

# THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 15, 2006

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



**YOU CAN BE HAPPY  
DESPITE PROBLEMS**

# 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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**Y**ES, you might well ask yourself, 'How happy am I?' Social scientists are trying hard to find out how you or others would answer, but their task is not an easy one. Measuring the happiness of individuals might be likened to attempting to quantify the love that a man has for his wife or the amount of grief that is caused by a death in the family. Emotions do not lend themselves to precise measurement. However, scientists do recognize a basic truth: All humans have the capacity for being happy.

Despite that built-in capacity for happiness, serious problems have brought a plague of unhappiness. Consider this example: In some cities, AIDS victims have filled the cemeteries. Authorities are reopening older graves in order to bury those recently deceased. In parts of Africa, coffinmaking is a major means of employment. And no matter where you live, you have seen that there are few smiles among those suffering from serious disease and among those who have lost relatives and friends.

What about more prosperous places? A sudden turn of events can snatch financial security from the unprepared. In the United States, many retired people have had to go back to work because they lost pension benefits. Medical bills often consume all the savings that a family has. "You see these people come in with huge costs and health problems and it breaks your heart," says one legal adviser. "A lot of times you have to tell them, 'You're going to lose your home.'" But what about those who have no

# HOW HAPPY Are You?

financial worries? Might unhappiness affect them too?

Some individuals are like the famous composer Richard Rodgers. It was said of him: "Few men have given so much pleasure to so many people." Even though his songs contributed to others' pleasure, he suffered from chronic depression. He reached the twin goals to which many aspire—money and fame—but what about happiness? One biographer observed: "[Rodgers] became extraordinarily successful in his work, enjoyed a privileged life, and shared two Pulitzer Prizes. He was also unhappy and depressed much of the time."

As you may have observed, looking to wealth for happiness is often deceptive. An investment reporter for *The Globe and Mail* of Toronto, Canada, described the "isolation and emptiness" that many well-to-do people endure. According to one financial adviser, when wealthy parents shower their children with money and the things it can buy, "often the seeds are being planted for misery later on."



## Any Solid Basis for Happiness?

To flourish, a flowering plant needs good soil, water, and a proper climate. Likewise, researchers recognize that certain conditions contribute to happiness. These include physical well-being; good work; adequate food, shelter, and clothing; fulfillment of creative desires; and true friends.

You would probably not dispute the effect those conditions have on a person's prospects for being happy. But there is a



*Like a flowering plant, happiness needs proper conditions in order to grow*

more important factor. It is knowledge of "the happy God," whose name is Jehovah. (1 Timothy 1:11) How does that knowledge help? Jehovah is our Creator, and he gave us the capacity for being happy. Logically, he knows what can make us truly happy. The following

article describes his way of directing people in any location or circumstance to a life of enduring happiness.

to "the happy God," Jehovah. (1 Timothy 1:11) In the Bible, God provides guidance so that your pursuit of happiness does not lead to a dead-end of dis-

appointment. Jehovah can help you to overcome common causes for sadness. As an example, consider the comfort he offers to you when someone you love dies.

### When a Loved One Dies

Can anything good be said about death? Death tears parents from children and children from parents. It separates close friends and brings insecurity to close-knit communities. When death strikes, a happy family may be overwhelmed with sadness.

No one needs to tell you that death is a tragedy. Some people, however, deny that reality and paint death as a blessing. Note what happened after Hurricane Katrina struck the Gulf of Mexico in Au-

"THE pursuit of Happiness" is the right of all men. That was the view of the framers of the Declaration of Independence of the United States of America. But *pursuing* a goal is not the same as *reaching* it. While many young people pursue careers in entertainment and sports, how many do you know who have actually attained the success they so desired? "You probably won't make it," says one famous singer familiar with the struggle to become a successful musician.

If you have felt that way about finding happiness, there is good reason for you to take heart. If you pursue happiness in the right way, you will attain it. Why can that be said? The preceding article made reference

gust 2005. At the funeral of one victim, the minister said: "Katrina did not kill him. God called him home." At another time, a well-meaning hospital clerk told a daughter not to worry, for God had taken her mother to heaven. The daughter cried: "Why, why did he have to take her from me?"

Clearly, such mistaken notions about the dead often fail to console the bereaved. Why? Because these ideas do not represent the truth about death. Even worse, they portray God as snatching loved ones from family and friends by horrific, painful means. Instead of being a source of comfort, God is made to appear as a villain in the tragedy of death. But God's Word states the truth about death.

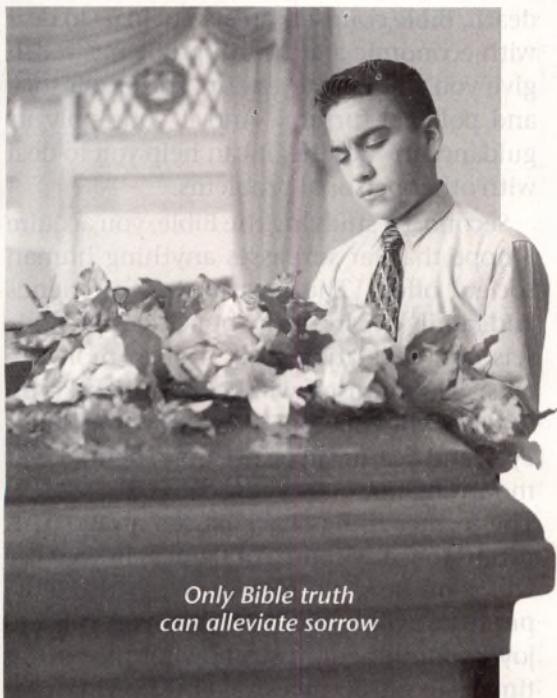
The Bible calls death an enemy. It likens death to a king who has ruled mankind. (Romans 5:17; 1 Corinthians 15:26) Death is

an adversary of such power that no human can resist it, and every loved one who dies is just another of death's uncountable victims. This Bible truth well accounts for the grief and helplessness we feel when a loved one dies. It confirms that those feelings are normal. Nevertheless, does God use the enemy death to carry off our loved ones to heaven? Let the Bible answer that question.

Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10 states: "As for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all . . . There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going." What is Sheol? It is the common grave of mankind to which humans go when they die. In the grave the dead are completely inactive, without movement, sensation, or thought of any kind. They are in what can be likened to a deep sleep.\* The Bible thus makes it clear that God does not take our dead loved ones to be with him in heaven. The effects of death have left them lifeless in the grave.

Jesus confirmed this truth after his friend Lazarus died. Jesus likened death to sleep. If Lazarus had gone to heaven to be with Almighty God, Jesus' bringing him back to earth eventually to die again would have been no kindness. The inspired account states that at the burial place, Jesus said in a loud voice: "Lazarus, come on out!" The Bible continues: "The man that had been dead came out." Lazarus began life anew. Jesus knew that Lazarus had never left the earth. He had been lying lifeless in a tomb.  
—John 11:11-14, 34, 38-44.

This incident recorded in the Bible helps us to understand that death is not a means that God uses to transfer humans from earth to heaven. We can thus be drawn to God,



*Only Bible truth  
can alleviate sorrow*

\* The *Encyclopædia Britannica* (2003) describes Sheol as "a place of neither pain nor pleasure, punishment nor reward."

knowing that he has not caused our sadness. We can also trust that he fully grasps the sorrow and damage that the enemy death causes us. And the Bible truth about the condition of the dead proves that the dead do not suffer in hellfire or purgatory but are lifeless in the grave. Thus, the memory of our loved ones need not be stained with revulsion toward God or with fear of the unknown. Moreover, in the Bible, Jehovah offers us additional comfort.

### Hope Leads to Happiness

The scriptures we have discussed point to hope, an essential part of true happiness. The word "hope" as used in the Bible implies the confident expectation of good. To see how hope can lead to happiness now, let us return to the account of Jesus' resurrection of Lazarus.

There are at least two reasons why Jesus performed that miracle. One was to remove the sadness of Martha, Mary, and grieving friends. Once again, they could enjoy the company of their loved one. But Jesus mentioned to Martha a second, more important, reason: "Did I not tell you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?" (*John 11:40*) *The New Testament in Modern English*, by J. B. Phillips, renders the last phrase "the wonder of what God can do." In giving life back to Lazarus, Jesus gave a preview of what Jehovah God can and will do in the future. Here are more details about this "wonder of what God can do."

At John 5:28, 29, Jesus said: "Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out." This means that all the dead in Sheol, our loved ones included, will come back to life. Acts 24:15 reveals more about this grand event, stating: "There is going to be a resurrection of both

the righteous and the unrighteous." So even "the unrighteous," many individuals who did not know and serve Jehovah, will get a future opportunity to gain God's favor.

Where will this resurrection occur? Psalm 37:29 states: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." Think of what that means! Families and friends torn apart by death will again meet here on earth. As you think of enjoying good times with those whose companionship you once treasured, it is reasonable for your heart to swell with happiness.

### Jehovah Wants You to Be Happy

We have considered two ways in which Jehovah can bolster your happiness despite your problems. First, through the Bible, he provides knowledge and guidance to help you face adversities successfully. Besides helping us cope with the sorrow of death, Bible counsel can also help us to deal with economic and health problems. It can give you strength to endure social injustice and political turmoil. And if you apply its guidance in your life, it can help you to deal with other personal problems.

Second, by studying the Bible, you acquire a hope that far surpasses anything human society offers. The resurrection of friends and family is part of the hope that the Bible sets out. Revelation 21:3, 4 gives more details: "God himself will be with [mankind]. And he will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away." This means that any source of sadness in your life will soon be gone forever. What the Bible promises will come true, and you can enjoy its fulfillment. Just knowing that better times are ahead gives relief. Knowing that

you do not face suffering indefinitely after death is a reason to be happy.

To illustrate: Several years ago Maria watched her husband die a painful death from cancer. Her tears had scarcely dried when financial problems forced her and her three daughters out of the family home. Two years later, Maria discovered that she had cancer. She has had two major operations and deals with severe pain every day. Despite these problems, she is so positive in her thinking that she is moved to encourage other people. How does she maintain her happiness?

Maria says: "When I have a problem, I try not to think too much about myself. I avoid asking questions like these: 'Why me? Why do I have to suffer like this? Why did I have to get sick?' Negative thinking uses up energy. Instead, I direct my energy toward serving Jehovah and helping others. That brings me happiness."

*The Bible's hope of the resurrection can contribute to happiness*

What role does hope play in Maria's life? She has her heart set on the future when Jehovah will take away illness and other problems from mankind. When she goes to the hospital for treatment, she shares that hope with other cancer patients, who may be despondent. How important is hope to Maria? She says: "I often think of what the Bible says at Hebrews 6:19, where Paul describes hope as an anchor for the soul. Without that anchor, you will drift like a boat loose in a storm. But if you are tied to that anchor, you will be secure in spite of the stormy problems you face." That "hope of the everlasting life which God, who cannot lie, promised" helps Maria to remain happy. It can do the same for you.—Titus 1:2.

Through a study of the Bible, you can find true happiness despite your problems. You may, though, have questions about the practical aspects of this. Jehovah's Witnesses will be pleased to show you the Scriptural answers that you need to know

if you are to be truly happy. As you await fulfillment of the hope Jehovah offers, you can be among those described in this way: "They shall obtain joy and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away."—Isaiah 35:

10, King James Version.





# Growth Among UGANDA'S Diverse People

**U**GANDA, set between two arms of East Africa's Great Rift Valley and astride the equator, is blessed with remarkable beauty. It enjoys physical diversity, rich vegetation, and interesting animal life. Situated on the great African high plateau, it has a moderate climate and a fascinating landscape of hills that continue for hundreds of miles.

Few countries range from glacial to tropical within a small area, but Uganda does. It stretches from the snowcapped peaks of the Mountains of the Moon, the Ruwenzori Mountains, in the west to the semiarid country in the east. You can find on its plains elephants, buffalo, and lions. The mountains and dense forests are home to gorillas, chimpanzees, and over 1,000 species of birds. Much of the African continent struggles with drought and famine, but Uganda is blessed with rivers and lakes, such as Victoria, the world's second-largest freshwater lake.

Lake Victoria's northern outlet opens into the Nile River. No wonder Winston Churchill referred to this land as "the pearl of Africa"!

## "The Pearl" Shines Today

Uganda's main attraction, however, is its people-friendly, hospitable, and diverse. This predominantly "Christian" country can be described as a melting pot of numerous ethnic groups and cultures. Even today, those diverse people can be distinguished by their traditions and dress.

Lately, an increasing number of Ugandans are responding to the good news of the Bible regarding the time when lasting peace will prevail earth wide. (Psalm 37:11; Revelation 21:4) It is a challenge to bring this message to all, in a country that is about the same size as Great Britain.

From a small beginning when the first baptism of a local resident as a dedicated Witness of Jehovah took place in Lake Victoria in

Background: © Uganda Tourist Board

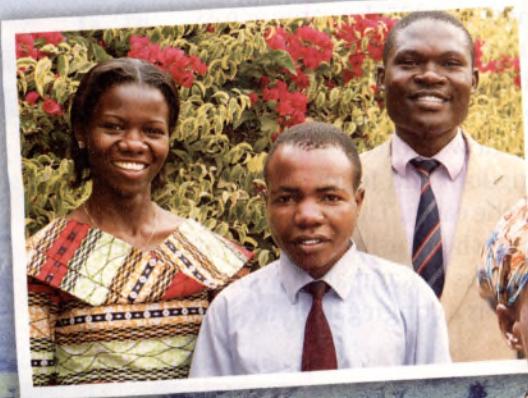


1955, "the little one" did finally become a thousand in 1992. Ever since, there has been continued growth. This is in harmony with God's reassuring words: "I myself, Jehovah, shall speed it up in its own time."—Isaiah 60:22.

### Breaking Language Barriers

English is the official language and is widely used, especially in education, yet it is not the native language of most Ugandans. Thus, in trying to reach people with the good news, Jehovah's Witnesses also give consideration to other major languages. This has proved necessary because over 80 percent of the country's 25 million people live in rural areas or small towns, where people depend to a great extent on their mother tongue for daily communication. Reaching these language groups and satisfying the people's spiritual needs requires great effort.

*Three of the many zealous pioneer ministers*



Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses have endeavored to meet these needs by witnessing to the people in their own tongue and by preparing Bible literature in a variety of languages. At the branch office in the capital, Kampala, translation teams serve four language groups: Acholi, Lhukonzo, Lugaanda, and Runyankore. Furthermore, Christian assemblies held in various languages throughout the country have had excellent attendances, more than twice the number of Jehovah's Witnesses. This clearly indicates that efforts to reach various language groups are contributing to rapid spiritual growth. But this is not all.

### Pioneers Spearhead the Work

Congregations gladly support yearly campaigns of about three months, during which isolated territories are being reached. (Acts 16:9) An increasing number of zealous young pioneers, or full-time evangelizers, spearhead this work. They travel to remote areas where, in some instances, the good news has never before been heard.

Two Witnesses were assigned as special pioneers for a period of three months to Bushenyi, a small town in western Uganda.



They joined the only Witness of Jehovah in that area in preaching and organizing Christian meetings. Within a month, the two pioneers were conducting regular Bible discussions with 40 individuals, 17 of whom started to attend the meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. The pioneers relate: "Some with whom we had left the brochure *What Does God Require of Us?*\* came to our home some days later with several pages on which they had written down the answers to the questions found in the brochure. They wanted to know if their answers were correct." Today, there is a congregation with its own Kingdom Hall in that town.



Patrick

Two pioneers traveled to a territory in western Uganda where the good news had not been preached before. They wrote: "People are really thirsting for Bible truth. During the three months we have been here, we have been able to start and conduct 86 Bible studies." It was not long before a group of Witnesses was formally established in that area.

### Other Zealous Workers in the Field

Among the zealous pioneers are some

\* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

who have served for a number of years. Before becoming one of Jehovah's Witnesses, Patrick played the clarinet in the air-force band of Ugandan ruler Idi Amin. Six months after Patrick's baptism in 1983, he joined the ranks of full-time ministers. Today he is a traveling overseer, visiting and encouraging congregations.



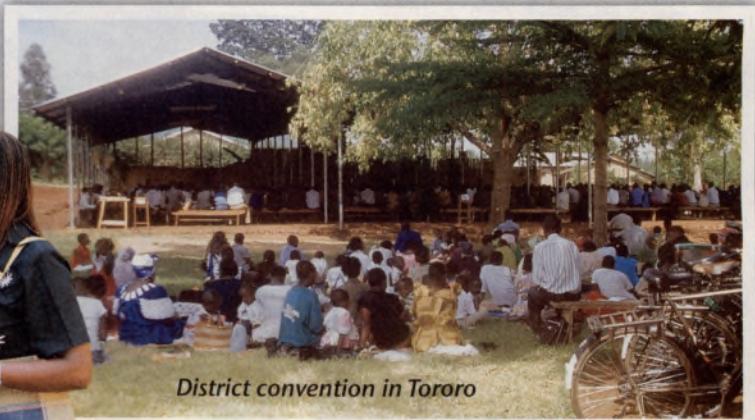
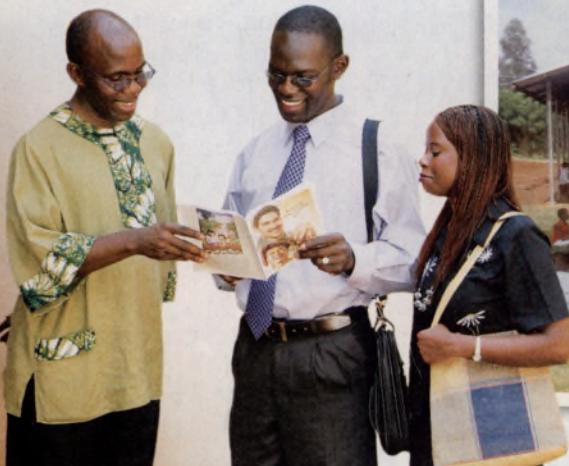
Margaret

Margaret was baptized in 1962. Despite being in her late 70's and having a hip condition that limits her mobility, she spends some 70 hours a month sharing the Bible-based hope with her neighbors. She displays the literature on a bench outside her home and strikes up conversations with any passersby who would like to listen to the good news about a peaceful new world.

Simon, a farmer from eastern Uganda, had been searching for the truth for 16 years when, in 1995, he came across some literature published by Jehovah's Witnesses. What he read gave him the desire to know more about God's Kingdom and Jehovah's wonderful purpose for the earth. There were no Witnesses in Kamuli where he lived, so Simon traveled about 85 miles to Kampala to look for them. Today, there is a congregation in his village.



Simon



District convention in Tororo



### "We Are Here to Stay"

As is true in other areas in Africa, many people expect a religious group to have a proper place of worship. This seemed to pose an insurmountable problem for some congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses, for they lacked the financial resources to construct a suitable Kingdom Hall. Words cannot describe the gratitude of the brothers when, in late 1999, an accelerated program for constructing Kingdom Halls was instituted worldwide. During the next five years, 40 new Kingdom Halls were completed in Uganda. Today, almost all congregations have their own modest but presentable Kingdom Hall. The message conveyed to local communities from such construction activity is, "We are here to stay." This has contributed to the increase.

A small congregation in northern Uganda used to hold meetings under some densely leaved mango trees. When a plot of land was obtained, things moved ahead rapidly. The brothers on the construction crew, working with the local Witnesses, started to build a Kingdom Hall. A former prominent politician in the area was impressed by the work. He offered the use of his garage for their meetings until the Kingdom Hall was finished. He also accepted a Bible study with one of the construction volunteers. Now he is a zealous baptized publisher, happy to worship Jehovah in that beautiful new Kingdom Hall!

At a Kingdom Hall building project in the southeastern part of the country, a local mason was so moved by the spirit of friendliness, love, and cooperation he observed

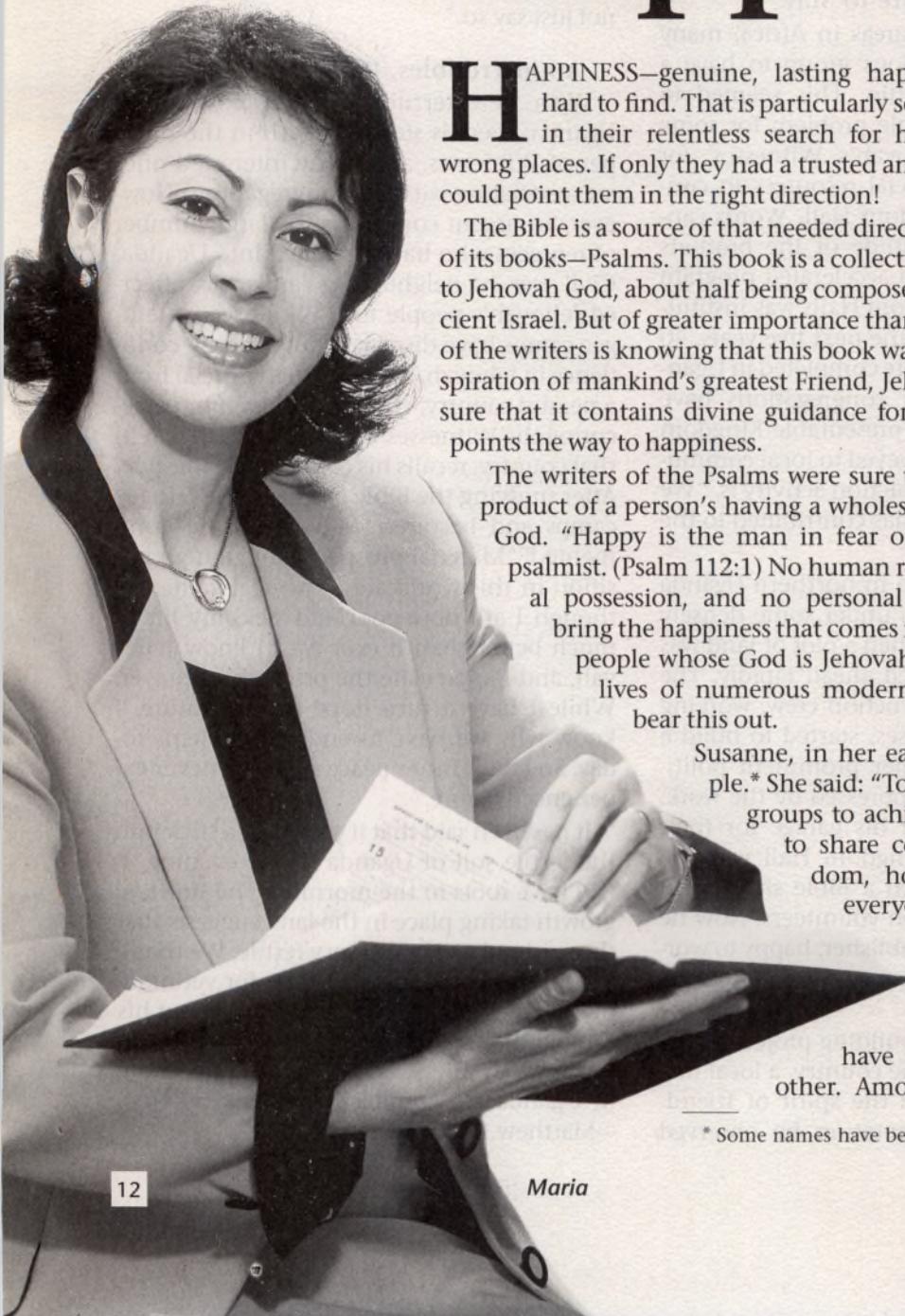
among the brothers that he volunteered to help with the work. Toward the end of the project, he even worked an entire night so that the brothers could have the Kingdom Hall ready for dedication the following morning. He commented: "You are the only ones who truly love one another, not just say so."

### Amid Troubles, Promising Growth

With new territories being covered in Uganda, there is steady growth in the number of Witnesses, and many interested ones are associating with the congregations. However, an urgent concern is the large number of refugees who have streamed into Uganda. Civil war in neighboring lands has affected Jehovah's people too. Witnesses in refugee camps have displayed outstanding confidence in Jehovah. A former high official from a nearby country, who once shared in persecuting the Witnesses when there was a ban in that country, recalls his comfortable lifestyle. After studying the Bible in one of the refugee camps and becoming a Witness, he commented: "Material prosperity and a high position in this world are of no real value. Although I am now poor and sick, my life is much better than it ever was. I know Jehovah, and I appreciate the privilege of prayer. While I have a firm hope for the future, I know why we have to endure problems today. So I have inner peace such as I never experienced before."

It has been said that if you drive a stick into the fertile soil of Uganda in the evening, it will have roots in the morning. The spiritual growth taking place in the land suggests that the spiritual soil is also very fertile. We thank Jehovah God for allowing time for yet more of Uganda's diverse people to learn about his Kingdom. Jesus likened its preciousness to a "pearl of high value." More and more in Uganda are coming to understand that.  
—Matthew 13:45, 46.

# Yes, You Can Find Happiness



**H**APPINESS—genuine, lasting happiness—is sometimes hard to find. That is particularly so because many people in their relentless search for happiness look in the wrong places. If only they had a trusted and qualified friend who could point them in the right direction!

The Bible is a source of that needed direction. Consider just one of its books—Psalms. This book is a collection of 150 sacred songs to Jehovah God, about half being composed by King David of ancient Israel. But of greater importance than knowing the identity of the writers is knowing that this book was written under the inspiration of mankind's greatest Friend, Jehovah. We can thus be sure that it contains divine guidance for our good and that it points the way to happiness.

The writers of the Psalms were sure that happiness is a by-product of a person's having a wholesome relationship with God. "Happy is the man in fear of Jehovah," wrote the psalmist. (Psalm 112:1) No human relationship, no material possession, and no personal accomplishment can bring the happiness that comes from belonging to "the people whose God is Jehovah." (Psalm 144:15) The lives of numerous modern-day servants of God bear this out.

Susanne, in her early 40's, is one example.\* She said: "Today, many join certain groups to achieve common goals or to share common interests. Seldom, however, do they view everyone in the group as a friend. With Jehovah's people, it is different. Our love for Jehovah makes us have affection for one another. Among God's people, we

\* Some names have been changed.

are at home, regardless of where we happen to be at the moment. This unity enriches our life enormously. Who else can lay claim to having friends from totally different social groups and backgrounds and of the widest variety of nationalities? With all my heart, I can say that belonging to Jehovah's people is what results in happiness."

Maree, born in Scotland, also learned that a fine relationship with Jehovah is vital if one is to find happiness. "Before learning Bible truth," she related, "I enjoyed watching horror movies. But at night I couldn't get to sleep without holding a cross in my hand to ward off ghosts and vampires, which many of the films were about. Once I learned the truth, however, and stopped watching such films, my relationship with Jehovah made it possible for me to go to bed without fear, happy to serve a God more powerful than demons or imagined vampires."

### Trusting in Jehovah Leads to Happiness

We have no reason to doubt the Creator's almighty and his limitless wisdom. Knowing that he could have complete confidence in Jehovah and that he could take refuge in Him, David wrote: "Happy is the able-bodied man that has put Jehovah as his trust."—Psalm 40:4.

Maria said: "My experience in Spain and elsewhere has been that when we do things Jehovah's way, even though our feelings and emotions may incline us to do otherwise, we get the best possible results. This makes for happiness because Jehovah's way is always the best."

Andreas, a Christian elder who has served in several European lands, also knows from



*Maree*

personal experience that we can put our trust in Jehovah. He said: "My older brother, who does not share my faith, strongly influenced me during my youth, encouraging me to pursue a financially rewarding career. He was extremely disappointed when I took up the ministry full-time and did not rely on the so-called security provided by secular pension plans. During my full-time service, I have

never been in need, and I have experienced blessings of which others can only dream."

In 1993, Felix was invited to help enlarge the facilities of the branch office of Jehovah's Witnesses in Selters, Germany. Once the work was finished, he was invited to

*Susanne and Andreas*



become a permanent part of the Bethel family there. His reaction? "I accepted the invitation with certain reservations. But now I have been here for almost ten years, and I am convinced that Jehovah answered my prayers. He knows what is best for me. By placing complete confidence in him and letting him direct me, I give him an opportunity to show me what he wants me to do."

Susanne, mentioned earlier, wanted to serve as a full-time minister, a pioneer, but she had difficulty finding a part-time job. After waiting a year for something to turn up, she acted with trust in Jehovah. She related: "I turned in my application for regular pioneering. I had saved enough to pay my normal expenses for about a month. And what a dramatic month it turned out to be! My ministry was a source of great joy, but one job interview after another failed. As Jehovah had promised, however, he did not desert me. On the *last* day of the month, I was able to sign a job contract. Now I knew that I really could trust in Jehovah! This first experience in full-time service has contributed to a rewarding and happy life."

### Accepting Divine Counsel Adds to Happiness

King David made some serious mistakes. At times, he needed wise counsel. Are we as willing to accept counsel and instruction as David was?

Aida, from France, once realized that she had made a serious mistake. She recounted: "My main concern was to restore my relationship with Jehovah. Nothing else mattered." She approached Christian elders for help. Having served for over 14 years in the full-time ministry, she now says: "How gratifying to know that Jehovah forgave my error!"

Being receptive to divine counsel can prevent us from making a mistake in the first place. Judith explained: "At the age of 20, I

became infatuated with a German business associate who tried his best to impress me. He was respected, had a brilliant career, and was already married! I realized that I had to choose between obeying Jehovah's laws and completely turning my back on Him. I confided in my parents. My father did not mince his words in reminding me of what Jehovah expected of me. He spoke to me in no uncertain terms—just what I needed! Even so, my heart sought a loophole. For weeks my mother spent evenings talking to me about how important and lifesaving God's laws are. I am so grateful that my heart was gradually drawn to Jehovah. To be disciplined and taught by him has brought me great happiness—many rewarding years in the full-time ministry and a fine Christian mate, who loves me and loves Jehovah wholeheartedly."

Clearly, such experiences underscore David's words: "Happy is the one whose revolt is pardoned, whose sin is covered. Happy is the man to whose account Jehovah does not put error."—Psalm 32:1, 2.

### Happiness From Showing Consideration to Others

"Happy is anyone acting with consideration toward the lowly one," David wrote. He continued: "In the day of calamity Jehovah will provide escape for him. Jehovah himself will guard him and preserve him alive. He will be pronounced happy." (Psalm 41:1, 2) The loving consideration that David showed toward Mephibosheth, the lame son of David's beloved friend Jonathan, is an example of the right attitude toward the lowly one.—2 Samuel 9:1-13.

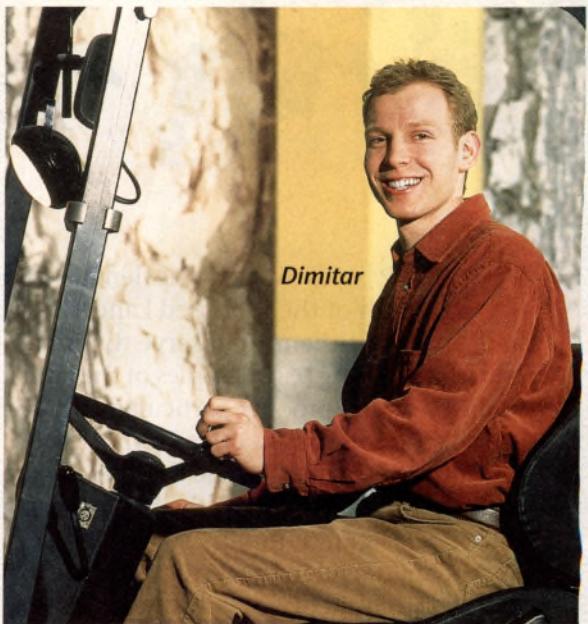
Marlies, who has been a missionary for 47 years, is privileged to preach among people who had to flee from crisis areas of Africa, Asia, and Eastern Europe. She said: "They have a variety of problems and generally feel

that they are not fully accepted, that they, in fact, are discriminated against. Helping such people always brings happiness."

Marina, in her early 40's, wrote: "Being single, I know what it means when others are there for you. This moves me to encourage people by telephoning them or writing them letters. Many have expressed their appreciation. Helping others brings me joy."

Dimitar, who is in his mid-20's, said: "My mother raised me by herself. When I was a youngster, I was happy to have a Congregation Book Study overseer who took me along every week to train me in the ministry. I am still grateful for his persistence. I know it was not always easy to motivate me." Out of gratitude for the help he once received, Dimitar now aids others: "I try to take a young person and also an older one along with me in the field ministry at least once a month."

The book of Psalms also mentions other things that make for happiness. One is the importance of relying on Jehovah's strength rather than on oneself: "Happy are



Dimitar

the men whose strength is in [Jehovah]."  
—Psalm 84:5.

Corinna can relate to this. She moved to a country where there was a great need in the ministry. "I encountered a new language, a new culture, and a new way of thinking. I felt as though I were on a different planet. I choked up at the thought of preaching in a strange environment. I asked Jehovah for help, and it was in his strength that I was able to preach all day in isolated territory. In time, doing so seemed to be the most natural thing in the world. I started many Bible studies, and I am still benefiting from this experience. I learned that in Jehovah's strength, we can overcome even seemingly insurmountable obstacles."

Yes, various factors contribute to happiness, such as cultivating friendship with God and with his people, trusting in Jehovah implicitly, accepting his divine counsel, and being considerate of others. By walking in Jehovah's ways and obeying his laws, we can happily bask in his favor.—Psalm 89:15; 106:3; 112:1; 128:1, 2.



Corinna



# "Take Care of This Vine"!

THE 12 spies walked the length and breadth of the Promised Land. Moses had told them to observe the inhabitants and to bring back samples of the land's produce. Which product particularly attracted their attention? Not far from Hebron, they found a vineyard where the grapes were so large that it took two of the spies to carry just one cluster. So impressive was the crop that the spies named the fertile area "the torrent valley of Eshcol," or "Cluster of Grapes."

—Numbers 13:21-24; footnote.

During the 19th century, a visitor to Palestine reported: "Eshcol, or Grape valley, . . . is still clad with vines, and the grapes are the finest and largest in Palestine." Although the vines of Eshcol excelled, much of Palestine produced fine grapes in Bible

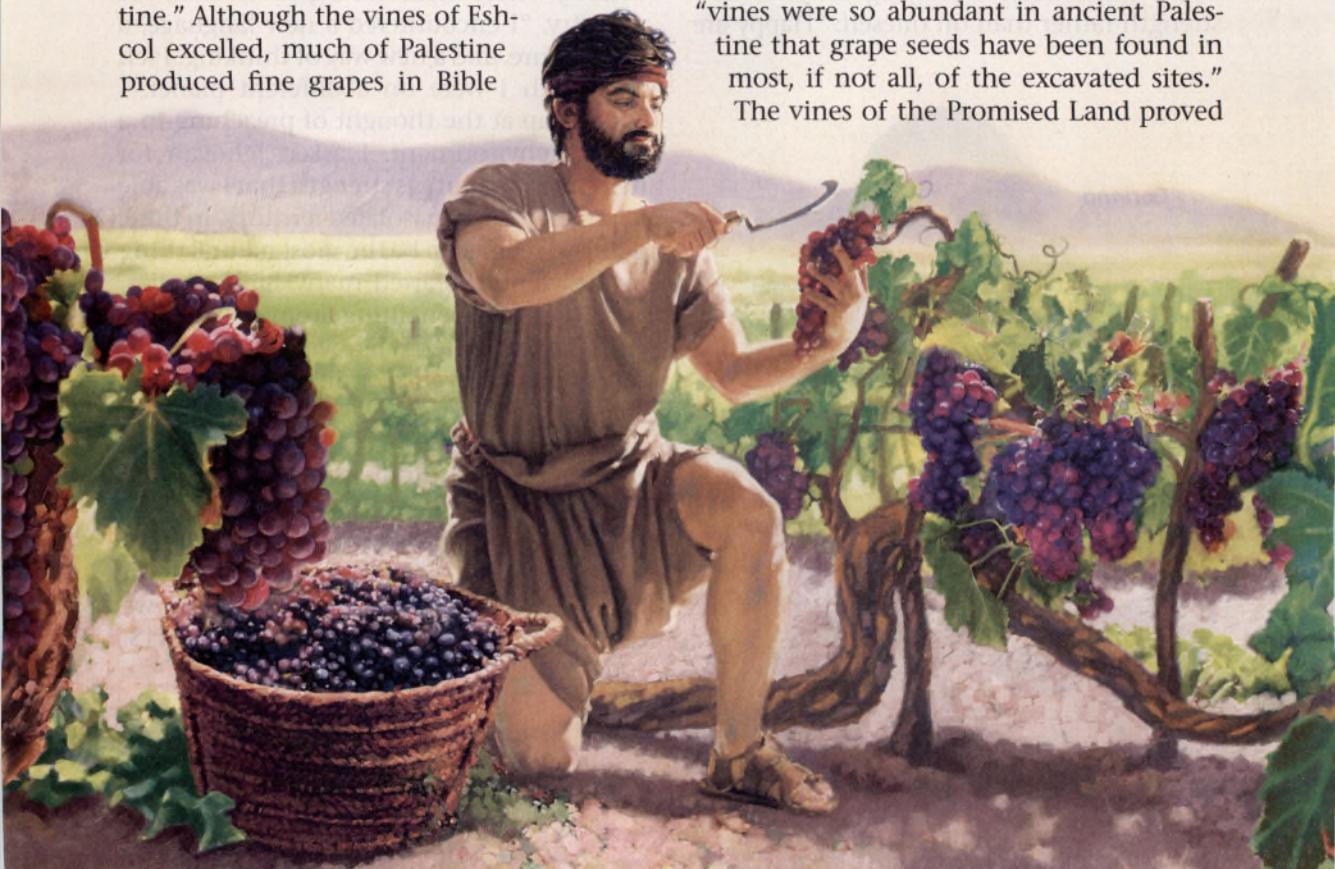
times. Egyptian records indicate that the Pharaohs imported wine from Canaan.

"The rocky hill-sides [of Palestine], with their light gravelly soil and sunny exposures, the heat of summer, and the rapid drainage of the winter rains, all combine to render it peculiarly a land of vines," explains the book *The Natural History of the Bible*. Isaiah indicated that some select areas had as many as a thousand vines.—Isaiah 7:23.

## "A Land of Vines"

Moses told the nation of Israel that they would inhabit a land of "vines and figs and pomegranates." (Deuteronomy 8:8) According to the *Baker Encyclopedia of Bible Plants*, "vines were so abundant in ancient Palestine that grape seeds have been found in most, if not all, of the excavated sites."

The vines of the Promised Land proved



so productive that even during the year 607 B.C.E. when Nebuchadnezzar's armies devastated Judah, the people remaining in the land "went gathering wine and summer fruits in very great quantity."—Jeremiah 40:12; 52:16.

To produce wine in quantity, Israelite farmers had to take good care of their vines. The book of Isaiah describes how a typical Israelite vinedresser would dig up a hillside plot of land and remove any large stones before planting his "choice red vine." He then might erect a stone wall, using the stones he had cleared from the soil. This wall would help protect his vineyard from being trampled by cattle as well as offer some protection from foxes, wild boars, and thieves. He might also hew out a winepress and build a small tower that could serve as a cool dwelling place during the harvest period when the vines needed extra protection. After all this preliminary work, he could expect a good harvest of grapes.—Isaiah 5:1, 2.\*

To ensure a good harvest, the farmer regularly pruned the vine to enhance productivi-

\* According to the *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, Israelite cultivators preferred vines that produced red-black grapes known as *sorek*, the type of vine apparently referred to at Isaiah 5:2. These grapes produced a sweet red wine.

ty and hoed the soil to keep weeds, briars, and thorns at bay. He might water the vineyard during the summer months if the spring rains had not provided enough moisture.—Isaiah 5:6; 18:5; 27:2-4.

The time of the grape harvest at the end of summer was a time of great rejoicing. (Isaiah 16:10) Three of the psalms have a superscription that includes the phrase "upon the Gittith." (Psalms 8, 81, and 84) This uncertain musical expression is rendered "winepresses" in the Septuagint version and may indicate that the Israelites sang these psalms at the time of the grape harvest. Although the grapes served mainly for making wine, the Israelites also ate fresh grapes or dried them as raisins, which they might make into cakes.—2 Samuel 6:19; 1 Chronicles 16:3.

### The Vine of Israel

The Bible several times describes God's people as a vine—an appropriate metaphor in view of the importance of the vine to Israelites. In Psalm 80, Asaph compared the nation of Israel to a vine that Jehovah had planted in Canaan. The land was cleared so that the vine of Israel could take root and grow strong. But as the years went by, its protective walls fell down. The nation no longer trusted in Jehovah, and he withdrew his protection.

Like a wild boar that plunders a vineyard, **enemy nations** kept devouring Israel's wealth. Asaph prayed that Jehovah would help the nation so that its former glory could be restored. "Take care of this vine," he implored.—*Psalm 80:8-15.*

Isaiah likened "the house of Israel" to a vineyard that gradually produced "wild grapes," or "putrid (rotten) berries." (*Isaiah 5:2, 7; footnote*) Wild grapes are much smaller than cultivated grapes and have very little flesh, the seeds occupying practically the entire grape. Wild grapes are worthless for making wine and for eating—an apt symbol of the apostate nation whose fruitage was lawbreaking rather than righteousness. This worthless fruitage was not the fault of the vine's Cultivator. Jehovah had done everything he could to make the nation fruitful. "What is there yet to do for my vineyard that I have not already done in it?" he asked.—*Isaiah 5:4.*

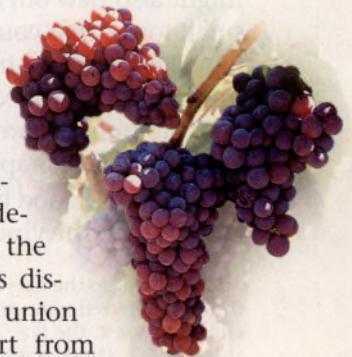
Since the vine of Israel had proved unproductive, Jehovah warned them that he would break down the protective wall he had built around his people. He would no longer prune his figurative vine or hoe its soil. The

spring rains on which the crop depended would not come, and thorns and weeds would overrun the vineyard.—*Isaiah 5:5, 6.*

Moses prophesied that Israel's apostasy would cause even their literal vineyards to wither. "Vineyards you will plant and certainly cultivate, but you will drink no wine and gather nothing in, because the worm will eat it up." (*Deuteronomy 28:39*) A vine can wither in a couple of days if a worm gets into the main trunk and eats away the inside.—*Isaiah 24:7.*

### "The True Vine"

Just as Jehovah likened literal Israel to a vine, Jesus used a similar metaphor. During what many call the Last Supper, Jesus told his disciples: "I am the true vine, and my Father is the cultivator." (*John 15:1*) Jesus compared his disciples to branches of the vine. As the branches of a literal vine derive their strength from the main trunk, so Christ's disciples must remain in union with him. "Apart from me you can do nothing at all," Jesus said. (*John 15:5*) Farmers cultivate a vine for its fruit, and Jehovah expects his people to bring forth spiritual fruitage. This brings satisfaction and glory to God, the vine's Cultivator.—*John 15:8.*



In the case of a literal vine, fruitfulness depends on pruning and cleaning, and Jesus refers to both of such operations. A vinedresser may prune the vine twice each year in order to obtain the maximum fruitage. During the winter months, the vine may be cut back quite severely. The cultivator

removes most of the growth of the preceding year. He will likely leave three or four main branches on the trunk, with one or two shoots on each of these branches. These young shoots, which correspond to the growth of the preceding year, will become the fruit-bearing branches during the following summer. Finally, when he completes the pruning, the vinedresser burns the pruned branches.

Jesus describes this severe pruning: "If anyone does not remain in union with me, he is cast out as a branch and is dried up; and men gather those branches up and pitch them into the fire and they are burned." (John 15:6) Although the vine at this stage may appear bereft of branches, another selective pruning occurs in the spring.

"Every branch in me not bearing fruit he takes away," Jesus said. (John 15:2) This may refer to a later pruning, after the vine has produced a substantial amount of new growth and the small clusters of grapes can be clearly identified. The vinedresser carefully examines each new branch to identify which ones bear fruit and which ones are barren. If left on the vine, those that have no fruit will still draw nutrients and water from the trunk. Thus, the cultivator prunes these fruitless branches so that the nourishment of the vine will go only to the fruit-bearing branches.

Finally, Jesus refers to the cleaning process. "Every one bearing fruit he cleans, that it may bear more fruit," he explains. (John 15:2) Once the fruitless branches are removed, the vinedresser carefully examines each branch bearing fruit. Near the base of the fruitful branch, he invariably finds small new sprouts that also need to be removed. If left to grow, they will draw sap from the vine that could otherwise provide vital moisture for the grapes. Some of the large leaves may likewise be removed to allow the young

grapes better access to the sunlight. These are all helpful steps for the fruitful branches to produce fruit in abundance.

### **"Keep Bearing Much Fruit"**

The figurative branches of "the true vine" represent anointed Christians. Yet, the "other sheep" must also prove themselves to be Christ's productive disciples. (John 10:16) They too can bear "much fruit" and bring glory to their heavenly Father. (John 15:5, 8) Jesus' illustration of the true vine reminds us that salvation depends on our remaining in union with Christ and producing good spiritual fruitage. Jesus said: "If you observe my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have observed the commandments of the Father and remain in his love."

—John 15:10.

In the days of Zechariah, God promised a faithful remnant of Israelites that the land would once more enjoy 'the seed of peace; the vine itself would give its fruitage, and the earth itself would give its yield.' (Zechariah 8:12) The vine is also used in describing the peace God's people will enjoy during Christ's Millennial Reign. Micah prophesied: "They will actually sit, each one under his vine and under his fig tree, and there will be no one making them tremble; for the very mouth of Jehovah of armies has spoken it."—Micah 4:4.

### **IN OUR NEXT ISSUE**

Finding True Enlightenment

Perseverance Brings Joy

"Anyone Regarding Reproof  
Is Shrewd"

# "HOW I DO LOVE YOUR LAW!"

*"How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."*—PSALM 119:97.

THE writer of Psalm 119 faced a severe trial. Presumptuous enemies who disregarded God's law derided him and smeared him with falsehood. Princes took counsel against him and persecuted him. The wicked surrounded him, and his very life was endangered. All of this made him "sleepless from grief." (Psalm 119:9, 23, 28, 51, 61, 69, 85, 87, 161) In the face of this trial, the psalmist sang: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern."—Psalm 119:97.

<sup>2</sup> You would do well to ask, "How could God's law be a source of solace and comfort to the psalmist?" What sustained him was his confidence that Jehovah was interested in him. Being acquainted with the loving provisions of that law made the psalmist happy, despite the hardships brought upon him by his opposers. He recognized that Jehovah had dealt well with him. Moreover, applying the guidance from God's law made the psalmist wiser than his enemies and had even preserved him alive. Obeying the law gave him peace and a good conscience.—Psalm 119:1, 9, 65, 93, 98, 165.

<sup>3</sup> Some of God's servants today are also undergoing grueling tests of their faith. We

1, 2. (a) What situation did the inspired writer of Psalm 119 face? (b) How did he react, and why?

3. Why is it a challenge for Christians to live according to godly standards today?



may not face a life-threatening crisis as the psalmist did, but we do live in "critical times hard to deal with." Many people with whom we are in daily contact have no love for spiritual values—their goals are self-centered and materialistic, their attitude arrogant and irreverent. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) Young Christians regularly have to deal with threats to their moral integrity. In such an environment, it can be difficult to maintain our love for Jehovah and for what is right. How can we protect ourselves?

<sup>4</sup> What helped the psalmist to withstand the pressures he experienced was his dedicating time to pore over God's law with appreciation. In that way he came to love it. Indeed, almost every verse of Psalm 119 mentions some facet of Jehovah's law.\* Christians today are not bound by the Mosaic Law, which God gave to the ancient nation of Israel. (Colossians 2:14) However, the principles expressed in that Law are of enduring value. These principles were a comfort to the psalmist, as they can be for God's servants who are struggling to deal with the difficulties of modern life.

\* All but 4 of the 176 verses of this psalm mention either Jehovah's commandments, judicial decisions, law, orders, regulations, reminders, sayings, statutes, ways, or word.

4. How did the psalmist show appreciation for God's law, and should Christians do likewise?

<sup>5</sup> Let us see what encouragement we can gain from just three aspects of the Mosaic Law: the Sabbath arrangement, the provision for gleaning, and the commandment against covetousness. In each case, we will find that an appreciation for the principles behind these laws is vital if we are to meet the challenges that characterize our times.

### Satisfying Our Spiritual Need

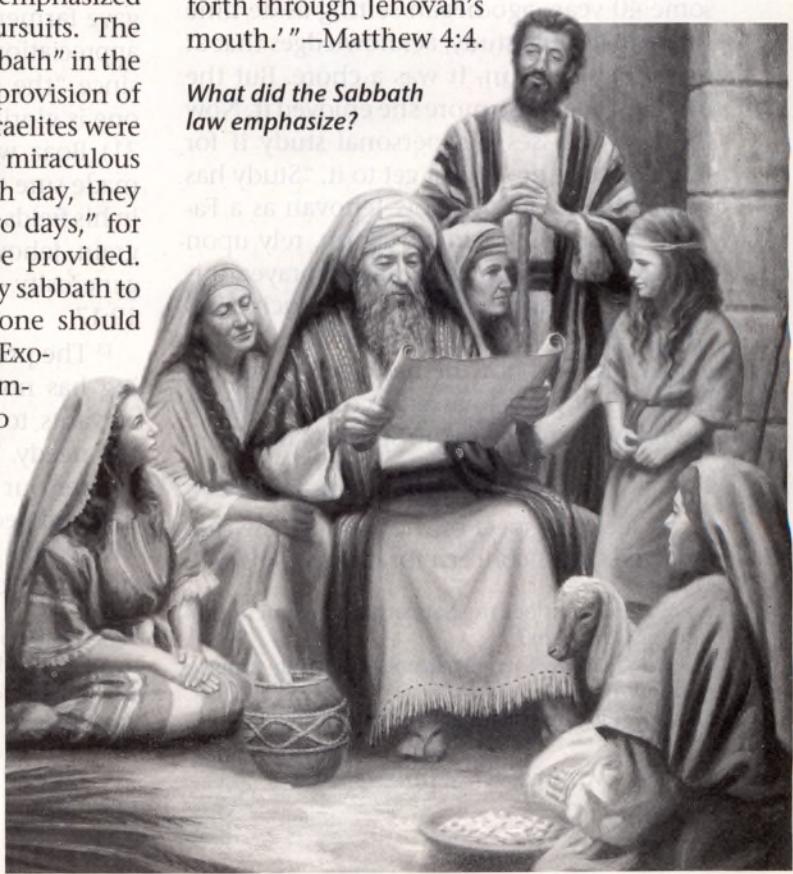
<sup>6</sup> Mankind was created with a number of needs. Food, drink, and shelter, for example, are essential if a person is to remain in good physical health. Yet, man also has to care for his "spiritual need." He will not be truly happy unless he does that. (Matthew 5:3) Jehovah considered the satisfying of this innate need to be so fundamental that he commanded his people to interrupt their normal activities for one whole day each week in order to give attention to spiritual matters.

<sup>7</sup> The Sabbath arrangement emphasized the importance of spiritual pursuits. The first occurrence of the word "sabbath" in the Bible is in connection with the provision of manna in the wilderness. The Israelites were told that they should collect this miraculous bread for six days. On the sixth day, they were to collect "the bread of two days," for on the seventh, none would be provided. The seventh day would be "a holy sabbath to Jehovah," during which each one should keep sitting in his own place. (Exodus 16:13-30) One of the Ten Commandments mandated that no work at all was to be done on the Sabbath. The day was sa-

cred. The penalty for not observing it was death.—Exodus 20:8-11; Numbers 15:32-36.

<sup>8</sup> The Sabbath law showed Jehovah's concern for both the physical and the spiritual welfare of his people. "The sabbath came into existence for the sake of man," said Jesus. (Mark 2:27) It not only allowed the Israelites to rest but also gave them the opportunity to draw close to and show love for their Creator. (Deuteronomy 5:12) It was a day dedicated exclusively to spiritual interests. That included family worship, prayer, and meditation on God's Law. The arrangement served to protect the Israelites from using all their time and energy in material pursuits. The Sabbath reminded them that their relationship with Jehovah was the most important thing in their lives. Jesus reiterated that unchanging principle when he said: "It is written, 'Man must live, not on bread alone, but on every utterance coming forth through Jehovah's mouth.'"—Matthew 4:4.

*What did the Sabbath law emphasize?*



5. What aspects of the Mosaic Law are we going to consider?
6. What fundamental needs do all people have?
7. 8. (a) How did God make a distinction between the Sabbath and other days? (b) What purpose did the Sabbath serve?

<sup>9</sup> God's people are no longer required to observe a literal 24-hour sabbath rest, but the Sabbath arrangement remains much more than a historical curiosity. (Colossians 2:16) Is it not a reminder that we too must give spiritual activities priority? Sacred interests must not be overshadowed by material preoccupations or recreational pursuits. (Hebrews 4:9, 10) So we might ask ourselves: "What takes first place in my life? Am I giving priority to study, prayer, attendance at Christian meetings, and the sharing of the good news of the Kingdom? Or are other interests crowding out such activities?" If we put spiritual matters first in our lives, Jehovah assures us that we will not lack the necessities of life.—Matthew 6:24-33.

<sup>10</sup> Periods spent studying the Bible and related publications, as well as thinking deeply about their message, can help us to draw closer to Jehovah. (James 4:8) Susan, who some 40 years ago began setting aside time for regular Bible study, acknowledges that at first it was not fun. It was a chore. But the more she read, the more she enjoyed it. Now she really misses her personal study if for some reason she cannot get to it. "Study has helped me to get to know Jehovah as a Father," she says. "I can trust him, rely upon him, and freely approach him in prayer. It is really overwhelming to see how much Jehovah loves his servants, how he cares for me personally, and how he has acted in my behalf." What great joy we too can have from regularly attending to our spiritual needs!

### God's Law on Gleaning

<sup>11</sup> A second aspect of the Mosaic Law that reflected God's concern for his people's wel-

9. What lesson does the Sabbath arrangement provide for Christians?

10. How can we benefit from dedicating time to spiritual matters?

11. How did the gleaning arrangement work?

fare was the right to glean. Jehovah ordered that when an Israelite farmer reaped the fruits of his field, the needy should be allowed to collect what harvest workers left behind. Farmers were not to reap the edges of their fields completely, nor were they to gather the leftover grapes or olives. Sheaves of grain inadvertently left in the fields should not be retrieved. This was a loving arrangement in behalf of the poor, the alien residents, the orphans, and the widows. Granted, gleaning required hard work on their part, yet by means of it, they could avoid having to beg.—Leviticus 19:9, 10; Deuteronomy 24:19-22; Psalm 37:25.

<sup>12</sup> The law on gleaning did not stipulate how much produce farmers were to leave for the needy. It was up to them whether the borders of unreaped grain around the edges of their fields would be wide or narrow. In this, the arrangement taught generosity. It gave farmers the opportunity to show their appreciation to the Provider of the harvest, since "the one showing favor to the poor one is glorifying [his Maker]." (Proverbs 14:31) Boaz was one who did so. He kindly made sure that Ruth, a widow who gleaned in his fields, would collect a good quantity of grain. Jehovah amply rewarded Boaz for his generosity.—Ruth 2:15, 16; 4:21, 22; Proverbs 19:17.

<sup>13</sup> The principle behind the law on gleaning has not changed. Jehovah expects his servants to be generous, especially toward the needy. The more generous we are, the greater our blessings will be. "Practice giving, and people will give to you," said Jesus. "They will pour into your laps a fine measure, pressed down, shaken together and

12. What opportunity did the gleaning arrangement give to farmers?

13. What does the ancient law on gleaning teach us?

overflowing. For with the measure that you are measuring out, they will measure out to you in return."—Luke 6:38.

<sup>14</sup> The apostle Paul recommended that we "work what is good toward all, but especially toward those related to us in the faith." (Galatians 6:10) Thus, we certainly need to be concerned that fellow Christians receive spiritual help whenever they face tests of their faith. But might they also need practical help, for example, in getting to the Kingdom Hall or in doing their grocery shopping? Are there any elderly, sick, or housebound ones in your congregation who would appreciate an encouraging visit or a helping hand? If we make an effort to be sensitive to such needs, then Jehovah might be able to use us to answer the prayers of a needy one. While caring for one another is a Christian obligation, doing so also helps the caregiver. Showing genuine love to fellow worshippers is a source of great joy and deep

14, 15. How can we manifest generosity, and with what possible benefits both to us and to those whom we help?

satisfaction that wins us Jehovah's smile of approval.—Proverbs 15:29.

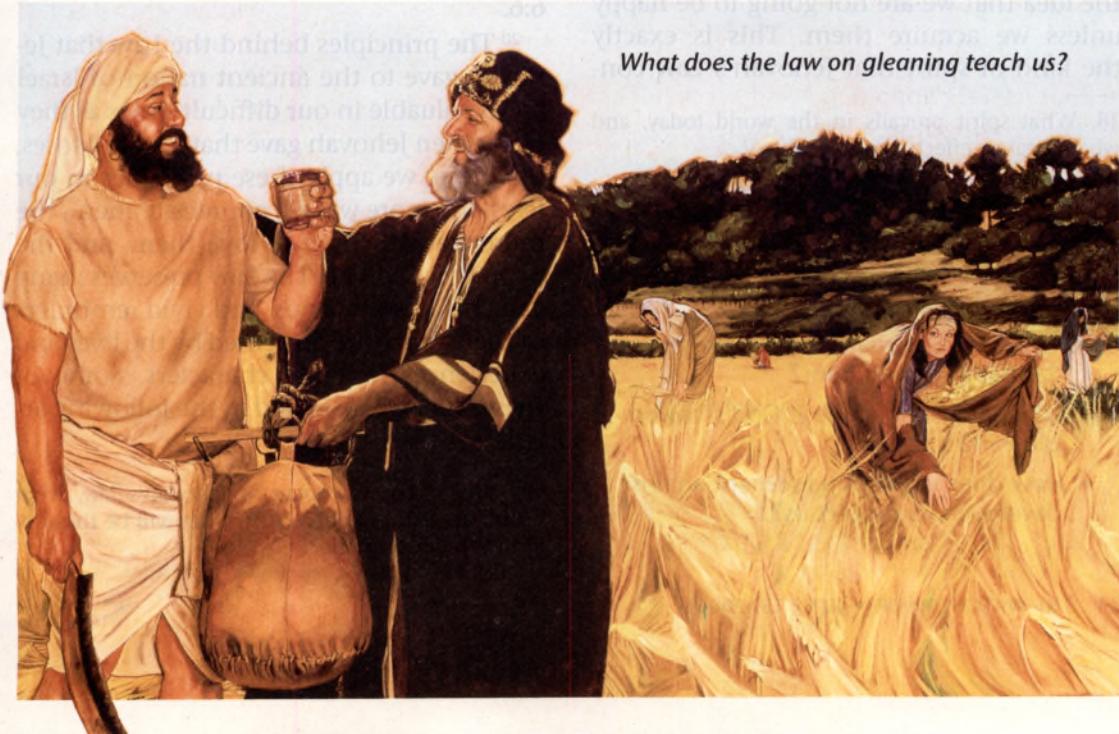
<sup>15</sup> Another important way in which Christians show an unselfish attitude is by using their time and energy to speak about God's purposes. (Matthew 28:19, 20) Anyone who has had the joy of helping another person to arrive at the point of dedicating his life to Jehovah knows the truth of Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

### Guarding Against Covetousness

<sup>16</sup> The third aspect of God's Law to Israel that we are going to consider is the tenth commandment, which prohibited covetousness. The Law stated: "You must not desire 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) No human could enforce such a commandment,

16, 17. What did the tenth commandment prohibit, and why?

*What does the law on gleaning teach us?*



since no one can read hearts. That commandment, however, elevated the Law to a plane higher than that of human justice. It made each Israelite aware that he was directly accountable to Jehovah, who can read the inclinations of the heart. (1 Samuel 16:7) Moreover, this commandment got to the very root of many illicit acts.—James 1:14.

<sup>17</sup> The law against covetousness encouraged God's people to avoid materialism, greed, and grumbling about their lot in life. It also safeguarded them from the temptation to commit theft or immorality. There will always be those who have material possessions that we admire or who in one way or another seem to be more successful than we are. If we fail to control our thinking in such situations, we could become unhappy and feel envious of others. The Bible calls covetousness a manifestation of "a disapproved mental state." We are far better off without it.—Romans 1:28-30.

<sup>18</sup> The spirit prevailing in the world today promotes materialism and competition. Through advertising, commerce arouses desires for new products and often conveys the idea that we are not going to be happy unless we acquire them. This is exactly the kind of spirit that Jehovah's Law con-

18. What spirit prevails in the world today, and what negative effects can it produce?

### How Would You Answer?

- Why did the writer of Psalm 119 love Jehovah's law?
- What can Christians learn from the Sabbath arrangement?
- Of what lasting value is God's law on gleanings?
- How does the commandment against covetousness protect us?

demned. Related to it is the desire to get ahead in life at any cost and to accumulate wealth. The apostle Paul warned: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and ruin. For the love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things, and by reaching out for this love some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

<sup>19</sup> Those who love God's law recognize the dangers of a materialistic spirit and are protected from it. The psalmist, for example, prayed to Jehovah: "Incline my heart to your reminders, and not to profits. The law of your mouth is good for me, more so than thousands of pieces of gold and silver." (Psalm 119:36, 72) Being convinced of the truth of these words will help us to maintain the balance necessary to avoid the snares of materialism, greed, and dissatisfaction with our lot in life. "Godly devotion," not the amassing of possessions, is the key to the greatest gain possible.—1 Timothy 6:6.

<sup>20</sup> The principles behind the Law that Jehovah gave to the ancient nation of Israel are as valuable in our difficult times as they were when Jehovah gave that Law to Moses. The more we apply these principles in our lives, the more we will appreciate them, the more we will come to love them, and the happier we will be. The Law preserves many valuable lessons for us, and vivid reminders of their worth are presented by the lives and experiences of Bible characters. Some of these will be considered in the following article.

19, 20. (a) For the lover of Jehovah's law, what things are truly valuable? (b) What will be the subject of the next article?

# "YOUR REMINDERS ARE WHAT I AM FOND OF"

*"All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction."—ROMANS 15:4.*

JEHOVAH provides his people with reminders in order to help them deal with the pressures of these difficult times. Some of these reminders come to the fore during personal Bible reading, while others take the form of information or comments presented at Christian meetings. Much of what we read or hear on these occasions is not new to us. Likely, we have considered similar information before. Since we are inclined to forget, though, we continually need to refresh our memories with regard to Jehovah's purposes, laws, and instructions. We should appreciate God's reminders. They renew our spirit by helping us to keep in focus the reasons that motivated us to adopt a godly life course. Thus, the psalmist sang to Jehovah: "Your reminders are what I am fond of."—Psalm 119:24.

<sup>2</sup> Though penned many centuries ago, God's Word is dynamic. (Hebrews 4:12) It presents us with true accounts of the lives of Bible characters. While customs and points of view have changed much since Bible times, the challenges we have to face are often similar to those faced back then. Many stories preserved for our benefit in the Bible offer us touching examples of people who loved Jehovah and served him faithfully de-

1. How does Jehovah give us reminders, and why do we need them?

2, 3. (a) Why did Jehovah preserve down to our day the life stories of Bible characters? (b) Which episodes from the Scriptures will be considered in this article?

spite adverse circumstances. Other accounts call attention to the kind of conduct that God hates. Jehovah had all these personal histories, good and bad, included in the Bible as reminders. It is as the apostle Paul wrote: "All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction, that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope."—Romans 15:4.

<sup>3</sup> Let us focus on three episodes from the Scriptures: the account of David's dealings with Saul, that of Ananias and Sapphira, and that of Joseph's conduct with Potiphar's wife. Each of these teaches us valuable lessons.

## Loyalty to God's Arrangements

<sup>4</sup> King Saul proved unfaithful to Jehovah and unworthy to rule over His people. So God rejected him and directed the prophet Samuel to anoint David as the future king of Israel. When David showed prowess as a warrior and received acclaim from the people, Saul began to view David as a rival. Saul repeatedly tried to do away with him. David survived on each occasion because Jehovah was with him.—1 Samuel 18:6-12, 25; 19:10, 11.

<sup>5</sup> For years, David was forced to live as a fugitive. When the opportunity arose to kill

4, 5. (a) What situation existed involving King Saul and David? (b) How did David react to Saul's animosity?



**Why did David refuse  
to allow Saul to be killed?**

doing, but it disturbs you. How should you react? Out of Christian interest in that person and out of loyalty to Jehovah, you may choose to speak with him in a kindly way, with the aim of winning him over. What, though, if the problem persists? After you have done all that you reasonably can, you may want to leave the matter in Jehovah's hands. That is what David did.

<sup>7</sup> Or you might be facing problems of social injustice or religious prejudice. Possibly there is little or nothing you can do about them at this time. Such a situation can be very difficult to endure, but David's reaction to injustice teaches us a lesson. The psalms David wrote are a poignant record not only of his heartfelt prayers for God to keep him out of Saul's clutches but also of his loyalty to Jehovah and his concern for the glorification of God's name. (Psalm 18:1-6, 25-27, 30-32, 48-50; 57:1-11) David remained loyal to Jehovah even though Saul continued to act in an unjust way for years. We too should remain faithful to Jehovah and to his organization regardless of injustices we suffer and regardless of what others do. We can rest assured that Jehovah is fully aware of the situation.—Psalm 86:2.

<sup>8</sup> Christians in Mozambique provide a modern-day example of some who loyally stuck to Jehovah in a time of testing. In

Saul, David's companions urged him to do so, saying that Jehovah was giving David's enemy into his hand. Yet, David refused. His loyalty to Jehovah and his respect for Saul's position as anointed king of God's people moved him to act this way. Jehovah had appointed Saul as king of Israel, had he not? Jehovah would also remove him when he saw fit to do so. David reasoned that it was not his business to intervene. After doing all that he could under the circumstances to soften Saul's antagonism toward him, David concluded: "Jehovah himself will deal him a blow; or his day will come and he will have to die, or down into battle he will go, and he will certainly be swept away. It is unthinkable, on my part, from Jehovah's standpoint, to thrust my hand out against the anointed of Jehovah!"—1 Samuel 24:3-15; 26:7-20.

<sup>6</sup> This account contains a vital lesson. Have you ever found yourself asking why certain problems arise in the Christian congregation? It could be that an individual is acting in a way that is not appropriate. His conduct may not amount to gross wrong-

6. Why is the story of David and Saul of interest to us?

7. In imitation of David, how should we react if we experience injustice or prejudice?

8. How did Jehovah's Witnesses in Mozambique react when their loyalty to Jehovah was put to the test?

*What do we learn from the account of Ananias and Sapphira?*

1984 their villages were repeatedly raided by armed members of a resistance movement, who robbed, burned houses, and killed. There seemed little that these true Christians could do to defend themselves. The inhabitants of the area were subjected to efforts to recruit them into a militarized movement or to force them to support it in other ways. Jehovah's Witnesses considered doing so to be incompatible with their position of Christian neutrality. Their refusal was met with rage. As many as 30 Witnesses were killed in that turbulent period, but not even the threat of death could break the loyalty of God's people.\* Like David, they endured injustices but eventually came off victorious.

**A Warning Reminder**

<sup>9</sup> Some of the individuals mentioned in the Scriptures provide warning reminders about conduct to be avoided. Indeed, the Bible contains many accounts of people, even among God's servants, who did wrong and suffered the consequences. (1 Corinthians 10:11) One such account is that of Ananias and Sapphira, a married couple who were members of the first-century Christian congregation in Jerusalem.

\* See the 1996 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, pages 160-2.

9, 10. (a) How can we benefit from certain Scriptural examples? (b) What was wrong with Ananias and Sapphira's actions?



<sup>10</sup> After Pentecost 33 C.E., the need arose to provide materially for new believers who remained in Jerusalem to benefit from association with the apostles. Some members of the congregation sold property to ensure that no one was in need. (Acts 2:41-45) Ananias and Sapphira sold a field and brought only part of the proceeds to the apostles, claiming that their gift represented all the funds received from the sale. Granted, Ananias and Sapphira were entitled to give as much or as little as they wanted, but their motive was bad, and their actions were dishonest. They wanted to make a good impression and appear to be doing more than they actually were. The apostle Peter, under the inspiration of holy spirit, unmasked their dishonesty and hypocrisy, and Jehovah struck them dead.—Acts 5:1-10.

<sup>11</sup> If we are ever tempted to distort the truth in an attempt to make people think

11, 12. (a) What are some reminders about honesty? (b) What benefits come from being honest?

*What caused Joseph to reject immoral advances?*

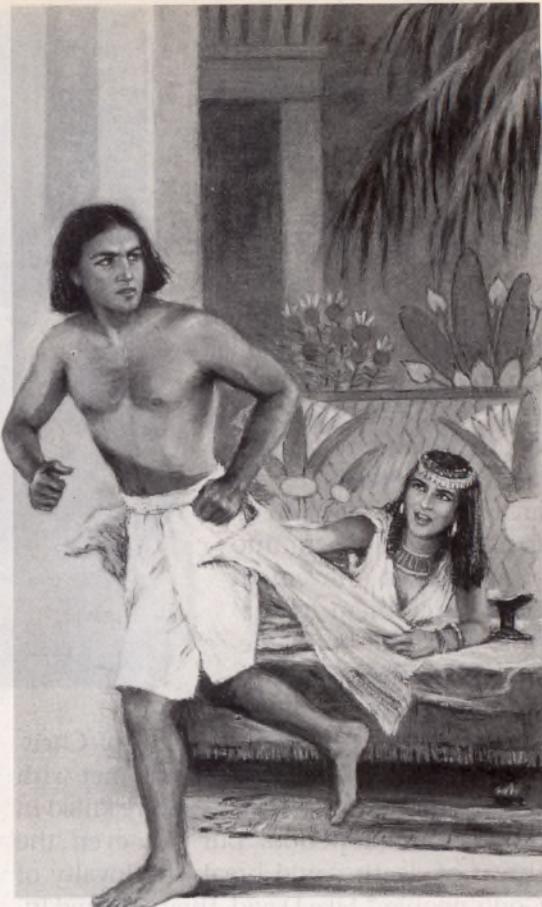
well of us, may the story of Ananias and Sapphira stand as a sober reminder. We might be able to deceive fellow humans, but we cannot fool Jehovah. (Hebrews 4:13) Time and again the Scriptures exhort us to be honest with one another, for liars will have no place in an earth swept clean of unrighteousness. (Proverbs 14:2; Revelation 21:8; 22:15) The reason for that should be clear. The promoter of all untruth is none other than Satan the Devil.—John 8:44.

<sup>12</sup> Making honesty our way of life brings numerous benefits. Among them are a clean conscience and the satisfaction of being trusted by others. In many cases, because they were honest, Christians have obtained employment or have kept their jobs. The most important benefit, though, is that honesty wins us the friendship of Almighty God.—Psalm 15:1, 2.

### Maintaining Chastity

<sup>13</sup> Joseph, a son of the patriarch Jacob, was sold into slavery at the age of 17. He eventually found himself in the household of Potiphar, an Egyptian court official, where Joseph caught the attention of his master's wife. She desired to have sexual intercourse with Joseph, who was a handsome young man, and day after day she kept urging him: "Lie down with me." Joseph was far from his family in a land where nobody knew him. He may well have been able to have relations with this woman without other people being aware of it. Yet, when Potiphar's wife finally grabbed hold of him, Joseph fled. —Genesis 37:2, 18-28; 39:1-12.

13. In what situation did Joseph find himself, and how did he react?



<sup>14</sup> Joseph was raised in a God-fearing family, and he understood that sexual relations between people who are not husband and wife are wrong. "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?" he asked. His conclusion was likely guided by knowledge of God's standard for humans as expressed in Eden, that of monogamy. (Genesis 2:24) God's people today can benefit from reflecting on the way Joseph reacted to that situation. In some areas, attitudes toward sexual relations are so casual that youngsters who refuse to get involved in immorality are derided by their peers. Extramarital relations among adults

14, 15. (a) Why is Joseph's story of interest to us? (b) Why was one Christian woman grateful that she heeded God's reminders?

are common. Hence, Joseph's story is a timely reminder for us. God's standard still is that fornication and adultery are sins. (Hebrews 13:4) Many who have succumbed to pressure to engage in illicit sex agree that there is compelling reason not to do so. Among the undesired results may be a sense of degradation, a troubled conscience, jealousies, pregnancy, and sexually transmitted disease. Just as the Scriptures remind us, a person who practices fornication is "sinning against his own body."—1 Corinthians 5:9-12; 6:18; Proverbs 6:23-29, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Jenny,\* a single Witness of Jehovah, has reason to appreciate God's reminders. At work, a handsome colleague made overtures to her. When Jenny did not reciprocate, he intensified his attentions. "I found myself struggling to remain chaste," she admits, "because it is flattering when someone of the opposite sex takes notice of you." Yet, she realized that the man was only trying to add her to the number of women with whom he had had relations. When she felt herself weakening in her resolve to resist, she supplicated Jehovah to help her remain faithful to Him. Jenny found that the things she learned as she did research in the Bible and Christian publications were like reminders that served as a shot in the arm to keep her guard up. One of those reminders was the story of Joseph and Potiphar's wife. "As long as I keep reminding myself about how much I love Jehovah," she concludes, "I need not fear that I will commit this great badness and sin against him."

### Heed God's Reminders!

<sup>16</sup> We can all increase our appreciation for Jehovah's standards by striving to under-

\* Name has been changed.

16. How can we benefit from reviewing and meditating on the lives of individuals mentioned in the Bible?

stand why he had certain accounts preserved in the Scriptures for us. What do they teach? What qualities or tendencies exemplified by Bible characters do we need to imitate or to avoid? Literally hundreds of individuals make their appearance in the pages of God's Word. All who love divine instruction would do well to cultivate an appetite for life-giving wisdom, including lessons we can learn from the examples that Jehovah has carefully preserved. This magazine has often featured articles about such individuals whose stories have something to teach us. Why not spend time reviewing these?

<sup>17</sup> How grateful we can be for the loving concern that Jehovah manifests for those who are striving to do his will! We are by no means perfect, just as the men and women mentioned in the Bible were not perfect. However, the written record of their actions is an invaluable resource for us. By heeding Jehovah's reminders, we can avoid making costly mistakes, and we can imitate the fine examples of those who walked in the ways of righteousness. If we do so, we will be able to sing with the psalmist: "Happy are those observing [Jehovah's] reminders; with all the heart they keep searching for him. My soul has kept your reminders, and I love them exceedingly."—Psalm 119:2, 167.

17. How do you feel about Jehovah's reminders, and why?

### How Would You Answer?

- What can we learn from David's attitude toward Saul?
- The account of Ananias and Sapphira teaches us what?
- Why is Joseph's life story of particular interest today?

## Questions From Readers

**What did Jesus mean when he told Nicodemus: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man"?—John 3:13.**

Jesus was then on earth, and he had not yet ascended, or gone back, to heaven. However, what we know about Jesus and the context of his words can help us to grasp his point.

Jesus "descended from heaven" in that he had previously lived in the spirit realm with his Father, but at the appointed time, the Son's life was transferred to the womb of Mary, leading to Jesus' birth as a human. (Luke 1:30-35; Galatians 4:4; Hebrews 2:9, 14, 17) After his death, Jesus would be resurrected as a spirit creature and return to be with Jehovah. Thus, shortly before he was put to death, Jesus could pray: "Father, glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you before the world was." —John 17:5; Romans 6:4, 9; Hebrews 9:24; 1 Peter 3:18.

When Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, a Pharisee and a teacher in Israel, Jesus had not yet gone back to heaven. Of course, no other human had died and ascended to the spirit realm, to heaven. Jesus himself stated that John the Baptist was peerless as a prophet of God, but "a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is." (Matthew 11:11) And the apostle Peter explained that even faithful King David had died and was still in his tomb; David did not ascend into heaven. (Acts 2:29, 34) There was a reason why those who died before Jesus, such as David, John the Baptist, and other men of faith, did not go to heaven. They died before Jesus inaugurated the way or possibility for humans to be

resurrected to heavenly life. The apostle Paul wrote that Jesus, like a forerunner, "inaugurated . . . a new and living way" into heaven. —Hebrews 6:19, 20; 9:24; 10:19, 20.

Since Jesus had not yet died and been resurrected, what did he mean in saying to Nicodemus: "No man has ascended into heaven but he that descended from heaven, the Son of man"? (John 3:13) Consider the context, or what Jesus was discussing with Nicodemus.

When that Jewish ruler came to Jesus under the cover of darkness, Jesus told him: "Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (John 3:3) In response, Nicodemus asked: 'How can that be? How can a man be born a second time?' He did not comprehend this divine teaching about being in the Kingdom of God. Was there any way that he could learn about this? Well, not from a human standpoint; no man could instruct him about it because no one had been in heaven and thus in a position to explain anything about getting into the Kingdom. The only exception was Jesus. He could teach Nicodemus and others because He had descended from heaven and was qualified to instruct people about such things.

The question on this text thus illustrates a valuable point about studying God's Word. It is not reasonable to stumble over a passage just because it seems hard to understand. What the Bible says in one place must be viewed in the light of other passages and be in harmony with them. Furthermore, often the context—the situation or what was under discussion—can help us to find the reasonable, logical meaning of a puzzling text.

# A LESSON ABOUT PRIDE and HUMILITY

**A**N INCIDENT in the life of King David highlights the difference between true humility and wicked pride. It happened after David had conquered Jerusalem and made it his capital city. David looked to Jehovah as the real King of Israel, so he arranged for the Ark, which symbolized God's presence, to be brought into the city. This event was so important to David that he showed his joy for all to see as he followed the priests who carried the Ark. The inhabitants of Jerusalem saw their king "skipping about" and "dancing . . . with all his power."—1 Chronicles 15:15, 16, 29; 2 Samuel 6:11-16.

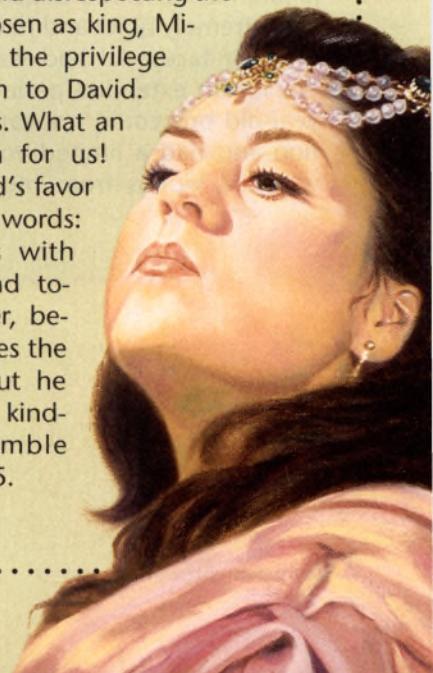
David's wife Michal, however, did not join that joyful procession. She watched from a window, and rather than admiring David's way of directing praise to Jehovah, she "began to despise him in her heart." (2 Samuel 6:16) Why did Michal feel this way? Evidently, she attached too much importance to being the daughter of Israel's first king, Saul, and now the wife of Israel's second king. She could have felt that her husband, the king, should not have lowered himself to the level of the common people and shared in their mode of celebrating. Such haughty feelings were revealed in the way she greeted David when he returned home. With sarcasm she said: "How glorious the king of Israel made himself today when he uncovered himself today to the eyes of the slave girls of his servants, just as one of the empty-headed men uncovers himself outright!"—2 Samuel 6:20.

How did David react to this criticism? David gave Michal a rebuke by stating that Jehovah had rejected her father, Saul, in favor of him.

David added: "I will make myself even more lightly esteemed than this, and I will become low in my eyes; and with the slave girls whom you mentioned, with them I am determined to glorify myself."—2 Samuel 6:21, 22.

Yes, David was determined to keep on serving Jehovah with humility. This attitude helps us to understand why Jehovah called David "a man agreeable to my heart." (Acts 13:22; 1 Samuel 13:14) In fact, David was following the finest example of humility—that of Jehovah God himself. Interestingly, the expression David used when he said to Michal, "I will become low" is from a Hebrew root verb that is also used to describe God's own view of mankind. Although Jehovah is the greatest Personage in the universe, Psalm 113:6, 7 describes him as "condescending [coming down from one's rank or dignity in dealing with an inferior] to look on heaven and earth, raising up the lowly one from the very dust; he exalts the poor one from the ashpit itself."

Since Jehovah is humble, it is no wonder that he hates the "lofty eyes" of proud people. (Proverbs 6:16, 17) For displaying this wicked trait and disrespecting the one God had chosen as king, Michal was denied the privilege of bearing a son to David. She died childless. What an important lesson for us! All who want God's favor must follow these words: "Gird yourselves with lowliness of mind toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones."—1 Peter 5:5.





# Television A Good Babysitter?

**A**T TIMES, keeping your children amused by letting them watch television while you take care of other matters may seem very appealing. But how could this affect your children?

"Even young babies can be influenced by emotional messages delivered through a television screen," reports *The New York Times*. In a recent study, one-year-olds were shown short television clips in which an actress reacted to a toy in a variety of ways. "When the actress responded to a toy with fear," says the *Times*, "the babies avoided playing with it and were more likely to appear worried, frown, scowl or cry. When the actress was enthusiastic, the infants were more apt to play with the toy."

Obviously, television can affect infants. How about its long-term influence on children? Dr. Naoki Kataoka, professor of pediatrics at Kawasaki Medical College in Kurashiki, Japan, has observed dozens of children who are extremely quiet and have little expression on their faces. All had watched TV or videos for an extended period of time. A two-year-old boy could not carry on a conversation and had a limited vocabulary. He had watched videos from morning to evening

every day since he was a year old. Only after his mother, following the doctor's advice, stopped letting the boy watch videos and started having physical contact with him through play did the boy's vocabulary gradually increase. Yes, parents must interact with their children.

Jehovah God, the Author of the family arrangement, stressed the importance of the best interaction. He long ago told his people: "You must inculcate [God's words] in your son and speak of them when you sit in your house and when you walk on the road and when you lie down and when you get up." (Deuteronomy 6:7) Parents, not television, can instruct children in the best way by word and example, "according to the way" for them.—Proverbs 22:6.

