

AUGUST 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
SEPTEMBER 26–OCTOBER 23, 2016



COVER IMAGE:
HUNGARY

What a pleasure it is to give a witness in the morning hours along the Danube River! These happy publishers are sharing the Kingdom message with an appreciative listener at Vigadó Square in Budapest, Hungary

PUBLISHERS
22,582

PIONEERS
1,980

BIBLE STUDIES
12,163

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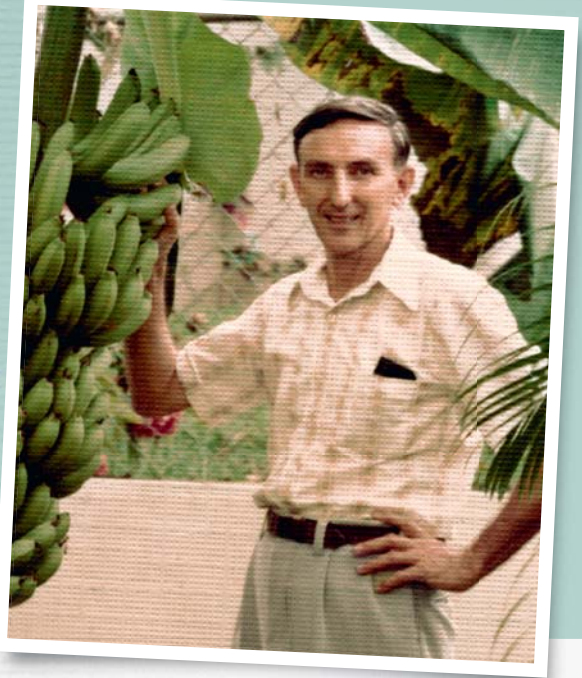
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How I Found Happiness in Giving

AS TOLD BY
RONALD J. PARKIN



WHEN I was 12 years of age, I first realized that I had something valuable to give. During an assembly, a brother asked me if I would like to preach. “Yes,” I said, although I had never preached before. We went to the territory, and he gave me some booklets about God’s Kingdom. “You visit the people on that side of the street,” he said, “and I’ll take this side.” Nervously, I began going from house to house, and to my surprise, I had soon placed all the booklets. Clearly, many individuals wanted what I had to give.

I was born in 1923 in Chatham, Kent, England, and I grew up in a world full of disappointed people. The Great War had not lived up to the promise of making the world a better place. My parents were also disappointed by Baptist clergymen who seemed too interested in their own advancement. When I was about nine, my mother began going to the hall of the International Bible Students Association, where people who had adopted the name Jehovah’s Witnesses held their “classes,” or meetings. One of the sisters there gave us children Bible lessons based on the

Bible and the book *The Harp of God*. I liked what I was learning.

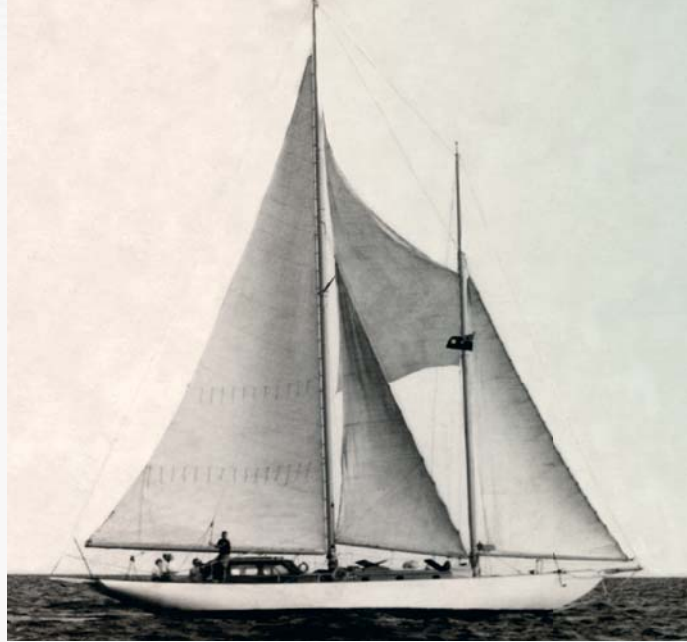
LEARNING FROM OLDER BROTHERS

As a teenager, I enjoyed giving people hope from God’s Word. Although I often went out and worked from house to house alone, I also learned by preaching with others. For example, one day as an older brother and I were cycling to the preaching territory, we passed a clergyman and I said, “There goes a goat.” The brother stopped his bicycle and asked me to sit down with him on a log. He said: “Who gave you authority to judge who is a goat? Let’s just be happy giving people the good news and leave the judging to Jehovah.” I learned a lot about the happiness of giving in those early days.—Matt. 25:31-33; Acts 20:35.

Another older brother taught me that to find happiness in giving, we sometimes have to endure patiently. His wife did not like Jehovah’s Witnesses. Once he invited me to his home for refreshments. She was so furious that he had been out preaching that she began throwing

The schooner *Sibia* served as our missionary home from 1948 to 1953 (right)

Advertising a convention during my early pioneering days in Ireland (below)



packets of tea at us. Rather than reprimand her, he cheerfully put the tea back in its place. Years later, his patience was rewarded when his wife was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

My desire to give others a hope for the future continued to grow, and my mother and I got baptized in Dover in March 1940. Britain had declared war on Germany in September 1939 when I was 16. In June 1940, I watched from our front doorstep as thousands of traumatized soldiers passed by in lorries (trucks). They were survivors of the Battle of Dunkirk. I saw no sign of hope in their eyes, and I yearned to tell them about God's Kingdom. Later that year, the regular bombing of Britain began. Each night, I watched as squadrons of German bombers flew over our area. The bombs whistled, and you could hear them falling, adding to the terror. When we went out the next morning, we would find whole areas of destroyed houses. I increasingly realized that the Kingdom was my only hope for the future.

STARTING OUT ON A LIFE OF GIVING

It was really in 1941 that I embarked on the life that has made me so happy. I had been working in the Royal Dockyard in Chatham as an appren-

tice shipwright, a coveted position with excellent benefits. Jehovah's servants had long understood that Christians should not fight for one nation against another. By 1941 we were becoming aware that we should not work in the arms industry. (John 18:36) Since the dockyard was building submarines, I decided that it was time for me to leave my job and take up the full-time ministry. My first assignment was in Cirencester, a picturesque town in the Cotswolds.

When I turned 18, I was imprisoned for nine months because I refused to perform military service. It was a dreadful feeling when the door of my cell first slammed shut and I was left alone. But soon, guards and prisoners began asking why I was there, and I gladly explained my faith to them.

After my release, I was asked to join Leonard Smith* to preach in various towns in our home county of Kent. Starting in 1944, over a thousand unmanned jet planes packed with explosives fell on Kent. We were exactly under the flight path between Nazi-occupied Europe and London. Those flying bombs were called doodle-

* Leonard Smith's life story appeared in *The Watchtower* of April 15, 2012.



The crew of missionaries aboard the *Sibia* (left to right): Ron Parkin, Dick Ryde, Gust Maki, and Stanley Carter

bugs. It was a terror campaign, for if you heard the engine cut out, as we often did, you knew that seconds later the plane would fall and explode. We conducted a Bible study with one family of five. At times, we sat under an iron table designed to protect them if the house collapsed. That entire family eventually got baptized.

TAKING THE GOOD NEWS ABROAD

After the war, I pioneered for two years in southern Ireland. We were not aware of how different Ireland was from England. We went from door to door asking for accommodations, saying that we were missionaries, and we offered our magazines on the street. What “silly” things to do in such a Catholic country! When a man threatened us with violence, I complained to a policeman, who said, “Well, what do you expect?” We did not realize how much power the priests had. They had people dismissed from their jobs if they accepted our books, and they had us evicted from our lodgings.

We soon learned that when we arrived in a new area, it was best to cycle far away from our place of lodging, preaching only where people had a different priest. Last of all, we visited the people

nearby. In Kilkenny, we studied with a young man three times a week despite the threats of violent mobs. I so much enjoyed teaching Bible truths that I decided to apply for training as a missionary at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

After the five-month course in New York, four of us Gilead graduates were assigned to the smaller islands of the Caribbean Sea. In November of 1948, we left New York City aboard a 59-foot (18 m) schooner named *Sibia*. I had never sailed before, so I was excited. One of our number, Gust Maki, was an experienced sea captain. He taught us some basic seamanship, such as how to raise and lower the various sails, how to maintain a compass bearing, and how to tack against the wind. Gust skillfully navigated our craft for 30 days through dangerous storms until we reached the Bahamas.

“PROCLAIM IT AMONG THE ISLANDS”

After spending a few months preaching on the smaller islands of the Bahamas, we set sail for the Leeward Islands and the Windward Islands, which extend some 500 miles (800 km) from the Virgin Islands near Puerto Rico and stretch almost to Trinidad. For five years, we preached mainly on isolated islands where there were no Witnesses. Sometimes we went for weeks without being able to send or receive mail. But how happy we were proclaiming Jehovah’s word among the islands!—Jer. 31:10.

When we anchored in a bay, our arrival would create quite a stir among the villagers, and people would gather on the jetty to see who we were. Some had never seen a schooner or a white man before. The islanders were friendly religious people who knew the Bible well. Often, they gave us fresh fish, avocados, and peanuts. Our small vessel had little space for sleeping, cooking, or washing clothes, but we managed.

We would row ashore and visit the people all day long. We used to tell them that there would

be a Bible talk. Then at dusk we rang the ship's bell. It was wonderful to see residents arriving. Their oil lamps were like twinkling stars coming down the hillsides. Sometimes a hundred people came, and they stayed late into the evening asking questions. They enjoyed singing, so we typed out and distributed the words of some Kingdom songs. As the four of us did our best to sing the tunes, the people joined in, their voices harmonizing beautifully. What happy times!

After we conducted a Bible study, some students would walk with us to the next family we were to visit in order to join in their study too. Although we had to leave after spending a few weeks in a certain place, we often asked the most interested people to continue studying with the others until we returned. It was lovely to see how seriously some of them took their assignment.

Today, many of those islands are bustling tourist resorts, but back then they were secluded places with only turquoise lagoons, sandy beaches, and palm trees. We usually sailed from island to island at night. Dolphins playfully swam alongside our boat, and all you could hear was the swish of our bow cutting through the water. The moon shining on the calm seas made a silvery highway stretching to the horizon.

After spending five years preaching on the islands, we sailed to Puerto Rico to exchange the schooner for a boat with engines. When we arrived, I met and fell in love with Maxine Boyd, a beautiful missionary sister. She had been a zealous preacher of the good news since childhood. Later, she served as a missionary in the Dominican Republic until she was expelled from that country by the Catholic government in 1950. As a ship's crewman, I had a permit to stay in Puerto Rico only one month. I would soon be sailing to the islands and be away for a few more years. So I said to myself, 'Ronald, if you want this girl, you've got to act quickly.' After three weeks I proposed, and after six weeks we were married.

Maxine and I were assigned as missionaries to Puerto Rico, so I never went out on the new boat.

In 1956 we began visiting congregations in the circuit work. Many of the brothers were poor, but we loved visiting them. For example, in the village of Potala Pastillo, there were two Witness families with many children, and I used to play the flute for them. I asked one of the little girls, Hilda, if she wanted to come and preach with us. She said: "I want to, but I can't. I don't have any shoes." We bought her a pair, and she came preaching with us. Years later, in 1972, when Maxine and I were visiting Brooklyn Bethel, a sister who had just graduated from Gilead School approached us. She was about to leave for her assignment in Ecuador, and she said: "You don't recognize me, do you? I am the little girl from Pastillo who had no shoes." It was Hilda! We were so happy that we cried!

In 1960 we were asked to serve at the Puerto Rico branch, which was located in a small two-story house in Santurce, San Juan. At first, Lenart Johnson and I did most of the work. He and his wife were the first Witnesses of Jehovah in the Dominican Republic, and they had arrived in Puerto Rico in 1957. Later, Maxine processed the magazine subscriptions—over a thousand a week. She enjoyed doing this work because she thought of all those people receiving spiritual food.

I enjoy Bethel service, for it is a life of giving. But it is not without its challenges. For example, during Puerto Rico's first international assembly in 1967, I felt overwhelmed by the responsibility. Nathan Knorr, who was then taking the lead among Jehovah's Witnesses, came to Puerto Rico. He mistakenly assumed that I had neglected to arrange transportation for the visiting missionaries, although I had done so. Later, he gave me strong counsel about being organized and said that he was disappointed in me. I didn't want to argue with him, but I felt misjudged and upset



With Maxine in Puerto Rico shortly after we got married and at our 50th wedding anniversary in 2003

for quite a while. Nevertheless, the next time Maxine and I saw Brother Knorr, he invited us to his room and cooked a meal for us.

From Puerto Rico, we visited my family in England several times. Father did not accept the truth when Mother and I did. But when speakers from Bethel visited, my mother often had them stay in our home. My father saw how humble these Bethel overseers were in contrast with the clergymen who had disgusted him years earlier. Finally, in 1962 he was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

My dear wife, Maxine, died in 2011. I am really looking forward to seeing her again in the resurrection. What a happy thought! During our 58 years together, Maxine and I saw Jehovah's people in Puerto Rico grow from about 650 Witnesses to 26,000! Then, in 2013 the Puerto Rico branch was merged with the United States branch, and I was asked to serve at Wallkill, New York. After 60 years on the island, I felt as Puerto Rican as a *coquí*, the popular little Puerto Rican tree frog that sings *ko-kee, ko-kee* at dusk. But it was time to move on.

“GOD LOVES A CHEERFUL GIVER”

I still enjoy serving God at Bethel. I am now over 90 years of age, and my job is to encourage members of the Bethel family as a spiritual shepherd. I am told that I have visited over 600 since I came to Wallkill. Some who come to see me want to discuss personal or family problems. Others ask for counsel on making a success of their Bethel service. Still others who recently got married are looking for advice on marriage. Some have been reassigned to the field. I listen to all who speak to me, and when appropriate, I often tell them: “‘God loves a cheerful giver.’ So be happy in your work. It is for Jehovah.”—2 Cor. 9:7.

The challenge of being happy at Bethel is the same as it is elsewhere: *You have to focus on why what you are doing is important.* Everything we do at Bethel is sacred service. It contributes to helping “the faithful and discreet slave” to provide spiritual food for the worldwide brotherhood. (Matt. 24:45) Wherever we serve Jehovah, we have opportunities to praise him. Let us enjoy what he asks us to do, for “God loves a cheerful giver.”



Marriage

—Its Origin and Purpose

“Jehovah God said: ‘It is not good for the man to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him.’”—GEN. 2:18.

SONGS: 36, 11

HOW WOULD YOU RESPOND?

Why can it be said that marriage is a gift from God?

How would you describe the history of marriage from the time of Adam to Jesus' day?

What can help a Christian to decide whether to get married?

MARRIAGE is very much a part of life. A review of its origin and purpose can help us to have a proper view of this relationship and enjoy its intended blessings more fully. After God created the first man, Adam, the animals were brought to him so that he could name them. But “for man there was no helper as a complement of him.” God therefore caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, took a rib from him, built it into a woman, and brought her to the man. **(Read Genesis 2:20-24.)** Thus, marriage is of divine origin.

² Jesus confirmed that it was Jehovah who stated: “A man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh.” (Matt. 19:4, 5) God’s use of a rib from Adam in creating the first woman could have impressed on the first human couple the closeness of their union. There was no arrangement for divorce or for having more than one mate at the same time.

1, 2. (a) How did marriage begin? (b) What could the first man and woman have realized about marriage? (See opening picture.)

HOW MARRIAGE SERVES JEHOVAH'S PURPOSE

³ Adam was delighted with his lovely wife, whom he later named Eve. Being “a complement” of him, she would be “a helper for him” as they daily brought happiness to each other by fulfilling their roles as husband and wife. (Gen. 2:18) An important purpose of marriage was to populate the earth. (Gen. 1:28) Though they loved their parents, sons and daughters would leave them to get married and form new households. Humans would fill the earth to a comfortable degree and would extend their home until the entire globe was a paradise.

⁴ The first marriage was struck with calamity because both Adam and Eve chose to misuse their free will by disobeying Jehovah. “The original serpent,” Satan the Devil, deceived Eve by leading her to believe that eating fruit from “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” imparted special knowledge that would enable her to decide what was good and what was bad. She did not show respect for her husband’s headship by asking him about the matter. And instead of obeying God, Adam accepted the fruit Eve held out to him.—Rev. 12:9; Gen. 2:9, 16, 17; 3:1-6.

⁵ When brought to account by God, Adam blamed his wife, saying: “The woman whom you gave to be with me, she gave me fruit from the tree, so I ate.” Eve blamed the serpent for deceiving her. (Gen. 3:12, 13) Lame excuses

but no justification! Because the first human pair had disobeyed Jehovah, they stood before him as condemned rebels. What a warning for us! For success in marriage, each mate must accept personal responsibility and obey Jehovah.

⁶ Despite what Satan did in Eden, Jehovah held out hope for mankind in the first Bible prophecy. (**Read Genesis 3:15.**) The original rebellious spirit creature would be crushed by the “offspring” of “the woman.” Jehovah thus gave humans a glimpse of the special relationship that exists between him and the vast throngs of righteous spirit creatures serving him in heaven. The Scriptures later revealed that from his wife-like organization, God would send one who would “crush” the Devil and provide the means for obedient mankind to enjoy the prospect that the first human pair lost—that of living forever on the earth in keeping with Jehovah’s original purpose.—John 3:16.

⁷ The rebellion of Adam and Eve had an impact on their marriage and on all marriages thereafter. For example, Eve and her female descendants would experience much pain during pregnancy and childbirth. Women would have a longing for their husbands, but men would dominate their wives, even abusively, as we see in many marriages today. (Gen. 3:16) The Bible requires that husbands exercise headship in a loving way. In turn, wives are to submit to the headship of their husbands. (Eph. 5:33) Because of cooperation between God-fearing

3. What was an important purpose of marriage?

4. What happened to the first marriage?

5. What can we learn from Adam’s and Eve’s responses to Jehovah?

6. How would you explain Genesis 3:15?

7. (a) What has happened to marriage since the rebellion of Adam and Eve? (b) What does the Bible require of husbands and wives?

mates, situations that cause friction are kept to a minimum or eliminated entirely.

MARRIAGE FROM THE TIME OF ADAM TO THE FLOOD

⁸ Before sin and imperfection brought about the death of Adam and Eve, the couple produced sons and daughters. (Gen. 5:4) Their first son, Cain, married one of his female relatives. Cain's descendant Lamech is the first man reported as having two wives. (Gen. 4:17, 19) In the generations from Adam to the Flood of Noah's day, only a few individuals are identified as worshippers of Jehovah. Among them were Abel, Enoch, and Noah and his family. In Noah's day, "the sons of the true God began to notice that the daughters of men were beautiful," says the Bible. "So they began taking as wives all whom they chose." This unnatural union of materialized angels and women produced violent hybrids known as Nephilim. Moreover, "man's wickedness was great on the earth" and "every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only bad all the time."—Gen. 6:1-5.

⁹ Jehovah brought about the Flood of Noah's day in order to destroy the wicked. At that time, people were so occupied with the daily affairs of life, including marriage, that they did not take seriously what "Noah, a preacher of righteousness," said about the impending destruction. (2 Pet. 2:5) Jesus compared conditions then with what we would see in our day. **(Read Matthew**

24:37-39.) Today, most people refuse to listen to the good news of God's Kingdom that is being preached throughout the earth for a witness to all the nations before this wicked system is brought to its end. Let us take to heart the lesson that even family-matters, such as marriage and the raising of children, should not be allowed to crowd out our sense of urgency as to Jehovah's day.

MARRIAGE FROM THE FLOOD TO JESUS' DAY

¹⁰ Although Noah and his three sons each had only one wife, polygamy was practiced in patriarchal times. In many cultures, sexual immorality became a way of life, even being incorporated into religious rites. When Abram (Abraham) and his wife, Sarai (Sarah), obeyed God and moved to Canaan, that land was filled with practices that made a mockery of marriage. Jehovah therefore decreed that Sodom and Gomorrah be destroyed because inhabitants of those cities practiced or condoned gross sexual immorality. Abraham took the proper lead in his family, and Sarah set a fine example by submitting to her husband's headship. **(Read 1 Peter 3:3-6.)** Abraham made sure that his son Isaac married a worshipper of Jehovah. Similar concern for true worship guided Isaac's son Jacob, whose sons became the forefathers of the 12 tribes of Israel.

¹¹ Later, Jehovah brought the descendants of Jacob (Israel) into a covenant relationship with Him. The basic

8. What is the history of marriage from the time of Adam to the Flood?

9. What did Jehovah do to the wicked in Noah's day, and what lesson should we learn from what happened at that time?

10. (a) In many cultures, what sexual practices became a way of life? (b) How did Abraham and Sarah set a good example in their marriage?

11. How did the Mosaic Law protect the Israelites?

marriage practices of patriarchal times, including polygamy, were regulated by the Mosaic Law. It helped to protect the Israelites spiritually by prohibiting marriage to false worshippers. (**Read Deuteronomy 7:3, 4.**) When serious problems arose in marriage, help was often provided by the elders. Unfaithfulness, jealousy, and suspicions were dealt with appropriately. Divorce was allowed, but it too was regulated. A man could divorce his wife for “something indecent.” (Deut. 24:1) What was “indecent” is not defined, but it is reasonable to assume that it did not include petty issues.—Lev. 19:18.

NEVER DEAL TREACHEROUSLY WITH YOUR MATE

¹² In the days of the prophet Malachi, many Jewish husbands dealt treacherously with their wives by divorcing them, using all kinds of excuses. Such men thus rid themselves of the wives of their youth, perhaps to marry younger women or even pagan women. Jewish men were still treacherously divorcing their wives “on every sort of grounds” when Jesus was on earth. (Matt. 19:3) Jehovah God hated such divorcing.—**Read Malachi 2:13-16.**

¹³ Today, marital treachery cannot be tolerated among Jehovah’s people. But suppose a baptized married man or woman ran off with another person’s mate and married that one after obtaining a divorce. If he is unrepentant, the wrongdoer would be disfellowshipped in order to maintain the spiritual purity

12, 13. (a) How were some men treating their wives in Malachi’s day? (b) Today, if a baptized person ran off with someone else’s mate, what would the consequences be?

of the congregation. (1 Cor. 5:11-13) He or she would have to “produce fruits that befit repentance” before being accepted back into the congregation. (Luke 3:8; 2 Cor. 2:5-10) Though no set time must pass before that person’s reinstatement, such treachery, which seldom occurs among those associated with God’s people, cannot be ignored. It might take quite some time—a year or more—for the sinner to give proof of true repentance. Even if the person is reinstated, he or she must still render an account “before the judgment seat of God.”—Rom. 14:10-12; see *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1979, pp. 31-32.

MARRIAGE AMONG CHRISTIANS

¹⁴ The Mosaic Law governed Israel’s affairs for over 1,500 years. It helped God’s people to keep righteous principles in mind in handling family matters and other concerns while it served as a guardian leading to the Messiah. (Gal. 3:23, 24) With the cancellation of the Law at Jesus’ death, God began a new arrangement. (Heb. 8:6) Under it, some concessions in the Law were no longer allowed.

¹⁵ In response to a question posed by some Pharisees, Jesus said that the concession made by Moses to divorce one’s mate had “not been the case from the beginning.” (Matt. 19:6-8) Jesus thus indicated that the divine standard for marriage that was set in Eden would prevail in the Christian congregation. (1 Tim. 3:2, 12) Being “one flesh,”

14. What overall purpose did the Law serve?

15. (a) In the Christian congregation, what would be the standard for marriage? (b) What factors should a Christian consider when contemplating divorce?

marriage mates were to stick together, allowing love for God and for each other to strengthen their bond. A legal divorce not based on sexual immorality would not free one to remarry. (Matt. 19:9) Of course, a person might choose to forgive an adulterous but repentant mate, even as the prophet Hosea apparently forgave his immoral wife, Gomer. Similarly, Jehovah extended mercy to repentant Israel after that nation's spiritual adultery. (Hos. 3:1-5) It might be added that if a person knows that his or her mate committed adultery and chooses to resume sexual relations with the guilty mate, such an action constitutes forgiveness and removes a Scriptural basis for divorce.

¹⁶ After indicating that among true Christians there is no basis for divorce except sexual immorality, Jesus spoke of "those who have the gift" of living a single life. He added: "Let the one who can make room for it make room for it." (Matt. 19:10-12) Many have chosen to remain single in order to serve Jehovah with an undivided mind. For doing so, they are to be commended.

¹⁷ Whether to stay single or to get married is a matter of determining in one's heart if one is able to cultivate the gift of singleness. The apostle Paul recommended singleness; yet, he said: "Because of the prevalence of sexual immorality, let each man have his own wife and each woman have her own husband." Paul added: "If they do not have self-control, let them marry, for it is better to marry than to be inflamed with

passion." Getting married can help a person to avoid letting passion lead him to such a practice as masturbation or to sexual immorality. In addition, age is a factor to consider, for the apostle stated: "If anyone thinks he is behaving improperly by remaining unmarried, and if he is past the bloom of youth, then this is what should take place: Let him do what he wants; he does not sin. Let them marry." (1 Cor. 7:2, 9, 36; 1 Tim. 4:1-3) Nevertheless, a person should not be prompted to marry because of surges of passion that may come in youth. He may not be mature enough to take on the responsibilities of married life.

¹⁸ Christian marriage should begin with a man and a woman who are dedicated to Jehovah and love him wholeheartedly. They should also have come to love each other so much that they want to unite their lives in the marital bond. Of course, they will be blessed for having followed the counsel to marry "only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39) Once married, they will undoubtedly agree that the Bible gives the best advice for making their marriage a success.

¹⁹ The following article will discuss Scriptural points that can help married Christians face the challenges of living deep in "the last days" when so many men and women have traits that work against success in marriage. (2 Tim. 3:1-5) In his precious Word, Jehovah has given us what we need in order to have a successful and happy marriage as we keep on walking with his people on the road to everlasting life.—Matt. 7:13, 14.

16. What did Jesus say about singleness?

17. What can help a Christian to decide whether to get married?

18, 19. (a) How should a Christian marriage begin? (b) What will the following article discuss?



Making Christian Marriage a Success

“Each one of you must love his wife as he does himself; . . . the wife should have deep respect for her husband.”—EPH. 5:33.

WHEN a lovely bride appears before her handsome bridegroom on their wedding day, words can hardly describe their joy. During courtship, their love has grown so much that they are ready to vow that they will be faithful to each other in marriage. Of course, adjustments are needed as two lives are blended and a new household is established. But God’s Word provides wise advice for all who choose to get married, for the loving Originator of marriage wants each couple to have a good measure of success and happiness in their married life. (Prov. 18:22) Yet, the Scriptures clearly tell us that imperfect humans who get married “will have tribulation in their flesh.” (1 Cor. 7:28) How can such tribulation be kept to a minimum? And what will make Christian marriage a success?

² The Bible emphasizes the importance of love. Tender affection (Greek, *phi-li’a*) is needed in a marriage. Romantic

1. Although marriage usually begins with joy, what can those who marry expect to experience? (See opening picture.)
2. What kinds of love should marriage mates show?

SONGS: 87, 3

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What responsibilities did God give husbands and wives?

Why are love and tenderness very important in a marriage?

How can the Bible help if there are problems in a marriage?

love (*e'ros*) brings delight, and love for family (*stor-ge'*) is vital when children enter the picture. However, it is love based on principle (*a-ga'pe*) that ensures the success of a marriage. Concerning this love, the apostle Paul wrote: "Each one of you must love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for her husband."—Eph. 5:33.

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE ROLES OF MARRIAGE MATES

³ Paul wrote: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and gave himself up for it." (Eph. 5:25) Imitating Jesus' example requires that his followers love one another just as he loved them. **(Read John 13:34, 35; 15:12, 13.)** Marital love shown by Christians should therefore be so strong that either mate would be willing, if necessary, to die for the other. That may be the last thing one would be inclined to do if a serious disagreement were to develop. Nevertheless, *a-ga'pe* love "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Yes, "love never fails." (1 Cor. 13:7, 8) Remembering their vow to love each other and to be faithful to each other will help God-fearing marriage mates work together in harmony with Jehovah's lofty principles to resolve any problems that may arise.

⁴ Focusing on the personal duties of each marriage mate, Paul wrote: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord, because a husband is

head of his wife just as the Christ is head of the congregation." (Eph. 5:22, 23) This arrangement does not make a wife inferior to her husband. It actually helps her to fulfill the role God had in mind for a wife when he said: "It is not good for the man [Adam] to continue to be alone. I am going to make a helper for him, as a complement of him." (Gen. 2:18) Just as Christ, the "head of the congregation," displays love, a Christian husband is to exercise loving headship. When he does so, his wife feels secure and finds satisfaction in being respectful, supportive, and submissive.

⁵ Admitting that marriage calls for adjustments, Cathy^[1] says: "As a single sister, I was independent and took care of myself. Marriage was an adjustment for me as I learned to rely on my husband. It has not always been easy, but we have drawn so much closer as a couple by doing things Jehovah's way." Her husband, Fred, says: "Making decisions was never easy for me. In marriage, taking two people into consideration adds to the challenge. But by seeking Jehovah's guidance in prayer and really listening to my wife's input, it gets easier every day. I feel that we are a real team!"

⁶ A solid marriage is made up of two people who make allowances for each other's imperfections. They 'continue putting up with each other and forgiving each other freely.' Yes, both mates will make mistakes. When that happens, however, there are opportunities to learn from these errors, to be forgiving, and to let love have full sway as "a perfect bond of union." (Col. 3:13, 14) Moreover, "love is patient and kind.

6. How does love serve as "a perfect bond of union" when problems develop in a marriage?

3. How strong should love be in a marriage?

4, 5. (a) What is a husband's responsibility as a family head? (b) How should a wife view headship? (c) What adjustments did one married couple need to make?

. . . It does not keep account of the injury.” (1 Cor. 13:4, 5) Misunderstandings should be cleared away as soon as possible. A Christian couple, therefore, should try to settle any issue between them before the day ends. (Eph. 4:26, 27) Sincerely saying “I am sorry for hurting you” takes humility and courage, but it goes a long way in solving problems and drawing marriage partners closer together.

A SPECIAL NEED FOR TENDERNESS

⁷ The Bible gives sound counsel that can help a couple to have a balanced view of the marital due. **(Read 1 Corinthians 7:3-5.)** Loving consideration of the mate’s feelings and needs is essential. If a wife is not treated tenderly, she may find it difficult to enjoy this aspect of marriage. Husbands are told to deal with their wives “according to knowledge.” (1 Pet. 3:7) Sexual relations should never be forced or demanded but should come naturally. The man can often respond more quickly than the woman, but emotionally the time should be right for both mates.

⁸ Although the Bible does not provide specific rules about the kinds and limits of love play that might be associated with natural sexual intimacy, it mentions displays of affection. (Song of Sol. 1:2; 2:6) Christian marriage partners should treat each other with tenderness.

⁹ Strong love for God and neighbor will not allow anyone or anything to interfere with the marriage bond. Some

marriages have been strained or even ruined by a mate’s addiction to pornography. Any tendency toward being attracted to this or toward sexual interests of any sort outside marriage should be firmly resisted. Even giving the appearance of flirting with someone to whom one is not married is unloving and should be avoided. Remembering that God is aware of all our thoughts and actions will reinforce our desire to please him and to remain chaste.—**Read Matthew 5:27, 28; Hebrews 4:13.**

WHEN MARRIAGE TIES ARE STRAINED

¹⁰ Serious problems that persist in marriage may lead one mate or both mates to consider separation or divorce. In some lands, more than half of all marriages end in divorce. This trend is not as common in the Christian congregation, but increasing marital problems among God’s people are a cause for concern.

¹¹ The Bible gives these instructions: “A wife should not separate from her husband. But if she does separate, let her remain unmarried or else be reconciled with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife.” (1 Cor. 7:10, 11) Separating from one’s marriage partner should not be viewed lightly. Though separation may seem to be the answer when serious difficulties arise, it often causes more problems. After repeating what God had stated about a man leaving his father and his mother and sticking to his wife, Jesus said: “What God has yoked together, let no

7, 8. (a) What advice does the Bible give regarding sexual relations in marriage? (b) Why do marriage mates need to show tenderness?

9. Why is sexual interest in anyone who is not one’s own marriage mate unacceptable?

10, 11. (a) How common is divorce? (b) What does the Bible say about separation? (c) What will help a marriage mate not to separate quickly?

man put apart.” (Matt. 19:3-6; Gen. 2:24) This also means that neither a husband nor a wife should ‘put apart what God has yoked together.’ Jehovah views marriage as a lifelong bond. (1 Cor. 7:39) Bearing in mind that all of us will render an account to God should move marriage mates to make earnest efforts to resolve problems quickly so that these do not become more serious.

¹² Unrealistic expectations may be at the root of a marital problem. When dreams about a happy marriage do not come true, a person may feel dissatisfied, cheated, even bitter. Differences in emotional nature and upbringing may become issues, or disagreements may arise regarding money, in-laws, and child-rearing. However, it is commendable that the vast majority of Christian married couples find mutually acceptable solutions for all such problems because they let God guide them.

¹³ Separation might at times be justified. Willful nonsupport, extreme physical abuse, and the absolute endangerment of one’s spiritual life are exceptional situations that some have viewed as reasons for separation. Christian marriage mates who have serious problems should seek help from the elders. These experienced brothers can assist married couples to apply the counsel of God’s Word. In resolving marital problems, we should also pray for Jehovah’s spirit and his help in applying Bible principles and displaying the fruitage of his spirit.—Gal. 5:22, 23.^[2]

12. What may lead a marriage mate to consider separation?

13. What are valid reasons for separation?

¹⁴ In some cases, a Christian is married to one who is not yet a servant of Jehovah. Under those circumstances, the Bible gives good reasons why they should remain together. (**Read 1 Corinthians 7:12-14.**) Whether the unbelieving mate realizes it or not, he or she is “sanctified” because of being married to a believer. Any children born to them are considered “holy” and thus have a standing with God. Paul reasons: “Wife, how do you know whether you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know whether you will save your wife?” (1 Cor. 7:16) Nearly every congregation of Jehovah’s Witnesses has married couples in which the Christian has been instrumental in ‘saving’ his or her mate.

¹⁵ The apostle Peter counsels Christian wives to be in subjection to their husbands, “so that if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eye-witnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect.” By conduct reflecting “the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God,” a wife may do more to win her husband over to true worship than she would by being too forward in speaking about Christian beliefs.—1 Pet. 3:1-4.

¹⁶ What if an unbelieving marriage mate chooses to separate? The Bible says: “If the unbelieving one chooses to depart, let him depart; a brother or

14. What does the Bible say to Christians married to mates who are not worshippers of Jehovah?

15, 16. (a) What counsel does the Bible give Christian wives whose husbands are not servants of God? (b) What is the position of a Christian “if the unbelieving one chooses to depart”?

Giving priority to spiritual matters can increase the happiness of your marriage
(See paragraph 17)



a sister is not bound under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace.” (1 Cor. 7:15) This does not mean that the Christian is now Scripturally free to remarry, but there is no obligation to try to force the unbelieving mate to remain. Separation may bring a measure of peace. And the Christian can hope that the departing mate will return with a willingness to work together in preserving the marriage and will eventually become a fellow believer.

MARRIAGE AND OUR FIRST PRIORITY

¹⁷ Because we are living deep in “the last days,” we are experiencing “critical times hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1-5) Yet, keeping spiritually strong will do much to offset this world’s negative influences. “The time left is reduced,” wrote Paul. “From now on, let those who have wives be as though they had none,

17. What should be the first priority of Christian married couples?

... and those making use of the world as those not using it to the full.” (1 Cor. 7:29-31) Paul was not telling married couples to neglect their marital duties. In view of the reduced time, however, they needed to give priority to spiritual matters.—Matt. 6:33.

¹⁸ Although we are living in very trying times and marital relationships are failing all around us, it is possible for us to make marriage happy and successful. Indeed, married Christians who stick with Jehovah’s people, apply Scriptural counsel, and accept the guidance of Jehovah’s holy spirit can preserve “what God has yoked together.”—Mark 10:9.

18. Why is it possible for Christians to have a happy and successful marriage?

ENDNOTES:

[1] (paragraph 5) Names have been changed.

[2] (paragraph 13) See the book “Keep Yourselves in God’s Love,” appendix, “The Bible’s View on Divorce and Separation,” pp. 219-221.

Seek Something Much Better Than Gold

Have you ever found a gold nugget? Very few people have. Yet, millions have discovered something much better. It is divine wisdom, which “cannot be bought with pure gold.”—Job 28:12, 15.

IN SOME ways, sincere Bible students are like prospectors looking for gold. Such students need to work hard and keep on searching the Scriptures to find priceless wisdom. In this regard, what can we learn by considering three ways in which gold is found?

YOU FIND A NUGGET!

Imagine that you are walking near a riverbank and see what seems to be a tiny pebble reflecting the sunlight. You stoop down and are delighted to find a gold nugget. It is smaller than a match head and rarer than a high-quality diamond. Of course, you look around to see if there are more nuggets to be found.

Similarly, on a memorable day some time ago, one of Jehovah’s servants may have called at your door to discuss the message of hope found in the Bible. Perhaps you vividly recall the moment when you discovered your first spiritual gold nugget, so to speak. That may have happened when you first saw God’s name, Jehovah, in the Bible. (Ps. 83:18) Or perhaps when you


learned that you could become Jehovah’s friend. (Jas. 2:23) You knew immediately that you had found something better than gold! And you may have been eager to find more spiritual nuggets.

YOU FIND MORE!

Tiny specks or flakes of gold sometimes accumulate in creeks and rivers. This is called alluvial gold. In a single season, hardworking prospectors may find in such deposits several pounds of gold, worth tens of thousands of dollars.

When you began to study the Bible with one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you may have felt like a prospector who pans a rich deposit of gold. Meditating on one Bible verse after another likely added to your fund of knowledge, something that enriched you spiritually. As you eagerly scooped up those precious Bible truths, you learned how you could draw close to Jehovah and keep yourself in his love with everlasting life in view.—Jas. 4:8; Jude 20, 21.

Just as a prospector seeks to find precious deposits of alluvial gold, you may have been very



Like a prospector who
exerts himself to find gold,
do you work hard to learn
precious Bible truths?

diligent in searching for valuable spiritual riches. After learning the fundamental Bible truths, you were likely moved to take the steps that led to dedication and baptism.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

KEEP ON SEARCHING!

A prospector may find tiny quantities of gold inside igneous rocks. Some patches of such rocks contain concentrations of gold high enough to mine the ore and crush it to extract the gold. At first glance, the gold may not be visible in the ore. Why not? Because high-quality ore may contain only about 0.3 troy ounce (10 g) of gold per ton of rock! Nevertheless, to the prospector it is worth the effort to mine it.

Effort is also needed after a person has moved beyond “the primary doctrine about the Christ.” (Heb. 6:1, 2) You need to work hard to extract fresh points and practical lessons from your Bible study. So, what can you do to make sure that your personal Bible study remains productive, even though you may have been studying the Scriptures for years?

Remain eager to learn. Pay close attention to details. Continue putting forth effort, and you will find valuable Scriptural nuggets of divine wisdom and guidance. (Rom. 11:33) To increase your knowledge of the Scriptures, make good use of the research tools available in your language. Patiently look for the direction you need and for answers to your Bible questions. Ask others what scriptures and articles they have found to be especially helpful and encouraging. Share interesting points that you have discovered during your study of God’s Word.

Of course, your goal is not simply to increase factual knowledge. The apostle Paul warned that “knowledge puffs up.” (1 Cor. 8:1) Therefore, work hard to remain humble and strong in faith. Regular family worship and personal Bible study will help you to live in harmony with Jehovah’s standards and will motivate you to help others. Above all, you will rejoice because you have found something much better than gold.—Prov. 3:13, 14.



Do You See the Need to Make Spiritual Progress?

“Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching.”—1 TIM. 4:13.

SONGS: 45, 70

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What can you do to make spiritual progress?

How can you progress spiritually without growing weary?

What adjustments might make you more effective in the ministry?

“THE little one will become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation.” (Isa. 60:22) Those prophetic words are undergoing fulfillment in these last days. Why, during the 2015 service year, 8,220,105 Kingdom publishers have been active in the world field! The last part of that prophecy should affect all Christians personally, for our heavenly Father says: “I myself, Jehovah, will speed it up in its own time.” Like passengers in a vehicle gaining speed, we sense the increased momentum in the disciple-making work. How are we personally reacting to that acceleration? Are we doing all we can as zealous Kingdom publishers? Many brothers and sisters are applying to serve as regular or auxiliary pioneers. And do we not rejoice to see so many answer the call to serve where the need is greater or participate in other areas of theocratic activity?

² At the same time, we see increased demands for more workers. Some 2,000 congregations are formed each year. If 5 elders were to serve in each new congregation, 10,000 ministerial servants would need to qualify as overseers each year.

1, 2. (a) How has Isaiah 60:22 come true in this time of the end?
(b) What needs now exist in the earthly part of Jehovah’s organization?

This means that it would be necessary for thousands of brothers to meet the qualifications needed in order to serve as ministerial servants. In addition to this, whether we are brothers or sisters, we certainly have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.”—1 Cor. 15:58.

WHAT IT MEANS TO MAKE SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

³ **Read 1 Timothy 3:1.** The Greek verb translated “reaching out” means stretching to grasp something, perhaps something beyond your normal reach. In using that word, the apostle Paul stressed that spiritual progress requires effort. Imagine a brother thinking about his future in the congregation. He may not now be serving as a ministerial servant, but he realizes that he needs to cultivate spiritual qualities. First, he strives to qualify as a ministerial servant. In time, he hopes to be spiritually qualified to serve as an overseer. In each case, he works hard to meet the qualifications needed to care for added responsibility in the congregation.

⁴ In like manner, brothers and sisters who desire to serve as pioneers, as Bethelites, or as Kingdom Hall construction volunteers do well to stretch forward to attain their goals. Let us consider how God’s Word encourages all to make progress in true worship.

STRIVE TO MAKE GREATER SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

⁵ Young people have the strength needed to accomplish much in Jeho-

vah’s service. **(Read Proverbs 20:29.)** Some young brothers in Bethel service have a part in printing and binding Bibles and Bible literature. Many young brothers and sisters share in the work of building and maintaining Kingdom Halls. When natural disasters strike, young people join more experienced Witnesses in carrying through with relief efforts. And many young pioneers help to take the good news to indigenous and foreign-language communities.

⁶ Very likely, you appreciate the importance of wholehearted service to God. But what if you feel the way a brother named Aaron once did? Although he grew up in a Christian family, he admitted, “I found the meetings and field service boring.” He wanted to serve God with joy but wondered why he was not happy. What did he do?

⁷ Aaron pursued a spiritual routine that included Bible reading, preparing for meetings, and commenting at them. He especially started praying regularly. As his love for Jehovah increased, he began to make fine spiritual progress. Since then, Aaron has enjoyed pioneering, working with others in connection with disaster relief, and preaching in a foreign land. Aaron now serves at Bethel and is an elder. How does he view the course he has taken? “I have ‘tasted and seen that Jehovah is good.’ Because of his blessing, I feel indebted to him and am moved to do more in his service, and this results in more blessings.”

⁸ The psalmist sang: “Those seeking Jehovah will lack nothing good.”

3, 4. What does making spiritual progress mean to you?

5. How can young people use their strength in Kingdom service?

6-8. (a) How did one young man change his view of God’s service, and with what result? (b) How can we “taste and see that Jehovah is good”?

(Read Psalm 34:8-10.) Indeed, Jehovah never disappoints those who zealously serve him. We personally “taste and see that Jehovah is good” as we do all we can in his service. And when we give God whole-souled worship, we experience happiness that has no equal.

PERSEVERE AND DO NOT GROW WEARY

⁹ As you work toward your goals, show “a waiting attitude.” (Mic. 7:7) Jehovah always supports his faithful servants, even though he may allow them to wait for privileges or a favorable change of circumstances. He promised Abraham a son, but the patriarch had to exercise faith and patience. (Heb. 6:12-

9, 10. Why is it important for you to have “a waiting attitude”?

15) Although he waited years for Isaac’s birth, Abraham did not lose heart, and Jehovah did not disappoint him.—Gen. 15:3, 4; 21:5.

¹⁰ Waiting is not easy. (Prov. 13:12) If we were to brood over disappointments, we could become very discouraged. Instead, it is wise to use our time to improve our spiritual qualifications. Note three ways to do so.

¹¹ *Develop spiritual qualities.* By reading God’s Word and meditating on it, we can develop wisdom, insight, good judgment, knowledge, thinking ability, and soundness of mind. Such qualities are vital for those taking the lead in true worship. (Prov. 1:1-4; Titus 1:7-9) And

11. What spiritual qualities can we work to develop, and why are they important?

ARE YOU WILLING TO TRY A DIFFERENT METHOD?

VENECIA, a sister in Venezuela, said: “I could never imagine myself witnessing by phone.” But she called an acquaintance and made a brief presentation. The lady was eager to discuss the Bible, and Venecia began conducting a study with her. The student eventually got baptized. Now Venecia says: “Phone witnessing works!”

In Liberia, Peter customarily took our literature to school. Some classmates saw the tract *Youths—What Will You Do With Your Life?* and requested copies. Peter discussed the tract with them and asked:

“What will you do with your life?” One young man said: “I want to use my life to serve God.” Peter began a Bible study with him.

Because of health problems, a married couple in Poland began to witness by letter. In his response, one man wrote: “I am very grateful for your comforting words. My wife died three years ago, and last year my son was killed in an accident.” In a delayed reply, a woman wrote: “Your letter helped me to learn the truth. After two years, I am writing back as your Christian sister.”

as we read our Bible-based publications, we can discern God's thinking on many matters. Daily, we face issues involving entertainment, dress and grooming, managing money, and getting along with others. By applying what we learn from the Bible, we can make decisions that please Jehovah.

¹² *Prove yourself trustworthy.* Whether we are brothers or sisters, we need to do our best to care for any theocratic assignment we receive. As governor, Nehemiah had to fill positions of responsibility among God's people. Whom did he appoint? He used those who were God-fearing, trustworthy, and reliable. (Neh. 7:2; 13:12, 13) Today as well, "what is expected of stewards is that they be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4:2) Fine works do not go unnoticed.—**Read 1 Timothy 5:25.**

¹³ *Let Jehovah refine you.* What can you do if others treat you unfairly? Perhaps you can straighten out the matter quickly. At times, though, by vigorously defending yourself, you make a problem worse. Joseph's brothers mistreated him, but he did not harbor resentment. Later, Joseph was falsely accused and unjustly imprisoned. However, he let Jehovah guide him through difficult times. The result? "The saying of Jehovah is what refined him." (Ps. 105:19) When those tests ended, Joseph qualified for a special assignment. (Gen. 41:37-44; 45:4-8) As you deal with thorny problems, pray for wisdom, act and speak with mildness, and look to God for strength. Jehovah will help you.—**Read 1 Peter 5:10.**

12. How can members of the congregation prove themselves trustworthy?

13. How can you follow Joseph's example if others treat you unfairly?

MAKE PROGRESS IN THE FIELD MINISTRY

¹⁴ Paul urged Timothy: "Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. Pay constant attention to yourself and to your teaching." (1 Tim. 4:13, 16) Timothy was already an experienced Kingdom proclaimer. Yet, his ministry would be effective only if he would "pay constant attention" to his teaching. He could not take for granted that people would respond to his usual approach. To continue reaching their hearts, he had to adapt his teaching methods to their needs. As Kingdom proclaimers, we need to do the same.

¹⁵ We often find that people are not at home when we preach from door to door. In some areas, we cannot enter certain apartment buildings and gated communities. If that is true in your territory, why not consider different ways to preach the good news?

¹⁶ Public witnessing is one excellent method of spreading the good news. Many Witnesses are having a very effective and rewarding share in such work. They set aside time to approach people at train and bus stations, in marketplaces and parks, and in other public areas. Using good judgment, a Witness may start a conversation with someone by commenting on the news, complimenting the person's children, or asking a question about his work. As

14, 15. (a) Why do we have to "pay constant attention" to the way we preach? (b) How might you adjust to changing conditions? (See opening picture and the box "Are You Willing to Try a Different Method?")

16. How can public witnessing prove to be effective?

the conversation moves along, the publisher brings up a Scriptural point and elicits a response. The person's comments often lead to a further discussion of the Bible.

¹⁷ If you find public witnessing challenging, do not give up. Eddie, a pioneer in New York City, was hesitant about conversing with people in public. In time, however, he gained confidence. What helped him? He says: "During our family worship, my wife and I do research to find answers to objections and opinions people express. We also ask other Witnesses for suggestions." Now Eddie looks forward to public witnessing.

¹⁸ As you gain skill and confidence in preaching the good news, your spiritual advancement will be evident. **(Read 1 Timothy 4:15.)** Moreover, you will undoubtedly laud our heavenly Father as did David, who sang: "I will praise Jehovah at all times; his praise will be on my lips constantly. I will boast in Jehovah; the meek will hear and rejoice." (Ps. 34:1, 2) And it may well be that as a result of your ministry, meek ones will joyfully join you in true worship.

GLORIFY GOD BY MAKING SPIRITUAL PROGRESS

¹⁹ David also sang: "All your works will glorify you, O Jehovah, and your loyal ones will praise you. They will proclaim the glory of your kingship and speak about your mightiness, to make known

17, 18. (a) How might you become more confident in public witnessing? (b) Why do you find David's spirit in praising Jehovah valuable as you engage in the ministry?

19. Why should a loyal servant of Jehovah be happy even if he or she lives in restrictive circumstances?

to men your mighty acts and the glorious splendor of your kingship." (Ps. 145:10-12) Those words surely express the sentiments of all loyal Witnesses of Jehovah. But what if illness or advanced age somewhat limits your ministry? Always remember that as you share the good news with caregivers and others, your sacred service glorifies our wonderful God. If you are imprisoned because of your faith, you likely speak about the truth as circumstances permit, and that makes Jehovah's heart rejoice. (Prov. 27:11) The same is true if you are in a religiously divided household but stick to your spiritual routine. (1 Pet. 3:1-4) Even under adverse circumstances, you can praise Jehovah and make spiritual progress.

²⁰ Jehovah will certainly bless you if you continue to make spiritual progress. Perhaps by making a few changes in your schedule or lifestyle, you can have a greater role in sharing God's precious truth with those who are in need of hope. Moreover, your spiritual progress and course of self-sacrifice can result in priceless benefits to your fellow believers. And because of your humble efforts in the congregation, you will be rewarded by receiving the affection, appreciation, and support of others who love Jehovah.

²¹ Whether we have enjoyed many years or just a few months in Jehovah's service, all of us can make progress in his worship. But how can mature Christians help newer ones to make spiritual advancement? We will discuss that subject in our next study.

20, 21. If you are entrusted with more work in Jehovah's organization, how can you become a blessing to others?



Do You See the Need to Train Others?

“I will give you good instruction.”—PROV. 4:2.

DECLARING the good news of the Kingdom was Jesus’ primary assignment. However, he took time to train others to be shepherds and teachers. (Matt. 10:5-7) Although Philip was busy as an evangelizer, he no doubt helped his four daughters to become effective in sharing Scriptural truths with others. (Acts 21:8, 9) How important is such training today?

² Worldwide, the number of people accepting the good news is growing. New ones who are not yet baptized need to grasp the importance of personal Bible study. They must also be taught to preach the good news to others and to teach them the truth. In our congregations, brothers need to be encouraged to work hard in order to qualify for appointment as ministerial servants and elders. By means of “good instruction,” mature Christians can help new ones to make spiritual progress.—Prov. 4:2.

1, 2. Why must we train others to take up theocratic assignments?

SONGS: 93, 96

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why should we build in Bible students a strong desire to study the Scriptures personally?

How can we help new ones to converse with householders and others?

Why should efforts be made to train prospective shepherds of God’s flock?

Perseverance Is Essential

As they preach the Kingdom message, new publishers need to learn that perseverance is sometimes necessary. A brother in Ghana placed literature with a young man who thereafter hid from him for weeks. After repeated visits, the Witness finally contacted him, but the young person tried to end the conversation. When the brother offered to show him how to study the Bible, he agreed. From then on, he no longer hid from Jehovah's Witnesses. Some months later, the young man was baptized at an assembly.

HELP NEW ONES ACQUIRE STRENGTH AND WISDOM FROM GOD'S WORD

³ How important is personal study of the Scriptures? We find the answer in the apostle Paul's words to fellow Christians in Colossae. He wrote: "We have never stopped praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the accurate knowledge of [God's] will in all wisdom and spiritual comprehension, so as to walk worthily of Jehovah in order to please him fully as you go on bearing fruit in every good work and increasing in the accurate knowledge of God." (Col. 1:9, 10) With such accurate knowledge, the Colossian Christians would be able "to walk worthily of Jehovah in order to please him fully." This would enable

3, 4. (a) How did Paul connect study of the Scriptures with a productive ministry? (b) Before we encourage our students to study the Bible on their own, what must we be doing?

them to continue "bearing fruit in every good work," especially in the preaching of the good news. To serve effectively, a worshipper of Jehovah must follow a routine of Bible study. We do well to help Bible students grasp that fact.

⁴ Before helping others to benefit from personal Bible study, we ourselves must be convinced of its value. In fact, we ourselves need to have good Bible study habits. So you might ask yourself: 'When householders express opinions that are contrary to Scriptural teachings or they ask difficult questions, am I able to give answers that are based on the Bible? When I read about how Jesus, Paul, and others persevered in the ministry, do I meditate on how their perseverance ought to affect my service to Jehovah?' All of us need knowledge and counsel from God's Word. And if we tell others how much we have benefited from our personal study of the Bible, we may encourage them to obtain such benefits by being diligent students of the Scriptures.

⁵ You may ask, 'How can I train my student to study the Bible regularly?' A good start is by showing him how to prepare for the study you conduct with him. You might suggest that he read portions of the appendix of the *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* book and look up cited scriptures. Help him to prepare for the meetings with the goal of commenting. Encourage him to read every issue of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* If the *Watchtower Library* or *Watchtower ONLINE LIBRARY* is available in his language, you can show him how to use it to answer Bible questions. As a result of such help, very likely your Bible student will soon be de-

5. Give a suggestion on how to help new ones to have a routine of personal Bible study.

lighting in his personal study of God's Word.

⁶ Of course, we should not pressure anyone to read and study the Bible. Rather, let us use the tools provided by Jehovah's organization to help our student deepen his or her love for the Bible. In time, the sincere student may well feel as did the psalmist who sang: "Drawing near to God is good for me. I have made the Sovereign Lord Jehovah my refuge." (Ps. 73:28) Jehovah's spirit will act on such a conscientious and appreciative Bible student.

TRAIN NEW ONES TO PREACH AND TEACH

⁷ In Matthew chapter 10, we find instructions that Jesus gave to his 12 apostles. Rather than speak in generalities, he covered specific points.^[1] The apostles listened as Jesus taught them how to preach effectively. Then the group went into the field. Having been able to observe Jesus' methods, they soon became capable teachers of Scriptural truth. (Matt. 11:1) We can train our Bible students to become effective publishers of the good news. Let us now consider two ways to help them.

⁸ **Converse with people.** Jesus often spoke to individuals about the Kingdom. For instance, he carried on a lively and fruitful conversation with a woman at Jacob's well near the city of Sychar.

6. (a) How can you help your student to cultivate love for the Bible in his heart? (b) What is a Bible student likely to do if he develops heartfelt love for the Scriptures?

7. How did Jesus train proclaimers of the good news? (See opening picture.)

8, 9. (a) How did Jesus approach individuals in his ministry? (b) How can we help new publishers to converse with people as Jesus did?

(John 4:5-30) He also spoke with Matthew Levi, a tax collector. The Gospels record very little of that conversation, but Matthew accepted Jesus' invitation to be his follower. Matthew and others heard Jesus speak at some length during a feast held in Matthew's home.—Matt. 9:9; Luke 5:27-39.

⁹ On another occasion, Jesus spoke in a friendly way to Nathanael, who had a negative view of people from Nazareth. However, Nathanael was moved to change his thinking. He decided to learn more about what Jesus, a man from Nazareth, was teaching. (John 1:46-51) So we have good reason to train new publishers to converse with people in a friendly, relaxed manner.^[2] Those whom we help in this way will likely be delighted to see how honesthearted people respond favorably to personal interest and kind words.

¹⁰ **Cultivate interest.** Jesus had limited time to carry out his ministry. Nevertheless, he took time to cultivate the interest people showed in the good news. For instance, Jesus taught a crowd, using a boat as a platform. On that occasion, he miraculously gave Peter a huge catch of fish and told him: "From now on you will be catching men alive." What result did Jesus' words and actions produce? Peter and his associates "brought the boats back to land and abandoned everything and followed [Jesus]."—Luke 5:1-11.

¹¹ Nicodemus, a member of the Sanhedrin, became interested in Jesus' teaching. He wanted to learn more but was

10-12. (a) How did Jesus cultivate the interest others showed in the good news? (b) How can we help new publishers to improve their skills as teachers of Bible truth?

afraid of what others would say if he spoke with Jesus in public. Jesus was flexible and generous with his time; he met with Nicodemus at night—away from the crowds. (John 3:1, 2) What lesson can we learn from these accounts? God's Son set aside time to build up the faith of individuals. Should we not be diligent in making return visits and conducting Bible studies with interested ones?

¹² New publishers are very likely to improve their skills as teachers of Bible truth if we work with them in the field service. We can help them to keep in mind those who show even slight interest. We can invite new publishers to accompany us when we make return visits and conduct home Bible studies. With such training and encouragement, less experienced publishers will surely want to cultivate the interest of others and conduct Bible studies on their own. They will also learn not to give up quickly but to be patient and persevere in the ministry.—Gal. 5:22; see the box “Perseverance Is Essential.”

TRAIN NEW ONES TO SERVE FELLOW BELIEVERS

¹³ Bible accounts highlight the privilege we have of showing “brotherly affection” and serving one another. **(Read 1 Peter 1:22; Luke 22:24-27.)** The Son of God gave everything, including his life, in ministering to others. (Matt. 20:28) Dorcas “abounded in good deeds and gifts of mercy.” (Acts 9:36, 39) Mary, a sister in Rome, “worked hard” in behalf of those in the congrega-

13, 14. (a) What do you think of the Bible examples of those who made great sacrifices in behalf of others? (b) In what practical ways can you train new publishers and young ones to show love for their brothers and sisters?

tion. (Rom. 16:6) How can we help new ones grasp the importance of helping their brothers and sisters?

¹⁴ Mature Witnesses can invite new ones to come along when visiting the sick and the elderly. If appropriate, parents can take their children on such visits. Elders can work with others in making sure that our dear older ones have good food and that their homes are maintained. In these ways, younger ones and those newly associated learn to perform acts of kindness for others. While preaching, one elder would briefly visit the Witnesses living in his rural territory to see how they were doing. A young brother who often accompanied him thus learned that all in the congregation should feel loved.—Rom. 12:10.

¹⁵ Since Jehovah uses men as teachers in the congregation, it is important for brothers to develop speaking ability. As an elder, could you listen as a ministerial servant practices a talk? With your help, he may be able to improve his skill as a teacher of God's Word.—Neh. 8:8.^[3]

¹⁶ The need for shepherds in the Christian congregation is great, and those who will do such work in the future need ongoing training. Paul provided a general outline of how training can be provided when he told Timothy: “You, . . . my child, keep on acquiring power in the undeserved kindness that is in Christ Jesus; and the things you heard from me that were supported by many witnesses,

15. Why is it important that elders take an interest in the progress of men in the congregation?

16, 17. (a) What interest did Paul take in the progress of Timothy? (b) How can the elders effectively train future shepherds of the congregation?

Train new ones to show
their love for fellow believers
(See paragraphs 13, 14)



these things entrust to faithful men, who, in turn, will be adequately qualified to teach others.” (2 Tim. 2:1, 2) Timothy learned by serving alongside the apostle, an older man. Then Timothy applied Paul’s methods in his own ministry and other aspects of sacred service.—2 Tim. 3:10-12.

¹⁷ Paul did not leave Timothy’s training to chance. He had the young man accompany him. (Acts 16:1-5) Elders can imitate Paul’s example by taking qualified ministerial servants along on shepherd-ing calls when appropriate. Elders thus give such brothers an opportunity to observe firsthand the teaching, faith, patience, and love required of Christian overseers. This procedure contributes to the training of future shepherds of “the flock of God.”—1 Pet. 5:2.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING OTHERS

¹⁸ Training others is vitally important because of increasing needs and opportunities to serve Jehovah. The examples of training provided by Jesus and Paul remain valid. Jehovah wants his modern-day servants to be well-trained for their theocratic assignments. God

18. Why should training others in Jehovah’s service be important to us?

gives us the privilege of helping less experienced ones develop their ability to do the work needed in the congregation. As conditions deteriorate in the world and new opportunities to preach continue to arise, such training becomes both important and urgent.

¹⁹ Of course, training people takes time and effort. But Jehovah and his beloved Son will support us and give us wisdom to provide such training. We will rejoice as we see those whom we assist go on ‘working hard and exerting themselves.’ (1 Tim. 4:10) And may we ourselves continue to make spiritual progress in rendering sacred service to Jehovah.

19. Why should you be convinced that your diligent efforts to train others in Jehovah’s service will be successful?

ENDNOTES:

[1] (paragraph 7) Among the points Jesus covered were the following: (1) Preach the right message. (2) Be content with God’s provisions. (3) Avoid arguing with householders. (4) Trust in God when facing opposers. (5) Do not yield to fear.

[2] (paragraph 9) *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, pp. 62-64, has excellent suggestions on how to converse with people in the field ministry.

[3] (paragraph 15) *Benefit From Theocratic Ministry School Education*, pp. 52-61, explains the qualities needed for effective public speaking.

Why was handwashing an issue for Jesus' antagonists?

■ This was just one of many issues in which Jesus' enemies found fault with him and his disciples. The Mosaic Law included a number of commands on ceremonial purity regarding such matters as bodily discharges, leprosy, and dealing with human and animal corpses. It also gave instructions on how impurities could be removed. This could be done by sacrifice, washing, or sprinkling.—Lev., chaps. 11-15; Num., chap. 19.

The Jewish rabbis expounded on every detail of these laws. One source says that each cause for impurity would be subjected "to questioning concerning the circumstances in which it may be contracted, how and to what extent it may be transmitted to others, the utensils and objects capable and incapable of becoming unclean, and finally, the means and rituals required for purification."

Jesus' opponents asked him: "Why do your disciples not observe the tradition of the men of

former times, but they eat their meal with defiled hands?" (Mark 7:5) Those religious enemies were not referring to the taking of sanitary measures. As a ritual, the rabbis required that water be poured over their hands prior to eating. The above-quoted source adds: "It is also debated which vessels are to be used for the pouring, which kind of water is suitable, who should pour, and how much of the hands should be covered with water."

Jesus' reaction to all these man-made laws was simple. He told the first-century Jewish religious leaders: "Isaiah aptly prophesied about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far removed from me [Jehovah]. It is in vain that they keep worshipping me, for they teach commands of men as doctrines.' You let go of the commandment of God and cling to the tradition of men." —Mark 7:6-8.



“I Am Reaping Fruit to Jehovah’s Praise”

“ALL the wars of the past . . . pale into insignificance before the present great struggle progressing in Europe.” Thus *The Watch Tower* of September 1, 1915, described the first world war, which eventually engulfed about 30 countries. Because of the hostilities, *The Watch Tower* reported: “[Kingdom] service has been to some extent hindered, especially in Germany and France.”

Confronted with a raging conflict of global proportions, the Bible Students did not completely understand the principle of Christian neutrality. However, they were determined to declare the good news. Wanting to do his part in Kingdom service, Wilhelm Hildebrandt ordered copies of *The Bible Students Monthly* in French. He was not in France as a colporteur (full-time preacher) but, rather, as a German soldier. This supposed enemy, dressed in a military uniform, gave a message of peace to astonished French passersby.

Letters printed in *The Watch Tower* indicate that a number of other German Bible Students felt compelled to share the good news of the Kingdom while in the military. Brother Lemke, who served in the navy, reported finding interest among five of his own crewmates. “Even on board this ship, I am reaping fruit to Jehovah’s praise,” he wrote.

Georg Kayser went to the battlefield as a soldier and returned home as a servant of the true God. What happened? He somehow got a Bible Student publication, wholeheartedly embraced Kingdom truth, and laid down his weapons. He then took up noncombatant work. After the war, he served as a zealous pioneer for many years.

Although the Bible Students did not fully understand the issue of neutrality, their attitude and conduct stood in stark contrast with the views and actions of people who welcomed the war. While politicians and church leaders in effect

Johannes Rauthe engaging in the field ministry, probably in the 1920’s





Hans Hölterhoff used this handcart to advertise *The Golden Age*

hoisted national banners, the Bible Students held to the “Prince of Peace.” (Isa. 9:6) Though some did not maintain strict neutrality, they still held the fundamental conviction expressed by Bible Student Konrad Mörtter, “I recognized clearly from God’s Word that a Christian should not kill.”—Ex. 20:13.*

In Germany, where the law made no provision for exemption because of conscientious objection, more than 20 Bible Students refused to have any involvement with the military. Some of them were classed as mentally ill, such as Gustav

* See an account of British Bible Students during World War I in the article “From Our Archives—They Stood Firm in an ‘Hour of Test’” in the May 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*.

Kujath, who was put in a mental institution and drugged. Hans Hölterhoff, who also refused the draft, went to prison, where he rejected all war-related work. Guards trussed him in a straitjacket until his limbs became numb. When that failed to break his resolve, guards staged a mock execution. However, Hans remained steadfast throughout the war.

Other brothers who were drafted refused to bear arms and requested noncombatant roles.* Johannes Rauthe took such a stand and was sent to work on the railways. Konrad Mörtter was assigned as a medical orderly, and Reinhold Weber worked as a nurse. August Krafzig was grateful that his duties did not put him on the battlefield. These Bible Students and others like them were determined to serve Jehovah based on their understanding of love and loyalty.

Because of their conduct during the war, the Bible Students came under official scrutiny. During the following years, the Bible Students in Germany had to face thousands of court cases because of their preaching activity. To assist them, the branch office in Germany formed a legal department at Bethel in Magdeburg.

Jehovah’s Witnesses progressively refined their understanding of the issue of Christian neutrality. When the second world war broke out, they maintained a neutral stand by keeping completely separate from the military. Hence, they were viewed as enemies of the German State and were bitterly persecuted. But that is quite a different chapter for a future segment of the series “From Our Archives.”—*From our archives in Central Europe*.

* This course of action was suggested in Volume VI of the *Millennial Dawn* series (1904) and also in the German edition of *Zion’s Watch Tower* of August 1906. *The Watch Tower* of September 1915 refined our viewpoint and suggested that Bible Students avoid joining the military. However, this article did not appear in the German edition.

