomforts as well as anxiety for the congregations they serve.  
—2 Corinthians 11:26-28.

### Benefiting Youths

The Scriptures urge young people to remember their Creator. (Ecclesiastes 12:1) Zealous Ministerial Training School graduates are fine examples for Christian youths. After two graduates arrived at one congregation in the United States, the total amount of time that the brothers spent in the ministry doubled. Moreover, the number of regular pioneers, or full-time Kingdom proclaimers, increased from 2 to 11. This is typical of what has happened in many congregations.

Graduates also encourage younger men to consider attending the Ministerial Training School. This has motivated some who are not yet serving as ministerial servants to reach out for that privilege. The Netherlands branch calls Ministerial Training School graduates "living examples for younger men who are contemplating what to do with their lives."

*Do you hope to enroll in the Ministerial Training School and benefit others?*

### Serving in Foreign-Language Congregations

In many lands, efforts to preach the good news to people in their native tongue are gaining momentum. Ministerial Training School graduates often learn other languages and serve in territories where there are large immigrant populations. In Belgium, for example, there is a need for more Kingdom preachers in the Albanian, Persian, and Russian fields.

Foreign-language congregations and groups in Britain, Germany, Italy, Mexico, the United States, and other lands already benefit greatly from traveling overseers, elders, and ministerial servants who are Ministerial Training School graduates. The branch in Korea reports that "more than 200 graduates are playing a prominent role in helping foreign-language congregations and groups."

### Serving Humbly in Other Capacities

In addition to serving with foreign-language groups and congregations, those who have graduated from the Ministerial Training School serve as elders, ministerial servants, and traveling overseers. Some take up assignments in other lands, perhaps filling urgent needs in the Service Department at a branch. Those who have acquired construction skills may share in the Kingdom Hall building program.



The worldwide increase in the number of congregations and circuits means that more traveling overseers are constantly required. To help fill this need, selected graduates of the Ministerial Training School receive ten weeks of training in the traveling work and then serve as substitute or regular circuit overseers. About 1,300 graduates presently serve as traveling overseers in 97 countries. In one African land, 55 percent of the traveling overseers have graduated from the Ministerial Training School. In another African country, the figure is 70 percent.

In Australia, Canada, Europe, the Far East, and the United States, hundreds of graduates of the school have been sent out to fill specific needs in other lands. In this way, benefits from the school have extended worldwide.

Through his Son, Jesus Christ, Jehovah has raised up evangelizers, shepherds, teachers, and others who promote Kingdom interests in these last days. Are there prospects for yet further increase in the ranks of God's people? Definitely! So there is an ever-increasing need for dedicated men to reach out for greater responsibility. (Isaiah 60:22; 1 Timothy 3:1, 13) The Ministerial Training School affords elders and ministerial servants an opportunity to become equipped to widen out in their ministry, with great benefit to themselves and others in the worldwide field.

# Christophe Plantin

## A PIONEER IN BIBLE PRINTING



JOHANNES GUTENBERG (about 1397-1468) is famous for producing the first Bible that was printed using movable type. But not many people know of Christophe Plantin. He was a pioneer in printing who played an important role in making books and Bibles available to people around the world during the 1500's.

Christophe Plantin was born about 1520 in Saint-Avertin, France. Favoring a place where the religious climate was more tolerant and economic opportunities were more promising than in France, Plantin, while in his late 20's, settled in Antwerp in the Low Countries.\*

Plantin began his career as a bookbinder and leather dresser. His richly crafted leather work was much sought after by the wealthy. However, an incident in 1555 caused Plantin to change his career. While on the way to deliver a leather case ordered for the ruler of the Low Countries, King Philip II of Spain, Plantin was attacked on a street in Antwerp. Some drunken men ran a sword through his shoulder. Although Plantin recovered from the wound, he was unable to do manual labor and was therefore obliged to give up his trade. With financial backing from Hendrik Niclaes, the leader of an Anabaptist group, Plantin took up printing.

\* The term "Low Countries" refers to the coastal area between Germany and France, comprising modern-day Belgium, Netherlands, and Luxembourg.

### "Work and Perseverance"

Plantin called his printery De Gulden Passer (The Golden Compass). His trademark bore a pair of golden drafting compasses with the inscription "*Labore et Constantia*," which means "Work and Perseverance." The trademark seemed to fit this industrious man.

Living in an era of great religious and political upheaval in Europe, Plantin sought to avoid trouble. Printing work was more important to him than anything else. Though he sympathized with the Protestant Reformation, he "displayed an ambiguous attitude toward the question of religion," states author Maurits Sabbe. Because of this, Plantin was plagued by rumors that he printed heretical books. In 1562, for example, he was forced to flee to Paris for more than a year.

When Plantin returned to Antwerp in 1563, he entered into a partnership with wealthy merchants, several of whom were known for their Calvinistic beliefs. During a five-year partnership, 260 different works came off Plantin's presses. These included Hebrew, Greek, and Latin Bible editions as well as beautifully illuminated editions of the Dutch Catholic Louvain Bible.

### "The Most Important Typographic Achievement"

In 1567, during the period when resistance to Spanish rule was increasing in the Low Countries, Spain's King Philip II sent the

## THE PLANTIN-MORETUS MUSEUM

The building in the city of Antwerp where Plantin and his descendants had lived and worked was opened to the public as a museum in 1877. No other printing house from that period remains intact. Five printing presses dating from the 17th and 18th centuries are on display. Two others—the oldest known in the world—date back almost to Plantin's time. The museum houses about 15,000 matrices used for casting type, 15,000 wood blocks, and 3,000 engraved copper plates. The museum library contains 638 manuscripts dating from the 9th to the

16th century as well as 154 books printed before the year 1501. These include an original Gutenberg Bible dating from before 1461 as well as one of Plantin's famous Antwerp Polyglot Bibles.



Both images: By courtesy of Museum Plantin-Moretus/Stedelijk Prentenkabinet Antwerpen

Duke of Alba to serve as governor there. With full authority from the king, the duke endeavored to extinguish the growing Protestant resistance. Plantin therefore began a monumental project that he hoped would erase all suspicion of heresy. He aspired to print a scholarly edition of the Bible texts in their original languages. For this new edition, Plantin succeeded in obtaining the support of Philip II. The king promised financial aid and sent the noted humanist Arias Montano to be a supervisor of the project.

Montano had a gift for language, and he worked for 11 hours a day. He was assisted by Spanish, Belgian, and French linguists. Their aim was to prepare a new version of the prestigious Complutensian Polyglot.\* In addition to the Latin *Vulgate*, the Greek *Septuagint*, and the original Hebrew text, Plantin's



Arias Montano

new Polyglot Bible included an Aramaic Targum and the Syriac *Peshitta*, along with their respective literal Latin translations.

Printing began in 1568. The colossal task was completed by 1573. It was fast work for the day. In a letter to King Philip II, Montano wrote: "More is accomplished here in one month than in Rome in a year." Plantin printed 1,213 copies of the new Polyglot Bible, each composed of a set of eight large volumes. The title page bore a printed illustration of a lion, a bull, a wolf, and a lamb peacefully eating from the same trough, thus depicting Isaiah 65:25. The price of a set not yet bound in volume form was 70 guilders—a considerable sum, since the average family then earned about 50 guilders a year. The

\* This multilingual Bible was published in 1517. It contained the text in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin and some portions in Aramaic. See "The Complutensian Polyglot—A Historic Translation Tool," in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2004, pages 28-31.



complete set came to be known as the Antwerp Polyglot. It was also called the Biblia Regia (Royal Bible) because King Philip II had sponsored it.

Even though Pope Gregory XIII approved the Bible, Arias Montano was severely criticized for his work. One reason was that Montano regarded the original Hebrew text as superior to the Latin *Vulgata*. His main opponent was León de Castro, a Spanish theologian who considered the Latin *Vulgata* to be the absolute authority. De Castro accused Montano of infecting the text with anti-Trinitarian philosophy. For instance, de Castro particularly noted that the Syriac *Peshitta* omitted from 1 John 5:7 the spurious addition, "in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one." (*King James Version*) The Spanish Inquisition, however, cleared Montano of all suspicion of heresy. The Antwerp Polyglot is considered by some "the most important typographic achievement by a single printer during the 16th century."

### A Lasting Contribution

Most printers of the time possessed only two or three presses. At the peak of his productivity, however, Plantin probably had no fewer than 22 presses and 160 workers. Throughout the Spanish world, he came to have a reputation of being a leading printer.

**The Antwerp Polyglot contains the Hebrew text, the Latin "Vulgata," and the Greek "Septuagint," as well as the Syriac "Peshitta" and an Aramaic Targum along with their Latin translations**

By courtesy of Museum Plantin-Moretus/Stedelijk Prentenkabinet Antwerpen

Meanwhile, resistance to Spanish rule was increasing in the Low Countries. Antwerp was caught up in the conflict. In 1576, Spanish mercenaries who had not received their pay mutinied and plundered the city. More than 600 houses were burned, and thousands of Antwerp's inhabitants were murdered. Merchants fled the city. This meant great financial loss for Plantin. Moreover, he was obliged to pay the mutineers exorbitant tribute.

In 1583, Plantin moved to Leiden, a city some 60 miles north of Antwerp. There he set up a printery and was appointed printer for Leiden University, an institution founded by Calvinist Protestants. The old accusations of unfaithfulness to the Catholic Church re-emerged. So Plantin returned to Antwerp at the end of 1585, shortly after the city was restored to Spanish rule. By that time he was in his 60's, and The Golden Compass had dwindled to only four employees working on a single press. Plantin set out to rebuild the printery. It never quite regained its former status, however, and Plantin died on July 1, 1589.

Over a span of 34 years, Christophe Plantin printed 1,863 different book editions, an average of almost 55 each year. Even today, this would be a staggering achievement for an independent printer! Although Plantin himself avoided taking a firm religious stand, his work promoted not only printing and typography but also the study of the inspired Scriptures. (2 Timothy 3:16) Indeed, Plantin and his contemporary printers contributed greatly toward eventually making Bibles available to the common man.

# Jehovah's Word Is Alive

## Highlights From the Song of Solomon

"**L**IKE a lily among thorny weeds, so is my girl companion among the daughters." "Like an apple tree among the trees of the forest, so is my dear one among the sons." "Who is this woman that is looking down like the dawn, beautiful like the full moon, pure like the glowing sun?" (Song of Solomon 2:2; 3; 6:10) How sublime are these verses from the Bible book Song of Solomon! The entire book is a poem so full of meaning and beauty that it is called "the most beautiful (most excellent) song."—Song of Solomon 1:1, footnote.

Composed by King Solomon of ancient Israel, likely about 1020 B.C.E., during the early part of his 40-year reign, this song is a love story of a shepherd boy and a country girl, a Shu-lammite. Among others mentioned in the poem are the girl's mother and brothers, "daughters of Jerusalem [court ladies]," and "daughters of Zion [women of Jerusalem]." (Song of Solomon 1:5; 3:11) It is challenging for a Bible reader to identify all the speakers in the Song of Solomon, but it is possible by considering what they say or what is said to them.

As part of God's Word, the message of the Song of Solomon is of great value for two reasons. (Hebrews 4:12) First, it teaches us what true love between a man and a woman is. Second, the song illustrates the type of love that exists between Jesus Christ and the congregation of anointed Christians.—2 Corinthians 11:2; Ephesians 5:25-31.



### DO NOT TRY TO "AROUSE LOVE IN ME"

(Song of Solomon 1:1-3:5)

"May he kiss me with the kisses of his mouth, for your expressions of endearment are better than wine." (Song of Solomon 1:2) The dialogue in the Song of Solomon opens with these words of a humble country girl who is brought into the royal tent of Solomon. How did she get there?

"The sons of my own mother grew angry with me," she says. "They appointed me the keeper of the vineyards." Her brothers are angry with her because the shepherd boy whom she loves has invited her to go for a walk with him on a lovely spring day. To prevent her from going, they have assigned her to guard against "the little foxes that are making spoil of the vineyards." This work brings her close to Solomon's camp. Her beauty is noticed when she goes down "to the garden of nut trees," and she is brought into the camp.—Song of Solomon 1:6; 2:10-15; 6:11.

As the maiden expresses her longing for her beloved shepherd, the court ladies tell her to 'go out for herself in the footprints of the flock' and look for him. But Solomon does not permit her to go. Expressing his admiration for her beauty, he promises her "circlets of gold . . . along with studs of silver." The girl, though, is not impressed. The shepherd boy makes his way into Solomon's camp, finds her, and exclaims: "Look! You are beautiful, O girl companion of mine. Look! You are beautiful." The young maiden puts the court ladies under oath: "Try not to

awaken or arouse love in me until it feels inclined.”—Song of Solomon 1:8-11, 15; 2:7; 3:5.

#### **Scriptural Questions Answered:**

**1:2, 3**—Why is the remembrance of the shepherd boy’s expressions of endearment like wine and his name like oil? Just as wine makes the heart of a man rejoice and the pouring of oil on the head is soothing, the memory of the boy’s love and his name strengthened and comforted the maiden. (Psalm 23:5; 104:15) True Christians, particularly anointed ones, likewise find strength and encouragement in reflecting upon the love that Jesus Christ has shown toward them.

**1:5**—Why does the country girl liken her swarthy appearance to “the tents of Kedar”? Goat’s hair, made into fabric, had many uses. (Numbers 31:20) For example, “cloths of goat’s hair” were used to make “the tent upon the tabernacle.” (Exodus 26:7) As is true of Bedouin tents even today, the tents of Kedar may well have been made of black goat’s hair.

**1:15**—What does the shepherd boy mean when he says: “Your eyes are those of doves”? The shepherd boy is saying that the eyes of his girl companion are soft and gentle in appearance, as are those of doves.

**2:7; 3:5**—Why are the court ladies put under oath “by the female gazelles or by the hinds of the field”? Gazelles and hinds are noted for their gracefulness and beauty. In effect, the Shu-

lammite maiden is obligating the court ladies by everything that is graceful and beautiful to refrain from trying to awaken love in her.

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**1:2; 2:6**. Clean expressions of endearment may be appropriate during courtship. However, a couple should take care that these are manifestations of genuine affection and not of unclean passion, which may pave the way for sexual immorality.—Galatians 5:19.

**1:6; 2:10-15**. The Shulammite’s brothers did not allow their sister to go with her beloved to an isolated place in the mountains but not because she was immoral or did not have proper motives. Rather, they took a precautionary measure intended to prevent her from getting into a situation that might lead to temptation. The lesson for courting couples is that they should avoid secluded places.

**2:1-3, 8, 9**. Though beautiful, the Shulammite maiden modestly viewed herself as “a mere saffron [a common flower] of the coastal plain.” Because of her beauty and faithfulness to Jehovah, the shepherd boy thought of her as “a lily among thorny weeds.” And what can be said about him? Because he was handsome,

*What does the Song of Solomon teach us to look for in a marriage mate?*



to her he resembled "a gazelle." He must also have been spiritually inclined and devoted to Jehovah. "Like an apple tree [that provides shade and fruit] among the trees of the forest," she says, "so is my dear one among the sons." Are not faith and devotion to God desirable qualities to look for in a prospective marriage mate?

2:7; 3:5. The country girl felt no romantic attraction to Solomon. She also put the court ladies under oath not to try to arouse in her love for anyone other than the shepherd boy. It is neither possible nor proper to feel romantic love for just anyone. A single Christian desiring to marry should consider only a loyal servant of Jehovah.—1 Corinthians 7:39.

### "WHAT DO YOU PEOPLE BEHOLD IN THE SHULAMMITE?"

(Song of Solomon 3:6–8:4)

Something "is coming up from the wilderness like columns of smoke." (Song of Solomon 3:6) What do the women of Jerusalem see when they go out to look? Why, Solomon and his attendants are returning to the city! And the king has brought the Shulammite maiden with him.

The shepherd boy has followed the maiden and soon finds a way to see her. As he assures her of his love, she expresses her desire to leave the city, saying: "Until the day breathes and the shadows have fled, I shall go my way to the mountain of myrrh and to the hill of frankincense." She invites the shepherd to "come into his garden and eat its choicest fruits." He answers: "I have come into my garden, O my sister, my bride." The women of Jerusalem say to them: "Eat, O companions! Drink and become drunk with expressions of endearment!"—Song of Solomon 4:6, 16; 5:1.

After relating a dream to the court ladies, the Shulammite maiden says to them: "I am

lovesick." They ask: "How is your dear one more than any other dear one?" She replies: "My dear one is dazzling and ruddy, the most conspicuous of ten thousand." (Song of Solomon 5:2-10) To Solomon's lavish praise, she humbly replies: "What do you people behold in the Shulammite?" (Song of Solomon 6:4-13) Viewing this as an opportunity to win her over, the king showers her with more compliments. The girl, however, remains steadfast in her love for the shepherd boy. Solomon finally lets her go home.

### Scriptural Questions Answered:

4:1; 6:5—Why is the maiden's hair compared to "a drove of goats"? The comparison suggests that her hair was shiny and luxuriant like the black hair of goats.

4:11—What is significant about the Shulammite's 'lips dripping with comb honey' and 'honey and milk being under her tongue'? Comb honey is more flavorful and sweeter than honey that has been exposed to air. This comparison, as well as the idea that honey and milk were under the maiden's tongue, emphasizes the goodness and pleasantness of the words spoken by the Shulammite.

5:12—What is the thought behind the expression "his eyes are like doves by the channels of water, which are bathing themselves in milk"? The maiden is speaking of her beloved's beautiful eyes. Perhaps she is poetically likening the dark iris surrounded by the white of his eyes to blue-gray doves bathing in milk.

5:14, 15—Why are the shepherd's hands and legs described in this way? The maiden is apparently referring to the shepherd's fingers as gold cylinders and to his nails as chrysolite. She likens his legs to "pillars of marble" because they are strong and beautiful.

**6:4, footnote—Does “Pleasant City” refer to Jerusalem?** No. “Pleasant City” is “Tirzah.” This Canaanite city was captured by Joshua, and after Solomon’s time it became the first capital of the northern ten-tribe kingdom of Israel. (Joshua 12:7, 24; 1 Kings 16:5, 6, 8, 15) “It appears that the city must have been a very beautiful one,” says one reference work, “which would account for its mention here.”

**6:13, footnote—What is “the dance of two camps”?** This expression can also be rendered the “dance of Mahanaim.” The city bearing that name was located on the east side of the Jordan River near the torrent valley of Jabbok. (Genesis 32:2, 22; 2 Samuel 2:29) “The dance of two camps” may refer to a certain dance held at that city in connection with a festival.

**7:4—Why does Solomon liken the neck of the Shulammite maiden to “an ivory tower”?** Earlier, the girl received this compliment: “Your neck is like the tower of David.” (Song of Solomon 4:4) A tower is long and slender, and ivory is smooth. Solomon is impressed with the slenderness and the smoothness of the girl’s neck.

#### **Lessons for Us:**

**4:7.** By resisting Solomon’s enticements, the Shulammite, though imperfect, proved herself to be without moral defect. Her moral

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strength thus enhanced her physical beauty. That should also be true of Christian women.

**4:12.** Like a beautiful garden enclosed by a hedge or a wall, which could be accessed only through a locked gate, the Shulammite maiden made her tender affections available only to her future husband. What a fine example for unmarried Christian women and men!

#### **“THE FLAME OF JAH”**

#### **(Song of Solomon 8:5-14)**

“Who is this woman coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her dear one?” ask the Shulammite’s brothers when they see her return home. Some time earlier, one of them had said: “If she should be a wall, we shall build upon her a battlement of silver; but if she should be a door, we shall block her up with a cedar plank.” Now that the constancy of the Shulammite’s love has been tested and proved, she says: “I am a wall, and my breasts are like towers. In this case I have become in his eyes like her that is finding peace.”—Song of Solomon 8:5, 9, 10.

True love is “the flame of Jah.” Why? Because such love originates with Jehovah. He is the One who has put in us the capacity to love. It is a flame whose blazings are inextinguishable. The Song of Solomon beautifully illustrates that love between a man and a woman can be “as strong [unfailing] as death is.”—Song of Solomon 8:6.

Solomon’s superlative song also sheds light on the bond that exists between Jesus Christ and the members of his heavenly “bride.” (Revelation 21:2, 9) Jesus’ love for anointed Christians surpasses any love between a man and a woman. The members of the bride class are unyielding in their devotion. Jesus lovingly gave his life for the “other sheep” too. (John 10:16) All true worshippers, then, can imitate the Shulammite’s example of unwavering love and devotion.

# KEEP YOURSELF IN GOD'S LOVE!

*"Beloved ones, . . . keep yourselves in God's love, . . . with everlasting life in view."—JUDE 20, 21.*

**J**EHOVAH loves the world of mankind so much that he gave his only-begotten Son in order that those exercising faith in him might have everlasting life. (John 3:16) How grand it is to experience such love! If you are a servant of Jehovah, you surely want to enjoy that love forever.

<sup>2</sup> The disciple Jude disclosed how you can remain in God's love. "By building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying with holy spirit," wrote Jude, "keep yourselves in God's love, while you are waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ with everlasting life in view." (Jude 20, 21) Studying God's Word and preaching the good news help to build you up on the "most holy faith"—Christian teachings. To remain in God's love, you must pray "with holy spirit," or under its influence. In order to be blessed with everlasting life, you must also exercise faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. —1 John 4:10.

<sup>3</sup> Some who once had faith have not remained in God's love. Because they have chosen to pursue a sinful course, they are no longer Jehovah's Witnesses. How can you avoid such an experience? Medi-

1, 2. How can you remain in God's love?

3. Why are some no longer Jehovah's Witnesses?

tating on the following points may help you to refrain from sin and to keep yourself in God's love.

## Demonstrate Your Love for God

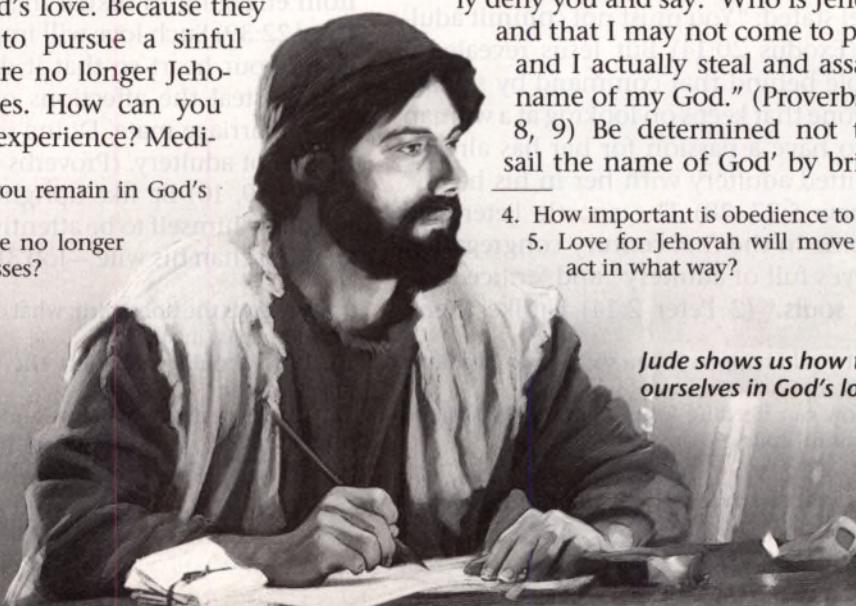
<sup>4</sup> Show your love for God by obeying him. (Matthew 22:37) "This is what the love of God means," wrote the apostle John, "that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome." (1 John 5:3) A pattern of obedience to God can strengthen you to resist temptation and can make you joyful. The psalmist said: "Happy is the man that has not walked in the counsel of the wicked ones, . . . but his delight is in the law of Jehovah."—Psalm 1: 1, 2.

<sup>5</sup> Your love for Jehovah will move you to avoid committing a serious sin that would bring reproach upon his name. "Give me neither poverty nor riches," prayed Agur. "Let me devour the food prescribed for me, that I may not become satisfied and I actually deny you and say: 'Who is Jehovah?'

and that I may not come to poverty and I actually steal and assail the name of my God." (Proverbs 30:1, 8, 9) Be determined not to 'assail the name of God' by bringing

4. How important is obedience to God?

5. Love for Jehovah will move you to act in what way?



*Jude shows us how to keep ourselves in God's love*

reproach upon him. Instead, always strive to do upright things that bring him glory.—Psalm 86:12.

<sup>6</sup> Pray regularly to your loving heavenly Father for help to resist temptation to engage in sin. (Matthew 6:13; Romans 12:12) Keep following God's counsel so that your prayers are not hindered. (1 Peter 3:7) If you were to go headlong into sin, the consequences could be tragic, for Jehovah figuratively blocks the approach of rebellious ones as with a cloud mass so that their prayers may not pass through to him. (Lamentations 3:42-44) So display a humble spirit, and pray that you may do nothing that would deprive you of approach to God in prayer.—2 Corinthians 13:7.

### Show Love for God's Son

<sup>7</sup> Display love for Jesus Christ by obeying his commandments, for this will help you to reject a sinful course. "If you observe my commandments," said Jesus, "you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love." (John 15:10) How can the application of Jesus' words assist you in remaining in God's love?

<sup>8</sup> Paying attention to Jesus' words can help you to maintain moral integrity. God's Law to Israel stated: "You must not commit adultery." (Exodus 20:14) But Jesus revealed a principle behind that command by saying: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5:27, 28) The apostle Peter said that some in the first-century congregation had "eyes full of adultery" and 'enticed unsteady souls.' (2 Peter 2:14) Unlike them,

6. What could happen if you were to go headlong into sin?

7, 8. How can heeding Jesus' counsel help one to reject a sinful course?

however, you can avoid sexual sins if you love and obey God and Christ and are determined to preserve your relationship with them.

### Let Jehovah's Spirit Lead You

<sup>9</sup> Pray for God's holy spirit, and allow it to lead you. (Luke 11:13; Galatians 5:19-25) If you were to persist in sin, God might withdraw his spirit from you. After David sinned in connection with Bath-sheba, he begged God: "Do not throw me away from before your face; and your holy spirit O do not take away from me." (Psalm 51:11) Because of being an unrepentant sinner, King Saul did lose God's spirit. Saul sinned by offering up a burnt sacrifice and by sparing the flock, the herd, and the king of the Amalekites. Jehovah thereafter withdrew his holy spirit from Saul.—1 Samuel 13:1-14; 15:1-35; 16:14-23.

<sup>10</sup> Reject the very thought of practicing sin. "If we practice sin willfully after having received the accurate knowledge of the truth," wrote the apostle Paul, "there is no longer any sacrifice for sins left." (Hebrews 10:26-31) How tragic it would be if you were to carry sin to that point!

### Display True Love for Others

<sup>11</sup> Love for fellow humans will deter you from engaging in sexual misconduct. (Matthew 22:39) Such love will impel you to safeguard your heart so that it does not entice you to steal the affections of another person's marriage mate. Doing so could lead to the sin of adultery. (Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 4:14; 17:9, 10) Be like upright Job, who did not allow himself to be attentive to any woman other than his wife.—Job 31:1.

9. As regards the holy spirit, what can happen if one were to persist in sin?

10. Why should you reject the very thought of practicing sin?

11, 12. In what ways will love and respect deter one from engaging in sexual misconduct?

<sup>12</sup> Respect for the sanctity of marriage can help you to avoid serious sin. God purposed that honorable marriage and sexual relations should be the means of propagating life. (Genesis 1:26-28) Remember that the sex organs have to do with life, which is sacred. Fornicators and adulterers disobey God, degrade the sexual act, lack respect for the sanctity of marriage, and sin against their own body. (1 Corinthians 6:18) But love of God and neighbor coupled with godly obedience will keep a person from engaging in conduct that could result in his being disfellowshipped from the Christian congregation.

<sup>13</sup> We need to suppress sinful thoughts so that we do not cause our loved ones pain. "He that is having companionship with prostitutes destroys valuable things," says Proverbs 29:3. An unrepentant adulterer destroys his relationship with God and ruins family bonds. His wife has grounds for divorce. (Matthew 19:9) Whether the husband or the wife is the wrongdoer, a marital breakup can cause the innocent mate, the children, and others great pain. Do you not agree that knowing the destructiveness of immoral conduct should move us to resist the temptation to engage in it?

<sup>14</sup> The fact that there is no way to compensate for adultery should impel one to avoid this grossly selfish act. Proverbs 6:30-35 shows that whereas people may sympathize with a thief who steals because he is hungry, they despise an adulterer because he has a bad motive. He is "bringing his own soul [or, life] to ruin." Under the Mosaic Law, he would have been put to death. (Leviticus 20:10) A person who commits adultery causes others pain just to satisfy his lust, and an unrepentant adulterer does not remain in

13. An immoral person "destroys valuable things" in what way?
14. What lesson regarding wrongdoing can be learned from Proverbs 6:30-35?

God's love but is expelled from the clean Christian congregation.

### Maintain a Clean Conscience

<sup>15</sup> To remain in God's love, we cannot allow our conscience to become insensitive to sin. Obviously, we must not accept the world's low moral standards, and we need to exercise care in such matters as our choice of associates, reading material, and entertainment. Paul warned: "In later periods of time some will fall away from the faith, paying attention to misleading inspired utterances and teachings of demons, by the hypocrisy of men who speak lies, marked in their conscience as with a branding iron." (1 Timothy 4:1, 2) A conscience marked "as with a branding iron" is like seared flesh covered with

15. What is the condition of a conscience marked "as with a branding iron"?

*A marital breakup can cause the innocent mate and children great pain*



scar tissue and devoid of feeling. Such a conscience would no longer warn us to stay away from apostates and from situations that could cause us to fall away from the faith.

<sup>16</sup> Our salvation depends on our having a clean conscience. (1 Peter 3:21) Through our faith in Jesus' shed blood, our conscience has been cleansed from dead works, "that we may render sacred service to the living God." (Hebrews 9:13, 14) If we were to sin willfully, our conscience would become defiled and we would no longer be clean people fit for God's service. (Titus 1:15) But with Jehovah's help, we can have a clean conscience.

### Other Ways to Avoid Wrong Conduct

<sup>17</sup> 'Follow Jehovah fully,' as did Caleb of ancient Israel. (Deuteronomy 1:34-36) Do what God requires of you, and never consider partaking of "the table of demons." (1 Corinthians 10:21) Reject apostasy. Partake appreciatively of the spiritual food available only at Jehovah's table, and you will not be misled by false teachers or wicked spirit forces. (Ephesians 6:12; Jude 3, 4) Focus on spiritual things, such as Bible study, meeting attendance, and the field ministry. You are sure to be happy if you follow Jehovah fully and have plenty to do in the Lord's work.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

<sup>18</sup> Be determined to "render God sacred service with godly fear and awe." (Hebrews 12:28)

16. Why is it so important to have a clean conscience?

17. Of what benefit is it to 'follow Jehovah fully'?

18. How will fear of Jehovah affect your conduct?

Reverential fear of Jehovah will motivate you to reject any wayward course. It will help you to conduct yourself in harmony with Peter's counsel to fellow anointed ones: "If you are calling upon the Father who judges impartially according to each one's work, conduct yourselves with fear during the time of your alien residence."—1 Peter 1:17.

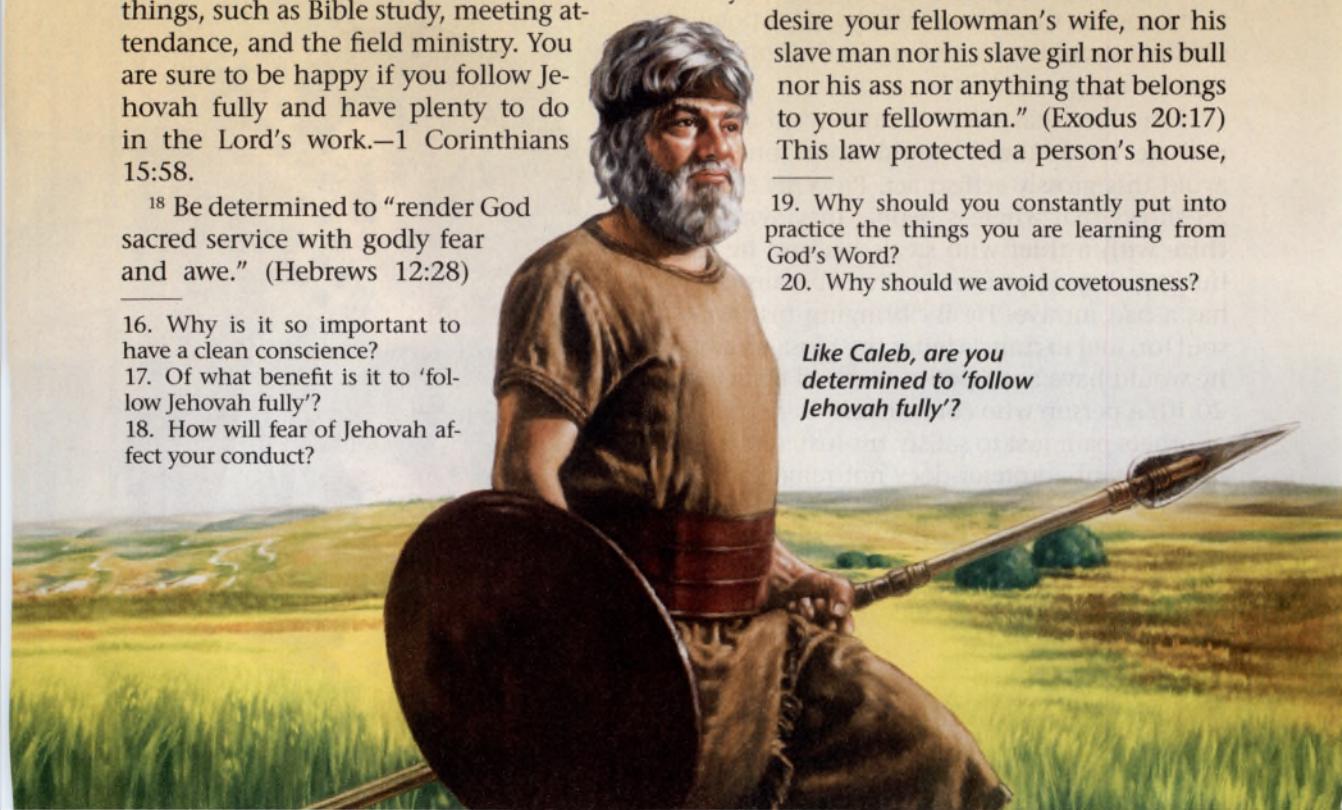
<sup>19</sup> Constantly put into practice what you are learning from God's Word. This will help you to avoid serious sin because you will prove to be among "those who through use have their perceptive powers trained to distinguish both right and wrong." (Hebrews 5:14) Instead of being careless in speech and conduct, be vigilant so that you walk as a wise person, "buying out the opportune time" in these wicked days. "Go on perceiving what the will of Jehovah is," and keep on doing it.—Ephesians 5:15-17; 2 Peter 3:17.

<sup>20</sup> Allow no place for covetousness—greedy desire for what belongs to others. One of the Ten Commandments says: "You must not desire [“covet,” *New International Version*] your fellowman's house. You must not desire your fellowman's wife, nor his slave man nor his slave girl nor his bull nor his ass nor anything that belongs to your fellowman." (Exodus 20:17) This law protected a person's house,

19. Why should you constantly put into practice the things you are learning from God's Word?

20. Why should we avoid covetousness?

*Like Caleb, are you determined to 'follow Jehovah fully'?*



wife, servants, animals, and so forth. But most important is Jesus' statement that covetousness defiles a man.—Mark 7:20-23.

<sup>21</sup> Take preventive measures so that desire does not lead to sin. The disciple James wrote: "Each one is tried by being drawn out and enticed by his own desire. Then the desire, when it has become fertile, gives birth to sin; in turn, sin, when it has been accomplished, brings forth death." (James 1:14, 15) For example, if a person has had a drinking problem in the past, he may decide not to have alcoholic beverages on hand in his home. To avoid temptation involving a member of the opposite sex, a Christian may need to change his work location or his place of employment.—Proverbs 6:23-28.

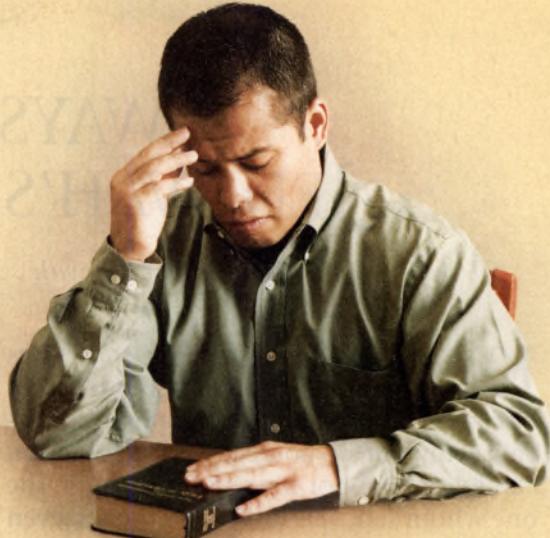
<sup>22</sup> Do not take even the first step toward sin. Flirtation and the entertaining of immoral ideas can result in fornication or adultery. Telling small lies could embolden a person to tell big ones and might lead to the sinful practice of lying. Little thefts could dull an individual's conscience to the point that he begins to steal on a larger scale. Even a slight toleration of apostate thinking might start one down the road to full-fledged apostasy.—Proverbs 11:9; Revelation 21:8.

### What if You Have Sinned?

<sup>23</sup> All humans are imperfect. (Ecclesiastes 7:20) But if you have sinned seriously, you can draw comfort from King Solomon's prayer at the inauguration of Jehovah's temple. Solomon prayed to God: "Whatever prayer, whatever request for favor there may occur on the part of any man or of all your people Israel, because they know each one his own plague and his own pain; when he actually spreads out his palms toward this house, then may

21, 22. What preventive measures might a Christian take in order to avoid sinning?

23, 24. What comfort can be drawn from 2 Chronicles 6:29, 30 and Proverbs 28:13?



*Pray regularly for help to resist temptation*

you yourself hear from the heavens, the place of your dwelling, and you must forgive and give to each one according to all his ways, because you know his heart (for you yourself alone well know the heart of the sons of mankind).”—2 Chronicles 6:29, 30.

<sup>24</sup> Yes, God knows the heart and is forgiving. Proverbs 28:13 says: "He that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy." By repentantly confessing and leaving sin, a person can receive God's mercy. Yet, if you are at a low ebb spiritually, what else can help you to remain in God's love?

### How Would You Answer?

- How can we keep ourselves in God's love?
- How does love for God and Christ help us to reject a sinful course?
- Why does real love for others deter us from engaging in sexual misconduct?
- What are some ways to avoid wrong conduct?

# ALWAYS ACCEPT JEHOVAH'S DISCIPLINE

*"The discipline of Jehovah . . . do not reject."—PROVERBS 3:11.*

KING SOLOMON of ancient Israel gives each one of us a good reason to accept discipline from God. "The discipline of Jehovah, O my son, do not reject," says Solomon, "and do not abhor his reproof, because the one whom Jehovah loves he reproves, even as a father does a son in whom he finds pleasure." (Proverbs 3:11, 12) Yes, your heavenly Father disciplines you because he loves you.

<sup>2</sup> "Discipline" refers to chastisement, correction, instruction, and education. "No discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous," wrote the apostle Paul, "yet afterward to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness." (Hebrews 12:11) Accepting and

1. Why should we accept divine discipline?
2. How is "discipline" defined, and how may a person be disciplined?

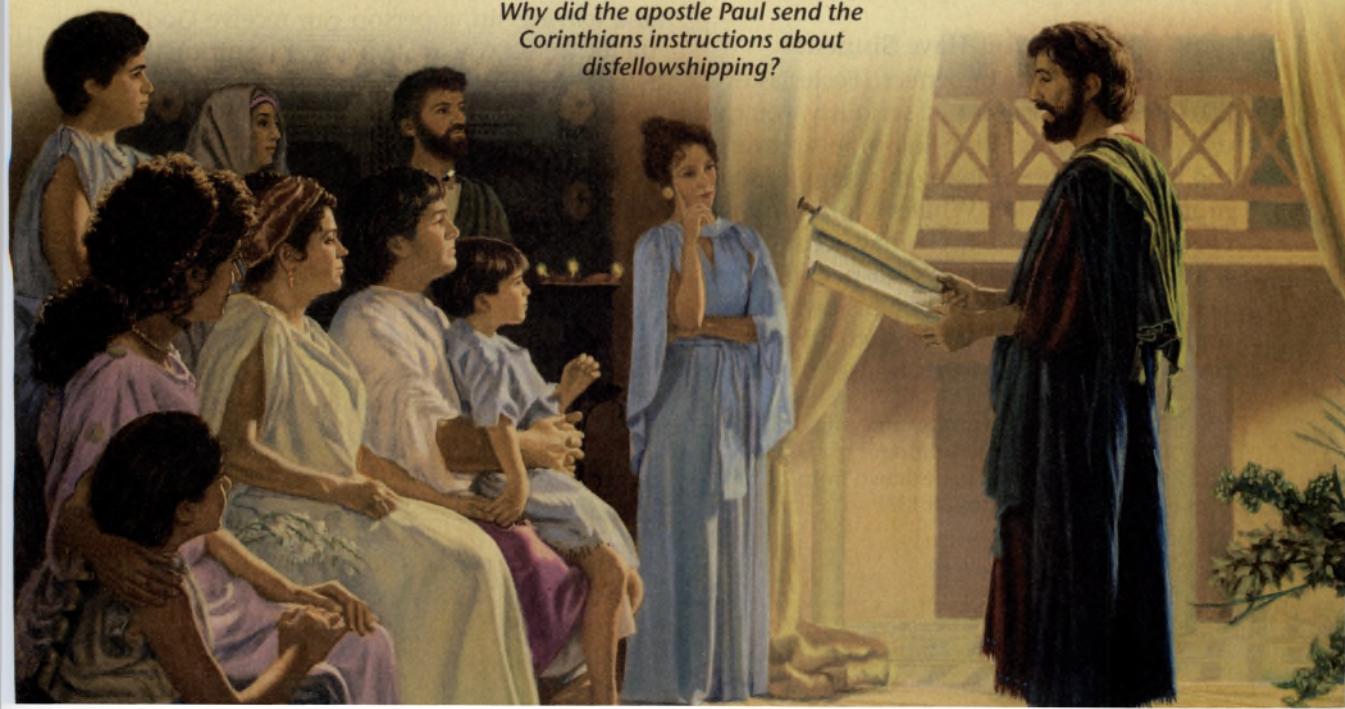
applying divine discipline can help you to pursue a righteous course and thus bring you closer to the holy God, Jehovah. (Psalm 99:5) Correction may come by way of fellow believers, through things learned at Christian meetings, and from your study of God's Word and the publications of "the faithful steward." (Luke 12:42-44) How thankful you can be when something needing adjustment is thus brought to your attention! But what discipline may be required if serious sin is committed?

## Why Some Are Disfellowshipped

<sup>3</sup> God's servants study the Bible and Christian publications. Jehovah's standards are discussed at their meetings, assemblies, and conventions. So Christians are in a position

3. When does disfellowshipping take place?

*Why did the apostle Paul send the Corinthians instructions about disfellowshipping?*



to know what Jehovah requires of them. Disfellowshipping takes place only if a member of the congregation *unrepentantly* engages in gross sin.

<sup>4</sup> Consider a Scriptural example of disfellowshipping. The congregation in Corinth tolerated "such fornication as [was] not even among the nations, that a wife a certain man [had] of his father." Paul urged the Corinthians to "hand such a man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, in order that the spirit may be saved." (1 Corinthians 5:1-5) When disfellowshipped and thus handed over to Satan, the sinner was again part of the Devil's world. (1 John 5:19) His expulsion removed an evil fleshly element from the congregation and preserved its godly "spirit," or dominant attitude.—2 Timothy 4:22; 1 Corinthians 5:11-13.

<sup>5</sup> Before a very long time had passed, Paul urged the Christians in Corinth to reinstate the wrongdoer. Why? It was so that they might not be "overreached by Satan," said the apostle. The sinner had evidently repented and cleaned up his life. (2 Corinthians 2:8-11) If the Corinthians refused to reinstate the repentant man, Satan would overreach them in that they would be as hard and unforgiving as the Devil wanted them to be. Very likely, they soon did "forgive and comfort" the penitent man.—2 Corinthians 2:5-7.

<sup>6</sup> What is accomplished by disfellowshipping? It keeps Jehovah's holy name clear of reproach and protects the fine reputation of his people. (1 Peter 1:14-16) Removing an unrepentant wrongdoer from the congregation upholds God's standards and preserves the congregation's spiritual clean-

4, 5. What Scriptural example of disfellowshipping is presented here, and why was the congregation urged to reinstate the man?

6. Disfellowshipping can accomplish what?

ness. It may also bring the unrepentant one to his senses.

### Repentance Makes a Difference

<sup>7</sup> Most who sin seriously are truly repentant and are not disfellowshipped from the congregation. Of course, genuine repentance does not necessarily come easily. Consider Israel's King David, who composed Psalm 32. That song reveals that for a time David did not confess his serious sins, likely involving Bath-sheba. The result was that anguish over his sins depleted his vigor, just as summer's dry heat saps moisture from a tree. David suffered physically and mentally, but when he 'confessed his transgressions, Jehovah pardoned him.' (Psalm 32:3-5) Then David sang: "Happy is the man to whose account Jehovah does not put error." (Psalm 32:1, 2) How wonderful it was to experience God's mercy!

<sup>8</sup> Clearly, then, a sinner must be repentant if he is to receive mercy. However, neither shame nor fear of exposure is repentance. "To repent" means "to change one's mind" with regard to bad conduct, because of regret. A repentant person has "a heart broken and crushed" and wants to 'right the wrong' if possible.—Psalm 51:17; 2 Corinthians 7:11.

<sup>9</sup> Repentance is a very important factor in connection with reinstatement into the Christian congregation. A disfellowshipped person is not automatically accepted back into the congregation after a certain amount of time has passed. Before he can be reinstated, his heart condition must undergo a great change. He must come to realize the gravity of his sin and the reproach he brought upon Jehovah and the congregation. The sinner

7. What effect did failure to confess his transgressions have on David?

8, 9. How is repentance manifested, and how important is it in connection with the reinstatement of a disfellowshipped person?

must repent, pray earnestly for forgiveness, and conform to God's righteous requirements. When requesting reinstatement, he should be able to give evidence that he has repented and is producing "works that befit repentance."—Acts 26:20.

### Why Confess Wrongdoing?

<sup>10</sup> Some who have sinned might reason: 'If I tell anyone about my sin, I may have to answer embarrassing questions and may be disfellowshipped. But if I keep quiet, that can be avoided and nobody in the congregation will ever know.' Such thinking fails to take some important factors into account. What are these?

<sup>11</sup> Jehovah is "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." Yet, he does correct his people "to the proper degree." (Exodus 34:6, 7; Jeremiah 30:11) If you were to sin seriously, how could you receive God's mercy if you tried to hide your sin? Jehovah is aware of it, and he does not merely ignore wrongdoing.—Proverbs 15:3; Habakkuk 1:13.

<sup>12</sup> If you have committed a serious sin, confession can help you to regain a good conscience. (1 Timothy 1:18-20) But failure to confess could result in a defiled conscience that could lead you into more sin. Remember that your sin is not just against another human or the congregation. It is against God. The psalmist sang: "Jehovah—in the heavens is his throne. His own eyes behold, his own beaming eyes examine the sons of men. Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one." —Psalm 11:4, 5.

10, 11. Why should we not just try to hide sin?

12, 13. What can result from trying to hide wrongdoing?

<sup>13</sup> Jehovah will not bless anyone who hides gross sin and tries to stay in the clean Christian congregation. (James 4:6) So if you have fallen into sin and want to do what is right, do not hesitate to make an honest confession. Otherwise, you will have a guilty conscience, especially when you read or hear counsel regarding such serious matters. What if Jehovah were to withdraw his spirit from you, as he did in the case of King Saul? (1 Samuel 16:14) With God's spirit removed, you could fall into even more serious sin.

### Trust Your Faithful Brothers

<sup>14</sup> So, then, what should a repentant wrongdoer do? "Let him call the older men of the congregation to him, and let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up." (James 5:14, 15) Approaching the elders is one way for a person to "produce fruit that befits repentance." (Matthew 3:8) These faithful and warm-hearted men will 'pray over him and grease him with oil in Jehovah's name.' Like soothing oil, their Bible counsel will prove to be comforting to anyone who is truly repentant.—Jeremiah 8:22.

<sup>15</sup> What a loving example was set by our Shepherd, Jehovah, when he freed the Jews from Babylonian captivity in 537 B.C.E. and when he liberated spiritual Israel from "Babylon the Great" in 1919 C.E.! (Revelation 17:3-5; Galatians 6:16) He thus fulfilled his promise: "I myself shall feed my sheep, and I myself shall make them lie down . . . The lost one I shall search for, and the dispersed one I shall bring back, and the broken one I shall

14. Why should a wrongdoer follow the counsel of James 5:14, 15?

15, 16. How do Christian elders follow the example set by God, as recorded at Ezekiel 34:15, 16?

bandage and the ailing one I shall strengthen."—Ezekiel 34:15, 16.

<sup>16</sup> Jehovah fed his figurative sheep, made them lie down in security, and searched for the lost ones. Similarly, Christian shepherds see to it that God's flock is spiritually well-fed and secure. The elders search for sheep who wander away from the congregation. Just as God 'bandaged the broken one,' overseers "bandage" sheep wounded by someone's words or by their own actions. And as God 'strengthened the ailing one,' the elders help those who have become spiritually sick, possibly because of personal wrongdoing.

### How Shepherds Provide Help

<sup>17</sup> The elders gladly comply with this counsel: "Continue showing mercy . . . , doing so with fear." (Jude 23) By falling into sexual immorality, some Christians have sinned seriously. But if they are truly repentant, they can expect merciful, loving treatment by elders eager to help them spiritually. Including himself, Paul said regarding such men: "Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy." (2 Corin-

17. Why should we not hesitate to seek the spiritual help of the elders?

*Like ancient shepherds, Christian elders "bandage" God's wounded sheep*

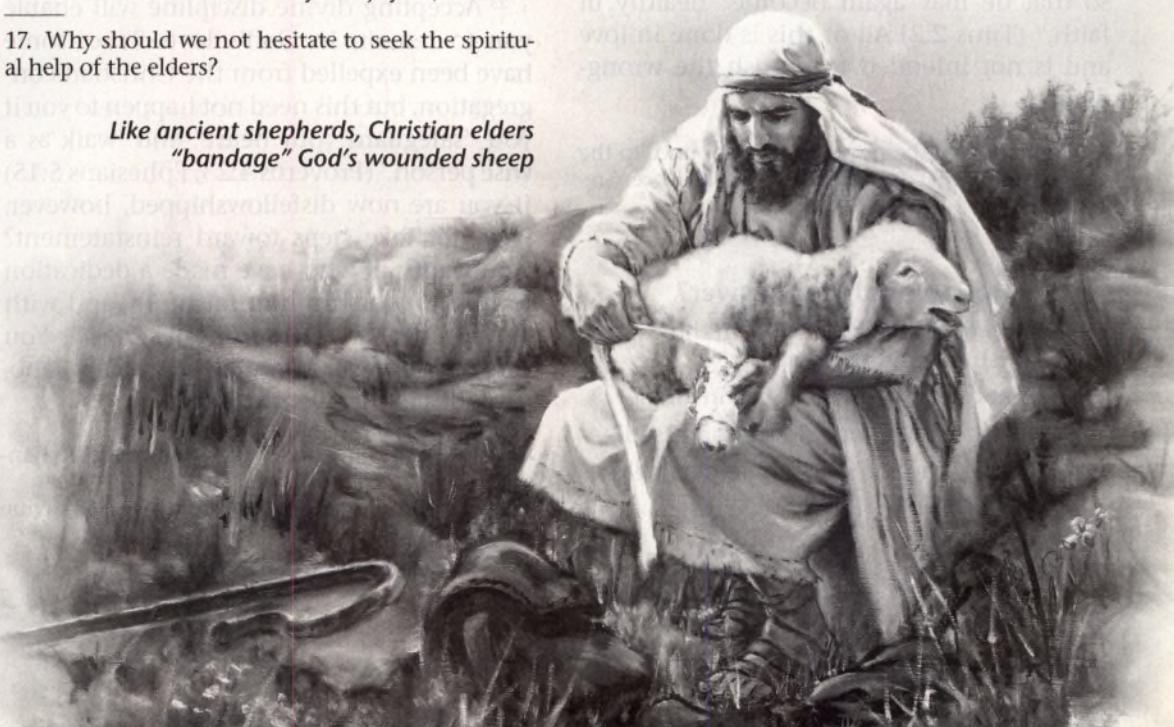
tians 1:24) Therefore, never hesitate to seek their spiritual assistance.

<sup>18</sup> If you have sinned seriously, why can you have confidence in the elders? Because they are primarily *shepherds* of God's flock. (1 Peter 5:1-4) No loving shepherd beats a docile, bleating lamb for hurting itself. When elders deal with erring fellow believers, therefore, it is a matter, not of crime and punishment, but of sin and spiritual restoration where possible. (James 5:13-20) Elders must judge with righteousness and "treat the flock with tenderness." (Acts 20:29, 30; Isaiah 32:1, 2) Like all other Christians, elders are to 'exercise justice, love kindness, and be modest in walking with God.' (Micah 6:8) Such qualities are vital when making decisions involving the life and sacred service of "the sheep of [Jehovah's] pasturage."—Psalm 100:3.

<sup>19</sup> Christian shepherds are appointed by holy spirit and seek to be led by it. If "a man takes some false step before he is aware of

18. How do elders deal with erring fellow believers?

19. With what attitude do Christian elders try to re-adjust someone?



it"—as though caught off guard—spiritually qualified men try to "readjust such a man in a spirit of mildness." (Galatians 6:1; Acts 20:28) With mildness yet firmness for divine standards, the elders try to readjust his thinking, just as a considerate doctor sets a broken limb carefully, to avoid causing needless pain and yet care for the problem. (Colossians 3:12) Since any extending of mercy would be based on prayer and the Scriptures, the elders' decision would reflect God's view of matters.—Matthew 18:18.

<sup>20</sup> If a sin is widely known or will undoubtedly become known, an announcement to the congregation would likely be appropriate in order to protect its reputation. An announcement will also be made if the congregation needs to be informed. During the time that an individual who has been judicially reprobated is healing spiritually, he might be likened to a person recovering from an injury, which temporarily limits his activity. For a time, very likely it would be beneficial for the repentant one to listen rather than comment at meetings. The elders may arrange for someone to have a Bible study with him to strengthen him where he is weak so that he may again become "healthy in faith." (Titus 2:2) All of this is done in love and is not intended to punish the wrongdoer.

20. When may it be necessary to announce to the congregation that a certain person has been reprobated?

### How Would You Answer?

- Why are some expelled from the Christian congregation?
- What does true repentance involve?
- Why should serious sin be confessed?
- In what ways do Christian elders help repentant wrongdoers?

<sup>21</sup> Elders can provide spiritual help in various ways. For instance, suppose a brother who in the past had a drinking problem drank too much once or twice when home alone. Or perhaps one who long ago abandoned the use of tobacco smoked privately a time or two in a moment of weakness. Although he has prayed and believes that God has forgiven him, he should seek the help of an elder so that such a sin does not become habitual. An elder or two might handle the situation. However, the elder(s) would inform the presiding overseer, as there may be other factors involved.

### Keep On Accepting Divine Discipline

<sup>22</sup> To enjoy God's approval, each Christian must pay attention to Jehovah's discipline. (1 Timothy 5:20) So take to heart any correction received when you study the Scriptures and Christian publications or when you hear counsel presented at meetings, assemblies, and conventions of Jehovah's people. Remain vigilant with regard to the doing of Jehovah's will. Then divine discipline will help you to maintain a spiritual bulwark—a strong wall-like defense against sin.

<sup>23</sup> Accepting divine discipline will enable you to remain in God's love. True, some have been expelled from the Christian congregation, but this need not happen to you if you "safeguard your heart" and 'walk as a wise person.' (Proverbs 4:23; Ephesians 5:15) If you are now disfellowshipped, however, why not take steps toward reinstatement? God wants all who have made a dedication to him to worship him faithfully and with "joy of heart." (Deuteronomy 28:47) You can do so forever if you always accept Jehovah's discipline.—Psalm 100:2.

21. How may some cases of wrongdoing be handled?

22, 23. Why should you continue to accept divine discipline?

# Teach Your Children to Give Comments

PERLA from Mexico remembers that when she was a little girl, her mother helped her to prepare brief comments for the *Watchtower Study*. Now Perla has a five-year-old son. How does she help him? "First I must prepare. When I do so, I look for a paragraph that my son can understand, one that he can explain in his own words. Then we concentrate on what he calls 'my paragraph.' I ask him to explain it using day-to-day examples. Then we rehearse the comment several times. We use an object the size of a microphone so that he knows how to hold it when he comments. I am very happy that not one meeting goes by without his commenting or raising his hand. Most of the time, he goes up to the conductor before the meeting begins and tells him which paragraph is his."



Jens, an elder serving in a Hindi-speaking group, has two sons, two and four years old. When he and his wife prepare for the meeting with their children, they use a method Jens learned from his parents. He says: "We decide which parts of the material the children can understand. We then try to give them an overview of the particular subject or the gist of the article, after which we ask them the questions we have in mind for them to answer at the meeting. Oftentimes we are surprised at the answers they give in quite a natural way. How they express themselves really reflects what they understand. As a result, their answers become a real praise to Jehovah and a personal expression of their faith."





# DID JUDAH REMAIN DESOLATE?

THE Bible foretold that the land of the kingdom of Judah would be devastated by the Babylonians and would remain desolate until the return of the Jewish exiles. (Jeremiah 25:8-11) The strongest reason to believe that this prophecy came true is the inspired historical account recorded some 75 years after the first group of exiles returned to their homeland. It states that the king of Babylon "carried off those remaining from the sword captive to Babylon, and they came to be servants to him and his sons until the royalty of Persia began to reign." And regarding the land, it is reported: "All the days of lying desolated it kept sabbath." (2 Chronicles 36:20, 21) Is there any archaeological evidence to support this?

In the journal *Biblical Archaeology Review*, Ephraim Stern, professor of Palestinian archaeology at Hebrew University, points out: "The Assyrians and Babylonians both ravaged large parts of ancient Israel, yet the archaeological evidence from the aftermath of their respective conquests tells two very different stories." He explains: "While the

Assyrians left a clear imprint of their presence in Palestine, there is a strange gap after the Babylonian destruction. . . . We find no evidence of occupation until the Persian period . . . There is a complete gap in evidence suggesting occupation. In all that time, not a single town destroyed by the Babylonians was resettled."

Professor Lawrence E. Stager of Harvard University agrees. "Throughout Philistia, and later throughout Judah," he says, the Babylonian king's "scorched-earth policy created a veritable wasteland west of the Jordan River." Stager adds: "Only with Cyrus the Great, the Persian successor to the Babylonians, does the archaeological record begin again . . . in Jerusalem and in Judah, where many Jewish exiles returned to their homeland."

Yes, Jehovah's word concerning Judah's lying desolate was fulfilled. What Jehovah God foretells always comes true. (Isaiah 55:10, 11) We can put our complete confidence in Jehovah and in the promises recorded in his Word, the Bible.—2 Timothy 3:16.