



FEBRUARY 15, 2007

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



THE EARTH Just Right for Us

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.

IN THIS ISSUE

- 3 Enjoy Our Beautiful Earth
- 4 Our Unique Solar System—How It Got Here
- 8 An Everlasting Gift From the Creator
- 9 Spiritual Building at the "House of Stone"
- 13 Husbands—Recognize Christ's Headship
- 18 Wives—Deeply Respect Your Husbands
- 23 "Children, Be Obedient to Your Parents"
- 28 Why Avoid Extremes?
- 30 Questions From Readers
- 32 An Example of Honesty

WATCHTOWER STUDIES

MARCH 19-25:

- Husbands—Recognize Christ's Headship.
Page 13. Songs to be used: 117, 224.

MARCH 26-APRIL 1:

- Wives—Deeply Respect Your Husbands.
Page 18. Songs to be used: 213, 145.

APRIL 2-8:

- "Children, Be Obedient to Your Parents."
Page 23. Songs to be used: 183, 221.

Publication of *The Watchtower* is part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Watchtower, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

© 2007 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.

All rights reserved. Printed in U.S.A.

Would you welcome more information or a free home Bible study? Please send your request to Jehovah's Witnesses, using the appropriate address below.

America, United States of: Wallkill, NY 12589. **Antigua:** Box 119, St. Johns. **Australia:** Box 280, Ingleburn, NSW 1890. **Bahamas:** Box N-1247, Nassau. **N.P. Barbados, W.I.:** Crusher Site Road, Prospect, St. James BB 24012. **Britain:** The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN. **Canada:** Box 4100, Halton Hills (Georgetown), Ontario L7G 4Y4. **Germany:** Niederselters, Am Steinfels, D-65618 Selters. **Ghana:** P. O. Box GP 760, Accra. **Guyana:** 352-360 Tyrell St., Republic Park Phase 2 EBD. **Hawaii 96819:** 2055 Kam IV Rd., Honolulu. **Hong Kong:** 4 Kent Road, Kowloon Tong. **India:** Post Box 6440, Yelahanka, Bangalore 560 064, KAR. **Ireland:** Newcastle, Greystones, Co. Wicklow. **Jamaica:** P. O. Box 103, Old Harbour, St. Catherine. **Japan:** 4-7-1 Nakashinden, Ebina City, Kanagawa Pref., 243-0496. **Kenya:** P.O. Box 47788, GPO Nairobi 00100. **New Zealand:** PO Box 75142, Manurewa, Manukau 2243. **Nigeria:** P.M.B. 1090, Benin City 300001, Edo State. **Philippines, Republic of:** P. O. Box 2044, 1060 Manila. **South Africa:** Private Bag X2067, Krugersdorp, 1740. **Trinidad and Tobago, Republic of:** Lower Rapsey Street & Laxmi Lane, Curepe. **Zambia:** Box 33459, Lusaka 10101. **Zimbabwe:** Private Bag WG-5001, Westgate.

NOW PUBLISHED IN 158 LANGUAGES. SEMIMONTHLY: Afrikaans, Albanian,* Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Bulgarian, Cebuano,* Chichewa,* Chinese, Chinese (Simplified),* Ci-bemba,* Croatian,* Czech,** Danish,** Dutch,** Efik,* English** (also Braille), Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,** French** (also Braille), Ga, Georgian,* German,** Greek,* Gun, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hungarian,** Igbo,* Iloko,* Indonesian, Italian,** Japaneze** (also Braille), Kirinyawanda, Kirundi, Korean** (also Braille), Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy,* Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,* Pangasinan, Papiamento (Aruba), Papiamento (Curaçao), Polish,** Portuguese** (also Braille), Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian,* Russian,** Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona,* Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak,* Slovenian, Spanish** (also Braille), Sranantongo, Swahili,* Swedish,** Tagalog,* Tamil, Telugu, Thai, Tigrinya, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tshiluba, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian,* Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba,* Zulu*

MONTHLY: American Sign Language,[□] Armenian (West), Azerbaijani, Azerbaijani (Cyrillic), Baoulé, Bislama, Brazilian Sign Language,[□] Cambodian, Chitonga, Chuukese, Gilbertese, Greenlandic, Guarani, Gujarati, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Hindi, Hiri Motu, Icelandic, Isoko, Kannada, Kaonde, Kazakh, Kikongo, Kiluba, Kirghiz, Kongo, Kosraean, Kwanyama/Ndonga, Luganda, Lunda, Marathi, Marshallese, Mauritanian Creole, Maya, Mexican Sign Language,[□] Mizo, Moore, Nepali, Niuean, Ossetian, Ottetela, Palauan, Persian, Ponapean, Sango, Seychelles Creole, Solomon Islands Pidgin, Tahitian, Tatar, Tiv, Tumbuka, Tuvaluan, Umbundu, Urdu, Urund, Uzbek, Venda, Wallilian, Yapese, Zande, Zapotec (Isthmus)

* Study articles also available in large-print edition.

[□] Audiocassettes also available.

+ CD also available.

○ MP3 CD-ROM also available.

△ Videocassette

▷ DVD

ENJOY OUR BEAUTIFUL EARTH

ASTRONOMERS have seen that mankind's home is just a tiny speck in the immeasurable reaches of a boundless universe. Nowhere else in the physical universe has life been found. Only on planet Earth have just the right conditions existed.

Moreover, we can enjoy life on this beautiful globe. How pleasant it is to feel warmed by the sun on a cold day! Who of us is not moved by a spectacular sunrise or sunset? Our sun, of course, does more than merely delight our senses. It is vital to our very existence.

For countless millions of years, the gravitational force of the sun has held the earth and other planets in stable orbits. And, as students learn in school, the whole solar system moves in orbit around the center of our Milky Way galaxy. But in our galaxy the sun is just one of more than 100 billion stars making this journey together.

The Milky Way galaxy is bound in a cluster of about 35 galaxies. Larger clusters contain thousands of galaxies. Our solar system likely would not be so stable if it were located in a much larger, dense cluster of galaxies. But, as it is, few regions of the universe "are as amenable to complex life as ours," state Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards in their book *The Privileged Planet*.

Is the existence of life on this planet the product of blind chance, the fortuitous result of some part of the "big bang"? Or is there a grander meaning to life on this beautiful planet Earth?

Many people have come to the conclusion that our earthly home was specifically designed to support life.* Centuries ago, a Hebrew poet called attention to the earth and the heavens. He wrote: "When I see your heavens, the works of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have prepared, what is mortal man?" (Psalm 8:3, 4) This poet believed that there must be a Creator. Is that a reasonable conclusion in our scientific age?

* See the book of Psalms, particularly Psalm 8.



"From a distance, the Earth shimmers like a blue jewel in the darkness of space," states *The Illustrated Science Encyclopedia—Amazing Planet Earth*.

Globe: U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Washington, D.C./NASA

OUR UNIQUE SOLAR SYSTEM HOW IT GOT HERE

MANY factors combine to make our part of the universe unique. Our solar system is located between two of the Milky Way's spiral arms in a region that has relatively few stars. Nearly all the stars that we can see at night are so far from us that they remain mere points of light when viewed through the largest telescopes. Is that how it should be?

If our solar system were close to the center of the Milky Way, we would suffer the harmful effects of being among a dense concentration of stars. Earth's orbit, for example, would likely be perturbed, and that would dramatically affect human life. As it is, the solar system appears to have just the right position in the galaxy to avoid this and other dangers, such as overheating when passing through gas clouds and being exposed to exploding stars and other sources of deadly radiation.

The sun is an ideal type of star for our needs. It is steady burning, long-lived, and neither too large nor too hot. The vast majority of stars in our galaxy are much smaller than our sun and provide neither the right kind of light nor the right amount of heat to sustain life on an earthlike planet. In addition, most stars are gravitationally bound to one or more other stars and revolve around one another. Our sun, by contrast, is independent. It is unlikely that our solar system would remain stable if we had to contend with the gravitational force of two or more suns.

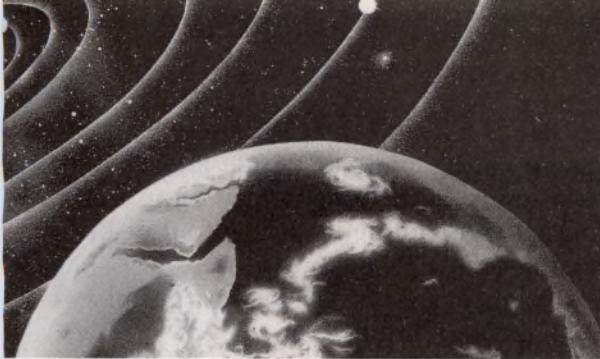
Another factor that makes our solar system unique is the location of the giant outer planets that have almost circular orbits and pose no gravitational threat to the inner terrestrial planets.* Instead, the outer planets fulfill the protective function of absorbing and deflecting dangerous objects. "Asteroids and comets hit us but not excessively so, thanks to the presence of giant gas planets such as Jupiter beyond us," explain scientists Peter D. Ward and Donald Brownlee in their book *Rare Earth—Why Complex Life Is Uncommon in the Universe*. Other solar systems with giant planets have been discovered. But most of these giants have orbits that would endanger a smaller earthlike planet.

The Role of the Moon

From ancient times, our moon has filled mankind with wonder. It has inspired poets and musicians. For instance, an ancient Hebrew poet describes the moon as being "firmly established for time indefinite, and as a faithful witness in the skies."—Psalm 89:37.

One important way in which the moon affects life on earth is that its gravitational pull causes the ebb and flow of the tides. Tidal movements are thought to be fundamental to ocean currents, which, in turn, are vital for our weather patterns.

* The four inner planets of our solar system—Mercury, Venus, Earth, and Mars—are called terrestrial because they have rocky surfaces. The giant outer planets—Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune—are composed mainly of gas.



Another key purpose that our moon serves is that its gravitational force stabilizes earth's axis with respect to earth's plane of orbit around the sun. According to the scientific journal *Nature*, without the moon, the inclination of earth's axis would wobble over long periods of time from "nearly 0 [degrees]" to 85 [degrees]." Imagine if earth's axis had no tilt! We would miss the delightful change of seasons and suffer from a shortage of rain. The earth's tilt also prevents temperatures from becoming too extreme for us to survive. "We owe our present climate stability to an exceptional event: the presence of the Moon," concludes astronomer Jacques Laskar. To fulfill its stabilizing role, our moon is large—relatively larger than the moons of the giant planets.

Yet another function of the earth's natural satellite, as noted by the writer of the ancient Bible book of Genesis, is that the moon serves as a light by night.—Genesis 1:16.

Chance or Purpose?

How is one to explain the concurrence of multiple factors that make life on earth not

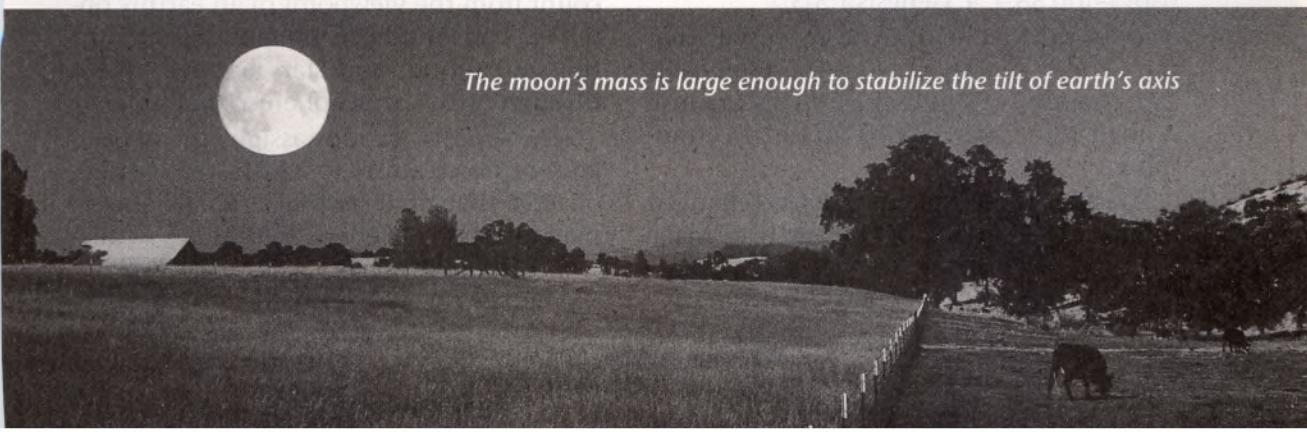
only possible but also enjoyable? There appear to be only two alternatives. The first is that all these realities are the casual product of aimless chance. The second is that there is some intelligent purpose behind it.

Thousands of years ago, the Holy Scriptures stated that our universe was conceived and crafted by a Creator—Almighty God. If that is true, it means that the conditions that exist in our solar system are the product, not of chance, but of deliberate design. The Creator left us with a report, so to speak, of the steps he took to make life on earth possible. It might surprise you to know that even though this report is some 3,500 years old, the events in universal history described in it basically correspond to what scientists believe must have taken place. This report is contained in the Bible book of Genesis. Consider what it says.

The Genesis Account of Creation

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) The Bible's opening words refer to the creation of our solar system, including our planet, as well as that of the stars in the billions of galaxies that make up our universe. According to the Bible, at one time the earth's surface was "formless and waste." There were no continents and no productive land. But the next words highlight what scientists say is the most important requirement for a

The moon's mass is large enough to stabilize the tilt of earth's axis



"If I as a geologist were called upon to explain briefly our modern ideas of the origin of the earth and the development of life on it to a simple, pastoral people, such as the tribes to whom the Book of Genesis was addressed, I could hardly do better than follow rather closely much of the language of the first chapter of Genesis."

—Geologist Wallace Pratt.

life-sustaining planet—an abundance of water. God's spirit was "moving to and fro over the surface of the waters."—Genesis 1:2.

For surface water to remain liquid, a planet must be the right distance from its sun. "Mars is too cold, Venus is too hot, Earth is just right," explains planetary scientist Andrew Ingersoll. Similarly, for the growth of vegetation, there must be sufficient light. And significantly, the Bible account reports that during an early creative period, God caused the sun's light to penetrate dark clouds of water vapor that enveloped the ocean like a "swaddling band" around a baby.—Job 38:4, 9; Genesis 1:3-5.

In the next verses of Genesis, we read that the Creator produced what the Bible calls "an expanse." (Genesis 1:6-8) This expanse is filled with gases making up earth's atmosphere.

The Bible then explains that God changed the formless surface of the earth to make

dry land. (Genesis 1:9, 10) He evidently caused earth's crust to buckle and move. As a result, deep troughs may have been formed and continents pushed out of the ocean.—Psalm 104:6-8.

At some unspecified time in earth's past, God created microscopic alga in the oceans. Using energy from the sun, these self-reproducing one-celled organisms began to convert carbon dioxide into food while releasing oxygen into the atmosphere. This marvelous process was hastened during a third creative period by the creation of vegetation that eventually covered the land. Thus the amount of oxygen in the atmosphere increased, which would make it possible for man and animals to sustain their lives by breathing.—Genesis 1:11, 12.

To make the land productive, the Creator caused a variety of microorganisms to live in the soil. (Jeremiah 51:15) These tiny creatures break down dead matter, recycling elements that plants use to grow. Special types of soil bacteria capture nitrogen from the air and make this vital element available to plants so that they can grow. Amazingly, an average handful of fertile soil may contain six billion microorganisms!

Genesis 1:14-19 describes the forming of the sun, moon, and stars in a fourth creative period. At first glance, this might seem to contradict the foregoing Scriptural explanation. Bear in mind, however, that Moses, the writer of Genesis, penned the creation account from the viewpoint of an earthly observer, had one been present. Apparently, the sun, moon, and stars became visible through earth's atmosphere at that time.

The Genesis account assigns the appearance of sea creatures to a fifth creative period and that of terrestrial animals and of man to a sixth.—Genesis 1:20-31.

JUST RIGHT FOR ASTRONOMY TOO

If the sun were located elsewhere in our galaxy, we would not have such a good view of the stars. "Our Solar System," explains the book *The Privileged Planet*, "is located . . . far from dusty, light-polluted regions, permitting an excellent overall view of both nearby stars and the distant universe."

The moon's size and distance from the earth, moreover, are just right for the moon to cover the sun during a solar eclipse. These rare, awe-inspiring events permit astronomers to study the sun. Such studies have enabled them to unlock many secrets about how stars shine.

The Earth Was Made to Be Enjoyed

Does it not seem to you that life on earth, which came about as described in the Genesis account, was made to be enjoyed? Did you ever wake up on a sunny day,

breathe in the fresh air, and feel glad to be alive? Perhaps you took a walk in a garden and enjoyed the beauty and scent of the flowers. Or you might have walked in an orchard and picked some delicious fruit. Such delights would be impossible were it not for the following: (1) earth's abundant water,

(2) the correct amount of heat and light from the sun, (3) our atmosphere, with its right mix of gases, and (4) fertile land.

All these features—absent on Mars, Venus, and our other planetary neighbors—are not the product of blind chance. They were fine-tuned to make life on earth pleasurable. As the next article will illustrate, the Bible also says that the Creator designed our beautiful planet to last forever.

What makes life on earth possible? Its abundant water, correct amount of light and heat, atmosphere, and fertile land

Globe: Based on NASA Photo; wheat: Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

AN EVERLASTING GIFT FROM THE CREATOR

NASA photo

DO YOU not find it amazing that the factors that scientists believe are essential for life on any planet either appear or are directly implied in the first chapter of the Bible? What are these?

For life to thrive, there must be a large quantity of water, as mentioned at Genesis 1:2. The temperature must be right for water on the planet to remain in liquid form. This requires that the planet be the right distance from its sun. The Genesis account repeatedly draws attention to the sun and its effect on the earth.

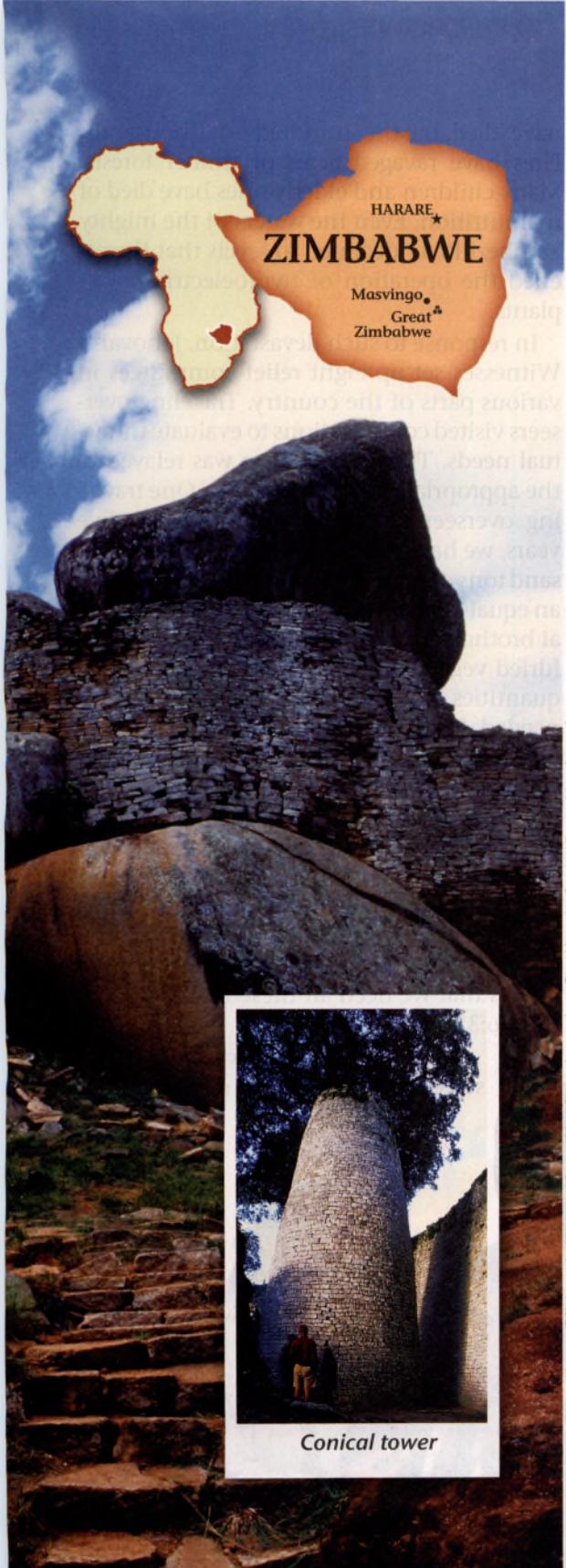
To be habitable by humans, a planet needs an atmosphere with a particular mix of gases. This vital aspect is mentioned at Genesis 1:6-8. The growth of vegetation, described at Genesis 1:11, 12, contributes to the rich supply of oxygen available. A planet on which a wide variety of animal life can thrive requires continents of dry, productive land, as described at Genesis 1:9-12. Finally, for moderate weather, a planet must be tilted to the proper angle and be held in place—in the case of earth, a function fulfilled in part by the gravitational pull of our moon. This satellite's existence and some of its benefits are highlighted at Genesis 1:14, 16.

How was the ancient writer Moses, without the help of modern science, able to draw attention to the above factors? Was Moses simply ahead of his time in appreciating their importance? The explanation is that he was inspired by the Creator of the heavens and the earth. That is noteworthy in

view of the scientific soundness of the Genesis account.

The Bible affirms that there is a purpose behind the wonders that we observe in the universe around us. "As regards the heavens, to Jehovah the heavens belong," states Psalm 115:16, "but the earth he has given to the sons of men." Another psalm states: "He has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to totter to time indefinite, or forever." (Psalm 104:5) If the universe and our beautiful planet are designed and produced by a Creator, surely it is not too much to believe that he also has the ability to maintain these. This means that you can confidently look forward to the fulfillment of the wonderful promise: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) To be sure, God "did not create [the earth] simply for nothing" but "formed it even to be inhabited" forever by appreciative humans who acknowledge his doings.—Isaiah 45:18.

According to the Scriptures, Jesus came to earth to teach us about God and His purpose to grant everlasting life to obedient mankind. (John 3:16) We are assured that soon God will "bring to ruin those ruining the earth," whereas peace-loving humans from all nations who accept his provision for salvation will survive. (Revelation 7:9, 14; 11:18) How wonderful life will be as humans keep on discovering and enjoying the marvels of God's creation forever!—Ecclesiastes 3:11; Romans 8:21.



Conical tower

Ruins with steps: ©Chris van der Merwe/AAP Fotostock; tower inset: ©Ingrid van den Berg/AAP Fotostock/age fotostock

Spiritual Building at the “HOUSE OF STONE”

The name of this African country means

“House of Stone.” It is a country that is well-known for Victoria Falls and for diverse wildlife. Yet, it has the largest ancient man-made buildings south of the Sahara. A granite plateau cuts across its center. The temperate climate on that plateau produces a fertile, lush landscape. This is Zimbabwe, home to some 12 million people.

WHY the name House of Stone? In 1867 hunter and explorer Adam Renders came across large stone structures spread over 1,800 acres. He had been traveling in the African veld, where homes were generally made of mud, poles, and grass thatch. He then came upon the stone ruins of a vast city, now called the Great Zimbabwe.

These ruins are located just south of the area now known as Masvingo. Some of the walls are over 30 feet high, granite stones laid upon one another without mortar. Within the ruins, there is an unusual conical tower rising some 35 feet from a base that measures 20 feet in diameter. The exact purpose of this edifice remains unknown. The ruins date back to the eighth century C.E., but there is evidence that the site was occupied hundreds of years before that.

In 1980 the country then known as Rhodesia became independent from Britain and

was renamed Zimbabwe. Its inhabitants include two major ethnic groups—the Shona, who make up the larger part of the population, and the Ndebele. The people are hospitable, as has often been noted by Jehovah's Witnesses in their evangelizing work from house to house. Sometimes even before the identity of a visitor is known, his knock at the door will prompt an invitation to "Come in" and "Please sit down." Most Zimbabweans have deep respect for the Bible and will often insist that during Scriptural discussions, their children sit and listen.

Offering an Upbuilding Message of Comfort

"AIDS" and "drought" are words frequently used in the media when Zimbabwe is discussed. The spread of AIDS has had a serious effect on the population and the economy of lands of sub-Saharan Africa. Here, hospital admissions are often HIV related. The disease has ruined family life for many.

To help people in Zimbabwe, Jehovah's Witnesses are busy declaring that the best way of life is one guided by God's standards set out in the Bible. For instance, God's Word teaches that the divine gift of sexual intimacy should be enjoyed only within the marriage, that homosexuality is unacceptable to God, and that blood transfusions and the use of recreational drugs are prohibited by Jehovah's law. (Acts 15:28, 29; Romans 1:24-27; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; 2 Corinthians 7:1) The Witnesses also disseminate a message of well-founded hope, stressing that in the near future, God's Kingdom will remove all sickness.—Isaiah 33:24.

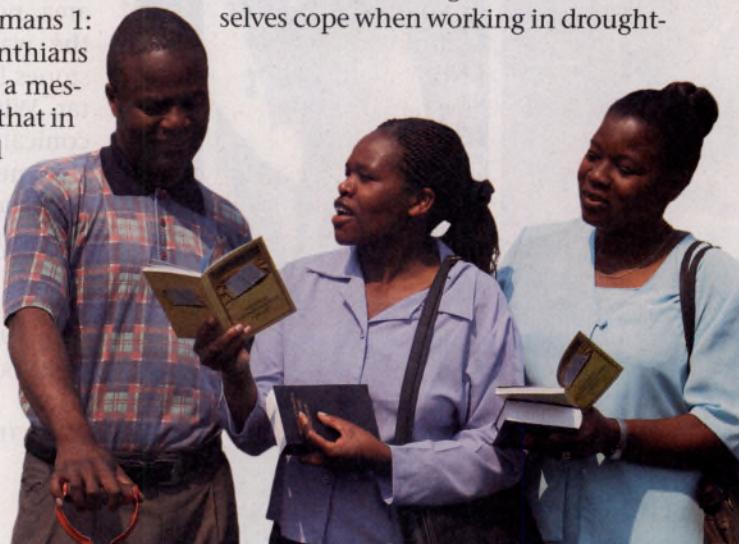
Providing Relief Aid

Drought has taken its toll on Zimbabwe over the past decade. Wild animals have collapsed from hunger and dehydration. Cattle

have died by the hundreds of thousands. Fires have ravaged acres of timber forests. Many children and elderly ones have died of malnutrition. Even the waters of the mighty Zambezi River declined to levels that threatened the operation of hydroelectric power plants.

In response to such devastation, Jehovah's Witnesses set up eight relief committees in various parts of the country. Traveling overseers visited congregations to evaluate the actual needs. This information was relayed to the appropriate relief committee. One traveling overseer reported: "Over the past five years, we have distributed more than a thousand tons of maize, ten tons of dried fish, and an equal quantity of sugar beans. Our spiritual brothers processed two tons of *mufushwa* [dried vegetables]. We also distributed large quantities of donated clothing as well as needed funds." Another traveling overseer observed: "When I reflect on the difficulties we have experienced in obtaining the permits required by Zimbabwe and South Africa to bring in these supplies and on the ever-present shortage of fuel necessary to transport this desperately needed relief, I can only conclude that our success is further evidence of Jesus' assurance that our heavenly Father knows that we need all these things."—Matthew 6:32.

How do traveling overseers themselves cope when working in drought-



stricken areas? Some carry food for themselves and the families they stay with. One of them reported that some Christian sisters were debating whether they should stop preaching for the day so that they could join the queue for anticipated government aid. They decided to trust in Jehovah by focusing on the preaching activity and seeing how things worked out. No government relief arrived that day.

A Christian meeting was scheduled for the next day, and these sisters again had to make a decision. Would they attend the meeting, or would they go to wait for the arrival of relief aid? Setting the right priorities, they attended the meeting at the Kingdom Hall. (Matthew 6:33) While singing the final song, they heard a truck approach. Relief had arrived right there, through their spiritual brothers on the relief committee! The sheer joy and gratitude of the faithful Witnesses attending that meeting was overwhelming.

Love Builds Up

Acts of kindness to those outside the Christian congregation have opened up opportunities to give a fine witness. A traveling overseer in the Masvingo area, along with some local Witnesses, was engaged in the evangelizing work. He noticed a girl lying alongside the street. The Witnesses realized that she was very sick, as she could not speak properly and her voice was quivering. The girl's name was Hamunyari, which in Shona means "Are You Not Ashamed?" The brothers learned that she had been abandoned by members of her church who were going to a religious service in the mountains. The Witnesses provided loving assistance to the girl, taking her to a nearby village.

In that village, some people knew who Hamunyari was, so they asked her relatives to come for her. Regarding the Witnesses, the villagers remarked: "This is the true

religion. This is the love that Christians should show." (John 13:35) Before leaving, the brothers gave Hamunyari the tract *Would You Like to Know More About the Bible?**

The following week the traveling overseer served the congregation in the area where Hamunyari lived. He wanted to find out if she had arrived home safely. The whole family was very happy to see him and the local brothers. Her parents remarked: "You people practice the true religion. You saved the life of our daughter, who was left to die on the road." They had asked members of her church: "Were you not ashamed, as the name Hamunyari implies, to leave her dying?" The Witnesses started a Bible discussion and left Bible-based literature with Hamunyari's family, who invited the brothers to return and conduct a Bible study with them. Some family members who had been opposed to the Witnesses changed their view. One of them, Hamunyari's brother-in-law, was a leader of a church in the area. He accepted a Bible study.

Building Houses of Worship

An inspired poet of long ago wrote: "O God, . . . my soul does thirst for you. . . . In a land dry and exhausted, where there is no water." (Psalm 63:1) How true this has been

* Published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Does It Matter Which Religion
You Choose?

Happy to Wait for Jehovah

Let Us Exalt Jehovah's Name Together



*New Kingdom Hall,
Concession Congregation*

of many people in Zimbabwe! Physically they endure drought, but spiritually they thirst for God and his goodness. You can see this from the results of the Christian ministry of Jehovah's Witnesses. When Zimbabwe became independent in 1980, about 10,000 Witnesses served in 476 congregations. Now, some 27 years later, the number of active Witnesses has tripled and the number of congregations has almost doubled.

Few of these congregations had their own places of worship. In January 2001, only 98 of the more than 800 congregations in Zimbabwe had a house of worship—a Kingdom Hall—in which to meet. Many of the congregations held their meetings under trees or in modest huts made of poles, walls plastered with mud and roofs thatched with grass.

As a result of generous donations and diligent volunteer work by their worldwide Christian brotherhood, the Witnesses in Zimbabwe have embarked on a program that enables more congregations to obtain modest but dignified Kingdom Halls. Many Witnesses from overseas who have building skills arranged their affairs to go to Zimbabwe and work along with local volunteers. One of the local Witnesses wrote: "We sincerely thank all the brothers and sisters from so many countries who have come to Zimbabwe to help build beau-

tiful Kingdom Halls. And we thank all the rest of you for your contributions to the Kingdom Hall Fund that makes this work possible."

In the eastern part of the country, the brothers met under a huge baobab tree for 50 years. When the Christian elders were told that a real house of worship was to be built, at least one of them could not hold back his tears. In a nearby congregation, a 91-year-old elder said: "I have been crying to Jehovah for so long for something like this to happen!"

Many comments are made about the speed with which these attractive buildings are constructed. One observer said: "You people are building during the day, but God must be building by night!" The unity and happiness of the workers is also noted. To date, over 350 new Kingdom Halls have been completed throughout the country. This allows for 534 congregations to meet in Kingdom Halls solidly constructed with bricks.

Vital spiritual building continues to take place in Zimbabwe. As we reflect on what has been accomplished, we are moved to credit Jehovah, the source of such blessings. Yes, "unless Jehovah himself builds the house, it is to no avail that its builders have worked hard on it."—Psalm 127:1.

*Members of the Lyndale Congregation
outside their new Kingdom Hall*



HUSBANDS—RECOGNIZE CHRIST'S HEADSHIP

"The head of every man is the Christ."—1 CORINTHIANS 11:3.

HOW would you measure the success of a husband? By his mental or physical abilities? By his ability to make money? Or is it especially by the loving and kind way he treats his wife and children? As to the latter measurement, many husbands rate poorly, for they are governed by the spirit of the world and by human standards. Why? Large-ly because of their failure to recognize and apply the guidance of the Originator of marriage—the One who "proceeded to build the rib that he had taken from the man into a woman and to bring her to the man."—Genesis 2:21-24.

² Jesus Christ confirmed this Bible account of the divine origin of marriage, saying to critics of his day: "Did you not read that he who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his moth-er and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together [in marriage] let no man put apart." (Matthew 19:4-6) The fact is that the key to realizing a successful marriage is to recognize that marriage is of divine origin and that suc-cess is dependent on applying the instruction found in God's Word, the Bible.

A Key to a Husband's Success

³ An aid to success as a husband is studying

1, 2. (a) How might the success of a husband be measured? (b) Why is it vital to recognize that mar-riage is of divine origin?

3, 4. (a) What makes Jesus knowledgeable about marriage? (b) Who is Jesus' figurative wife, and how should husbands treat their wives?

what Jesus said and applying what He did. His knowledge on the subject is profound, for he was present at the creation of the first hu-man pair as well as at their marriage. Jehovah God said to him: "Let us make man in *our* im-age, according to *our* likeness." (Genesis 1:26) Yes, God was speaking to the One whom He created before anyone or anything else and who "came to be beside him as a master worker." (Proverbs 8:22-30) This One is "the firstborn of all creation." He is "the begin-ning of the creation by God," existing even before the creation of the material universe.—Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14.

⁴ Jesus is called "the Lamb of God," and he is figuratively depicted as a husband. An an-gel once said: "Come here, I will show you the bride, the Lamb's wife." (John 1:29; Reve-lation 21:9) Who, then, is that bride, or wife? "The Lamb's wife" is made up of Christ's faithful spirit-anointed followers, who will share with him in his heavenly rulership. (Revelation 14:1, 3) Therefore, the way that Jesus treated his disciples when he was with them on earth provides a model for hus-bands as to how to treat their wives.

⁵ True, Jesus is presented in the Bible as an example for all his followers, as we read: "Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2: 21) Yet, he is, in particular, a model for men. The Bible says: "The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God."

5. For whom does Jesus serve as a model?



(1 Corinthians 11:3) Since Christ is man's head, husbands need to copy his example. Hence, the headship principle must be applied if the family is to find success and happiness. To this end, husbands need to deal with their wives in the loving way that Jesus deals with his figurative wife, his anointed disciples.

How to Face Marital Challenges

⁶ In today's troubled world, husbands especially need to imitate Jesus' example of patience, love, and firmness in upholding righteous principles. (2 Timothy 3:1-5) With regard to the model Jesus left, we read in the Bible: "You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with [your wives] according to knowledge." (1 Peter 3:7) Yes, husbands need to face marital challenges in a knowledgeable manner, just as Jesus faced difficulties. He suffered greater trials than has any other human, but he was aware that Satan, his demons, and this evil world were responsible for them. (John 14:30; Ephesians 6:12) Jesus was never surprised by trials, so neither should marriage mates be surprised when they experience "tribulation in their flesh."

6. How should husbands dwell with their wives?

Why should husbands study examples of how Jesus treated women?

The Bible warns that those who marry can expect to have such tribulation.—1 Corinthians 7:28.

⁷ Husbands, the Bible says, should dwell with their wives "according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one." (1 Peter 3:7) Rather than harshly dominating his wife, as the Bible foretold that men would commonly do, a husband who wins God's approval will honor her. (Genesis 3:16) He will want to treat her as a prized possession, never using his greater physical strength to hurt her. Instead, he will consider her feelings, always treating her with respect and dignity.

⁸ Why should husbands properly assign honor to their wives? The Bible answers: "Since you are also heirs with them of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered." (1 Peter 3:7) Husbands need to appreciate that Jehovah does not look at a man who worships Him as in any way superior to a woman who does so. Women who are counted worthy of God's approval will share with men the same reward of everlasting life—many even enjoying life in heaven, where "there is neither male nor female." (Galatians 3:28) So husbands need to remember that it is a person's faithfulness that makes him precious to God. It is not whether a person is a male or a female, a husband or a wife, or even a child.—1 Corinthians 4:2.

⁹ The necessity of a husband's treating his wife with honor is emphasized by the apostle Peter's concluding words, "in or-

7, 8. (a) What is involved in dwelling with wives according to knowledge? (b) Why do wives deserve to receive honor?

9. (a) According to Peter, for what reason should husbands honor their wives? (b) How did Jesus show honor to women?

*When his disciples were tired,
Jesus showed consideration*

der for your prayers not to be hindered." How dangerous such a hindrance could be! It could even lead to a husband's prayers being blocked, as happened to some neglectful servants of God in the past. (Lamentations 3:43, 44) Wisely, Christian men—both married and those considering marriage—will study the dignified way in which Jesus treated women. He welcomed them into the group accompanying him in his ministry, and he treated them with kindness and respect. On one occasion, Jesus even revealed a most startling truth to women first, telling them to inform the men about it! —Matthew 28:1, 8-10; Luke 8:1-3.

Example Especially for Husbands

¹⁰ The Bible, as noted earlier, compares a husband's relationship with his wife to that of Christ with his "bride," which is his congregation of anointed followers. The Bible says: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation." (Ephesians 5:23) These words should encourage husbands to examine the type of headship, or leadership, that Jesus provided for his followers. Only by making this examination will husbands be properly able to follow Jesus' example and provide for their wives direction, love, and care, as Jesus did for his congregation.

¹¹ "Husbands, continue loving your wives," the Bible urges Christians, "just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Ephesians 5:25) In

10, 11. (a) Why do husbands especially need to study Jesus' example? (b) How should husbands show love for their wives?



the preceding chapter of Ephesians, "the congregation" is called "the body of the Christ." This symbolic body has many members of both genders, all of whom contribute to the body's functioning effectively. Jesus, of course, is "the head of the body, the congregation."—Ephesians 4:12; Colossians 1:18; 1 Corinthians 12:12, 13, 27.

¹² Jesus demonstrated love for his figurative body, "the congregation," particularly by the caring manner in which he served the interests of those who would become its members. When his disciples were tired, for example, he said: "Come . . . privately into a lonely place and rest up a bit." (Mark 6:31) Describing Jesus' activity only hours before his execution, one of his apostles wrote: "Jesus, having loved his own [that is, members of his figurative body] . . . , loved them to the end." (John 13:1) What a fine example Jesus provided of how husbands are to treat their wives!

¹³ Continuing to draw upon the example that Jesus set for husbands, the apostle

12. How did Jesus demonstrate love for his figurative body?

13. How are husbands admonished to love their wives?

Husbands should counsel their wives with kind, well-chosen words

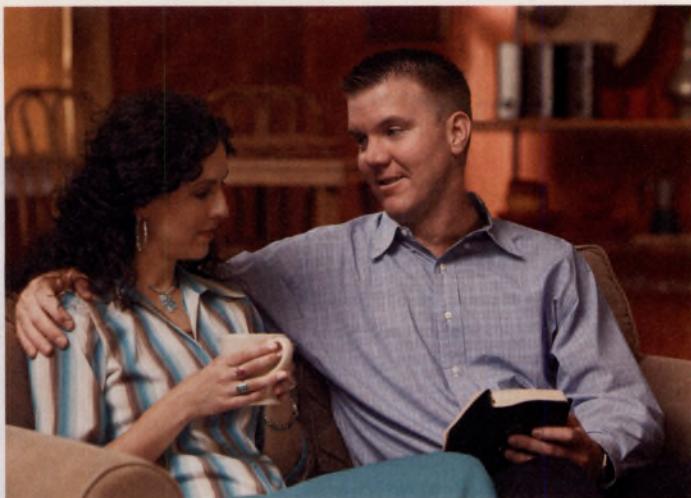
Paul admonished them: "Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation." Paul added: "Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself."—Ephesians 5: 28, 29, 33.

¹⁴ Think about Paul's words. Does a sane man ever intentionally injure his own body? When a man stubs his toe, does he beat it because it made him stumble? Of course not! Does a husband humiliate himself before his friends or gossip about his own shortcomings? No! Why, then, would he give his wife a tongue-lashing, or worse, if she made a mistake? Husbands should consider not just their own interests but those of their wives.—1 Corinthians 10:24; 13:5.

¹⁵ Consider how Jesus manifested concern for his disciples on the night before his death, when they showed human weakness. Despite his repeated request that they pray, they fell asleep three times in the garden of Gethsemane. Suddenly, armed men surrounded them. Jesus asked the men: "Whom are you looking for?" When they replied: "Jesus the Nazarene," he answered: "I am he." Knowing that 'the hour had come' for his death, he said: "If, therefore, it is I you are looking for, let these go." Jesus never failed to consider the welfare of his disciples—part of his figura-

14. How does a husband treat his imperfect physical body, and what does this indicate about how he should treat his wife?

15. (a) What did Jesus do when his disciples demonstrated human weakness? (b) What lessons might be drawn from his example?



tive bride—and he made a way out for them. By studying how Jesus treated his disciples, husbands will find many principles that they can apply as to how they should treat their wives.—John 18:1-9; Mark 14:34-37, 41.

Jesus' Love Not Sentimental

¹⁶ The Bible says: "Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus," who often received him as a guest in their home. (John 11:5) Yet, Jesus did not hold back from counseling Martha when she gave undue attention to a meal that she was preparing, thus limiting her time to receive spiritual instruction from him. He said: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and disturbed about many things. A few things, though, are needed, or just one." (Luke 10:41, 42) No doubt his evident affection for Martha made it easy for her to accept his counsel. Similarly, husbands should treat their wives in a kind, loving manner, using well-chosen words. Yet, when correction is needed, it is appropriate to speak up as did Jesus.

¹⁷ On another occasion, Jesus explained to his apostles that he must go to Jerusalem,

16. How did Jesus feel about Martha, yet how did he correct her?

17, 18. (a) How did Peter rebuke Jesus, and why did Peter need to be corrected? (b) What responsibility does a husband have?

where he would be persecuted by "the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up." At this Peter took Jesus aside and began to rebuke him, saying: "Be kind to yourself, Lord; you will not have this destiny at all." Clearly, Peter's view had been blurred by sentimentality. Correction was in order. So Jesus said to him: "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me, because you think, not God's thoughts, but those of men."—Matthew 16:21-23.

¹⁸ Jesus had just stated the divine will—namely, that he would suffer many things and be killed. (Psalm 16:10; Isaiah 53:12) So Peter was wrong to begin rebuking Jesus. Yes, Peter needed firm correction, as we all do at times. As the family head, the husband has the authority and responsibility to correct family members, including his wife. While firmness may be needed, this correction should be given in a kind, loving manner. So just as Jesus helped Peter to put matters in proper perspective, husbands at times may need to do the same for their wives. For example, a husband may need to point out in a kind manner why some adjustment is needed if her dress or use of jewelry or cosmetics begins to stray from the modest pattern recommended in the Scriptures.—1 Peter 3:3-5.

Good for Husbands to Be Patient

¹⁹ If there is a fault that needs attention, husbands should not necessarily expect that their sincere efforts to correct it will meet with immediate success. It took ongoing efforts by Jesus to adjust the attitudes of his apostles. For example, a rivalry developed among them that manifested itself again toward the end of Jesus' ministry. They argued

19, 20. (a) What problem developed among Jesus' apostles, and how did Jesus address it? (b) How successful were Jesus' efforts?

about who among them seemed to be the greatest. (Mark 9:33-37; 10:35-45) Not long after the second of such occasions, Jesus arranged to celebrate privately his last Passover with them. On that occasion, not one of them took the initiative to do the customary menial service of washing the dusty feet of the others. Jesus did it. Then he said: "I set the pattern for you."—John 13:2-15.

²⁰ Husbands who exercise a humble attitude like that of Jesus will likely have the co-operation and support of their wives. But patience is needed. Later that very Passover night, the apostles argued again regarding which one of them seemed to be the greatest. (Luke 22:24) Changes in attitudes and conduct often take time and are gradual. Yet, how rewarding when positive results are realized, as they were among the apostles!

²¹ Today, marriage is facing greater challenges than ever before. Many no longer take their marriage vows seriously. Hence, husbands, reflect on the origin of marriage. Remember that marriage is of divine origin, conceived and instituted by our loving God, Jehovah. He provided his Son, Jesus, not only as our Ransomer—our Savior—but also as a model for husbands to imitate.—Matthew 20:28; John 3:29; 1 Peter 2:21.

21. In the face of challenges today, what are husbands urged to remember and to do?

How Would You Answer?

- Why is it important that we recognize the origin of marriage?
- In what ways are husbands encouraged to love their wives?
- What examples of Jesus' treatment of his disciples illustrate how a husband should exercise Christlike headship?

WIVES—DEEPLY RESPECT YOUR HUSBANDS

"Wives be in subjection to [your] husbands."—EPHESIANS 5:22.

IN MANY lands when a couple gets married, the bride makes a vow, promising that she will deeply respect her husband. However, the way that many husbands treat their wives has a bearing on whether that vow is difficult to live up to or not. Yet, marriage had a wonderful beginning. God took a rib from Adam, the first man, and made the woman. Adam exclaimed: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh."—Genesis 2:19-23.

² Despite that fine beginning, a movement called women's liberation—an attempt by women to break free from male domination—began in the early 1960's in the United States. At that time, some 300 husbands abandoned their families to every 1 wife who did. By the end of the 1960's, the ratio changed to about 100 to 1. Now, it seems, women swear, drink, smoke, and behave immorally as much as men do. So are women happier? No. In some countries, about half of the people who marry eventually divorce. Has the effort by some women to improve their marital situation made matters better or worse?—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

³ What is the basic problem? To some extent, it is the problem that has existed since Eve was seduced by the rebel angel, "the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan." (Revelation 12:9; 1 Timothy 2:

1. Why is respecting a husband often hard to do?
2. What has developed regarding women and marriage in recent times?
3. What is the basic problem affecting marriage?

13, 14) Satan has undermined what God teaches. For example, regarding marriage, the Devil has made it appear restrictive and harsh. The propaganda he promotes through the media of this world—of which he is the ruler—is designed to make God's instructions seem unfair and out-of-date. (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4) If, though, we examine with an open mind what God says regarding a woman's role in marriage, we will see how wise and practical God's Word is.

Caution to Those Who Marry

⁴ The Bible provides a word of warning. It says that in this Devil-ruled world, even those in successful marriages will have "tribulation." So although marriage is a divine arrangement, the Bible cautions those who enter into it. One inspired Bible writer said regarding a woman whose husband has died and who therefore is free to remarry: "She is happier if she remains as she is." Jesus also recommended singleness for those who "can make room for it." However, if anyone chooses to marry, it should be to one "in the Lord," that is, to a dedicated and baptized worshipper of God.—1 Corinthians 7:28, 36-40; Matthew 19:10-12.

⁵ The reason that a woman in particular should give attention to whom she marries is the Bible's caution: "A married woman is bound by law to her husband." Only if he

- 4, 5. (a) Why is caution advisable when considering marriage? (b) What should a woman do before consenting to marry?

dies or commits immorality and the couple is divorced because of it is she "free from his law." (Romans 7:2, 3) The love-at-first-sight feeling may be enough for a pleasurable romance, but it is not an adequate basis for a happy marriage. A single woman, therefore, needs to ask herself, 'Am I willing to enter into an arrangement in which I will come under the law of this man?' The time to consider this question is before getting married, not afterward.

⁶ In many places today, a woman can choose either to accept or to reject a marriage proposal. Yet, making a wise choice may be the hardest thing a woman ever does, since her desire for the closeness and love possible in marriage can be very strong. One writer noted: "The more we want to do something—whether it is to marry or scale a particular mountain—the more likely we are to make unchecked assumptions and pay attention only to the data that tells us what we want to hear." An irrational decision for a mountain climber may cost him his life; an unwise choice of a marriage mate can likewise be disastrous.

⁷ A woman should consider seriously what could be involved in being under the law of a man who proposes to her. Years ago, a young Indian girl modestly acknowledged: "Our parents are older and wiser, and they aren't as easily deceived as we would be.... I could so easily make a mistake." The help that parents and others can provide is

6. What decision can most women today make, and why is it so important?

7. What wise counsel has been provided about seeking a mate?



Why is deciding whether to accept a marriage proposal so serious?

important. One wise counselor long encouraged young people to get to know the parents of their prospective marriage mate as well as to observe carefully that one's interaction with parents and other family members.

How Jesus Showed Subjection

⁸ Although subjection can be challenging, women can welcome it as honorable, even as did Jesus. While his subjection to God involved suffering, including death on a torture stake, he found joy in being submissive to God. (Luke 22:41-44; Hebrews 5:7, 8; 12:3) Women can look to Jesus as an example, for the Bible says: "The head of a woman is the man; in turn the head of the Christ is God." (1 Corinthians 11:3) Significantly, however, it is not only when women marry that they come under the headship of men.

⁹ The Bible explains that women, whether

8, 9. (a) How did Jesus view his subjection to God? (b) What benefit may be realized from subjection?

married or single, should submit to the headship of spiritually qualified men who exercise oversight in the Christian congregation. (1 Timothy 2:12, 13; Hebrews 13:17) When women follow God's direction to do so, they set an example for the angels in God's organizational arrangement. (1 Corinthians 11:8-10) In addition, older married women, by their fine example and helpful suggestions, teach younger women to 'subject themselves to their own husbands.'—Titus 2:3-5.

¹⁰ Jesus realized the value of appropriate subjection. On one occasion, he directed the apostle Peter to pay taxes to human authorities for them both, even providing Peter with the tax money to do so. Peter later wrote: "For the Lord's sake subject yourselves to every human creation." (1 Peter 2:13; Matthew 17:24-27) Regarding Jesus' most outstanding example of subjection, we read: "He emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death."—Philippians 2:5-8.

¹¹ When encouraging Christians to be submissive even to harsh, unjust authorities of this world, Peter explained: "In fact, to this course you were called, because even Christ suffered for you, leaving you a model for you to follow his steps closely." (1 Peter 2:21) After describing how much Jesus suffered and how he submissively endured, Peter encouraged wives of unbelieving husbands: "In like manner, you wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word,

10. How did Jesus set an example in showing subjection?

11. Why did Peter encourage wives to be submissive even to husbands who were unbelievers?

they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect."—1 Peter 3:1, 2.

¹² Submission in the face of ridicule and abuse may be viewed as evidence of weakness. Yet, that is not how Jesus viewed it. "When he was being reviled," Peter wrote, "he did not go reviling in return. When he was suffering, he did not go threatening." (1 Peter 2:23) Some who watched Jesus suffer became believers, at least to some degree, including a robber on a stake next to him and the army officer viewing the execution. (Matthew 27:38-44, 54; Mark 15:39; Luke 23:39-43) Similarly, Peter indicated that some unbelieving husbands—even those who are abusive—will become Christians after observing the submissive conduct of their wives. We have seen evidence of this happening today.

How Wives Can Win Favor

¹³ Wives who have become believers have won over their husbands by their Christlike conduct. At a recent district convention of Jehovah's Witnesses, a husband said of his Christian wife: "I guess I was a jerk in the way I treated her. Yet, she was very respectful of me. She never once put me down. She didn't try to force her beliefs on me. She cared for me in a loving way. When she went to an assembly, she worked hard to prepare my meals ahead of time and to get the housework done. Her attitude started to arouse my interest in the Bible. And, well, here I am!" Yes, he had, in effect, been "won without a word" by his wife's conduct.

12. What benefits were realized by Jesus' submissive course?

13, 14. How has submission to unbelieving husbands been beneficial?

¹⁴ As Peter emphasized, it is not so much what a wife says but what she does that produces positive results. This was illustrated by a wife who learned Bible truths and was determined to attend Christian meetings. "Agnes, if you go out that door, don't come back in!" her husband shouted. She did not go out "that door" but, rather, another one. The next meeting night, he threatened: "I won't be here when you come back." Well, he was not—he was gone for three days. When he returned, she kindly asked: "Would you like something to eat?" Agnes never budged in her devotion to Jehovah. Her husband eventually accepted a Bible study, dedicated his life to God, and later served as an overseer with many responsibilities.

¹⁵ The apostle Peter recommended something that the wives noted above have demonstrated, namely, "adornment," but not by giving exaggerated attention to the "braiding of the hair" or "the wearing of outer garments." Rather, Peter said: "Let [your adornment] be the secret person of the heart in the incorruptible apparel of the quiet and mild spirit, which is of great value in the eyes of God." This spirit is reflected in a tone of voice and a manner that are becoming rather than challenging or demanding. Thus a Christian wife shows her deep respect for her husband.—1 Peter 3:3, 4.

Examples to Learn From

¹⁶ Peter wrote: "Formerly the holy women who were hoping in God used to adorn themselves, subjecting themselves to their

15. What "adornment" is recommended for Christian wives?

16. In what ways is Sarah a fine example for Christian wives?



What can wives learn from the example of such Bible characters as Abigail?

own husbands." (1 Peter 3:5) Such ones realized that pleasing Jehovah by heeding his counsel would ultimately result in family happiness and the reward of everlasting life. Peter mentions Sarah, the beautiful wife of Abraham, noting that she "used to obey Abraham, calling him 'lord.'" Sarah supported her God-fearing husband, whom God had assigned to serve in a distant land. She gave up a comfortable lifestyle and even put her life in jeopardy. (Genesis 12:1, 10-13) Peter recommended Sarah for her courageous example, saying: "You have become her children, provided you keep on doing good and not fearing any cause for terror."—1 Peter 3:6.

¹⁷ Abigail was another fearless woman who hoped in God, and Peter may have had

17. Why might Peter have had Abigail in mind as an example for Christian wives?

her in mind as well. She "was good in discretion," but her husband Nabal "was harsh and bad in his practices." When Nabal refused to give assistance to David and his men, they prepared to wipe out Nabal and his entire household. But Abigail took action to save her household. She loaded supplies of food on asses and met David as he and his armed men were en route. Catching sight of David, she dismounted, fell at his feet, and entreated him not to act rashly. David was deeply moved. "Blessed be Jehovah the God of Israel, who has sent you this day to meet me!" he said, "and blessed be your sensibleness."—1 Samuel 25:2-33.

¹⁸ Another fine example for wives is that of a young Shulammite woman who remained loyal to the humble shepherd to whom she was promised in marriage. Her love for him remained strong despite the amorous attentions of a wealthy potentate. Moved to express her feelings for the young shepherd, she said: "Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; because love is as strong as death is . . . Many waters themselves are not able to extinguish love, nor can rivers themselves wash it away." (Song of Solomon 8:6, 7) May it also be the resolve of all those who accept a marriage

18. If tempted by the amorous attentions of another man, wives can reflect on what example, and why?

Do You Remember?

- Why may it be a challenge for a wife to respect her husband?
- Why is accepting a marriage proposal so serious?
- How did Jesus serve as an example for wives, and what benefits may result from following his example?

proposal to remain loyal to their husbands and deeply respect them.

Additional Divine Counsel

¹⁹ Finally, consider the context of our theme scripture: "Wives be in subjection to [your] husbands." (Ephesians 5:22) Why is such subjection necessary? "Because," the next verse continues, "a husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation." Therefore, wives are urged: "As the congregation is in subjection to the Christ, so let wives also be to their husbands in everything."—Ephesians 5:23, 24, 33.

²⁰ To obey this command, wives need to study and then imitate the example of Christ's congregation of anointed followers. Please read 2 Corinthians 11:23-28 and thereby learn what one member of the congregation, the apostle Paul, endured in being faithful to his Head, Jesus Christ. Like Paul, wives as well as the rest of the congregation need to remain loyally subject to Jesus. Wives demonstrate this by their subjection to their husbands.

²¹ While many wives today may chafe at being in subjection, a wise woman will consider its advantages. For example, in the case of a husband who is an unbeliever, submitting to his headship in all matters that would not mean violating God's laws or principles may well yield the marvelous reward of her being able to 'save her husband.' (1 Corinthians 7:13, 16) Furthermore, she can find contentment in knowing that Jehovah God approves of her course and will richly reward her for imitating the example of his dear Son.

19, 20. (a) For what reason should wives be in subjection to their husbands? (b) What fine example has been provided for wives?

21. What can serve as incentives for wives to remain subject to their husbands?

"CHILDREN, BE OBEDIENT TO YOUR PARENTS"

"Children, be obedient to your parents in union with the Lord, for this is righteous."—EPHESIANS 6:1.

WE MAY be alive now because we obeyed, while others are not alive because they failed to obey. Obey what? Warnings, for example, from our "wonderfully made" bodies. (Psalm 139:14) Our eyes see dark clouds, and our ears hear claps of thunder. Then, the electrical charge in the air makes our hair stand on end. To those who have been taught about the potential dangers, these signs are a warning to seek a place of safety from the impending storm with its lightning and hailstones that may be life threatening.

² You young ones need warnings about potential dangers, and your parents have the responsibility to provide them. You may recall being told: "Don't touch the stove. It's hot." "Stay away from the water. It's dangerous." "Look both ways before you cross the street." Sadly, children have been hurt or even killed for failing to obey. To be obedient to your parents "is righteous"—right and proper. It is also wise. (Proverbs 8:33) Another Bible text says that it is "well-pleasing" to our Lord Jesus Christ. Indeed, God commands you to obey your parents.—Colossians 3:20; 1 Corinthians 8:6.

Lasting Rewards of Obedience

³ Obedience to your parents protects your

1. How can obedience protect you?
2. Why do children need warnings, and why should they obey their parents?
3. What is "the real life" for most of us, and how can children hope to enjoy it?

"life now," but obedience will also make it possible for you to enjoy the life "which is to come," called "the real life." (1 Timothy 4:8; 6:19) For most of us, the real life is endless life on earth in God's new world, which he promises to those who faithfully adhere to his commandments. A chief one of these commandments says: "'Honor your father and your mother'; which is the first command with a promise: 'That it may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth.'" So if you obey your parents, you will be happy. Your future will be secure, and you will be in line to enjoy everlasting life on a paradise earth!—Ephesians 6:2, 3.

⁴ When you honor your parents by obeying them, you also honor God because he is the one who commands you to obey them. At the same time, you benefit. "I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself," the Bible says. (Isaiah 48:17; 1 John 5:3) How does being obedient benefit you? It makes your mother and father happy, and in turn, they will certainly show their pleasure in ways that will make your life happier. (Proverbs 23:22-25) But most important, your obedience makes your heavenly Father happy, and he will reward you in marvelous ways! Let us see how Jehovah blessed and protected Jesus, who said about himself: "I always do the

4. How can children honor God and thus benefit?

Twelve-year-old Jesus was well-versed in the Scriptures

things pleasing to him."—John 8:29.

Jesus—A Good Worker

⁵ Jesus was the firstborn of his mother, Mary. His adoptive father, Joseph, was a carpenter. Jesus too became a carpenter, evidently learning the trade from Joseph. (Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3; Luke 1:26-31) What kind of carpenter do you think Jesus was? When he was in heaven, before he was miraculously conceived by his virgin mother, as wisdom personified, he explained: "I came to be beside [God] as a master worker, and I came to be the one he was specially fond of day by day." God approved of Jesus, who in heaven was a good worker. Do you think that when he was a youngster on earth he also tried hard to be a good worker, a good carpenter? —Proverbs 8:30; Colossians 1:15, 16.

⁶ No doubt, when Jesus was a child, he sometimes played games, even as the Bible says children did in early times. (Zechariah 8:5; Matthew 11:16, 17) Yet, you can be sure that as the oldest child in a large family of modest means, he had chores to do in addition to receiving training from Joseph to become a carpenter. Later, Jesus became a preacher and devoted himself to his ministry to the extent of sacrificing personal comforts. (Luke 9:58; John 5:17) Can you see ways in which you can imitate Jesus? Do

5. What reasons are there for believing that Jesus was a good worker?

6. (a) Why do you think Jesus as a child may have worked at home? (b) In what ways can children imitate Jesus?



your parents ask you to clean your room or do other chores? Do they encourage you to participate in worship of God by attending Christian meetings and sharing your beliefs with others? How do you think the young Jesus would have responded to similar requests?

A Fine Bible Student and Teacher

⁷ All male members of an Israelite family were commanded to go up to worship Jehovah at the temple during the three Jewish festivals. (Deuteronomy 16:16) When Jesus was 12 years old, his whole family may have made the trip to Jerusalem for the Passover. That likely included half brothers and half sisters. However, those traveling with Jesus' family may have included Salome, who was possibly Mary's sister, along with her husband Zebedee and their sons James and

7. (a) With whom may Jesus have traveled to the Passover? (b) Where was Jesus when others began the journey home, and why was he there?

John, who later became apostles.* (Matthew 4:20, 21; 13:54-56; 27:56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25) On the return trip, Joseph and Mary may have assumed that Jesus was with relatives, so at first his absence was not noticed. Three days later, when Mary and Joseph finally found Jesus, he was in the temple, "sitting in the midst of the teachers and listening to them and questioning them."—Luke 2:44-46.

⁸ In what way was Jesus "questioning" the teachers? His questioning may not have been merely the type to satisfy his curiosity or simply to get information. The Greek word used here could refer to questioning as used in judicial examination and thus could involve counterquestioning. Yes, even as a youth, Jesus had developed into a Bible student who astonished learned religious teachers! "All those listening to him were in constant amazement at his understanding and his answers," the Bible says.—Luke 2:47.

⁹ How do you think that at a young age Jesus was able to amaze even experienced teachers with his Bible knowledge? He was, of course, blessed with God-fearing parents who provided him from infancy with divine instruction. (Exodus 12:24-27; Deuteronomy 6:6-9; Matthew 1:18-20) We can be sure that Joseph took young Jesus to the synagogue to hear the Scriptures read and discussed. Are you too blessed with parents who study the Bible with you and take you to Christian meetings? Do you value their efforts, as Jesus appreciated those of his par-

* See *Insight on the Scriptures*, Volume 2, page 841, published by Jehovah's Witnesses.

8. What did Jesus do in the temple, and why were people amazed?
9. How can you follow Jesus' example in studying the Bible?

ents? Do you share with others what you learn, as Jesus did?

Jesus Was Submissive

¹⁰ How do you think Mary and Joseph felt when after three days they finally found Jesus in the temple? No doubt, they were greatly relieved. Jesus, though, expressed surprise that his parents had not known where he was. Both of them knew about Jesus' miraculous birth. In addition, although not aware of all the details, they would have known something about his future role as Savior and as Ruler of God's Kingdom. (Matthew 1:21; Luke 1:32-35; 2:11) Hence, Jesus asked them: "Why did you have to go looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in the house of my Father?" Obediently, however, Jesus left with his parents and returned home to Nazareth. The Bible says: "He continued subject to them." Furthermore, "his mother carefully kept all these sayings in her heart."—Luke 2:48-51.

¹¹ Do you find it easy to imitate Jesus, always obeying your parents? Or do you feel that they often do not understand today's world and that you know more than they do? Granted, you may know more about certain things—perhaps about using cell phones, computers, or other modern gadgets. But think about Jesus, who amazed experienced teachers with "his understanding and his answers." You will probably agree that compared with him, you know little. Yet, Jesus was submissive to his parents. This does not necessarily mean that he always agreed with their decisions. Nevertheless, "he continued subject to them"

10. (a) Why should Jesus' parents have known where to find him? (b) What fine example did Jesus provide for children?
11. What lesson about obedience can you learn from Jesus?

*How did Jesus learn
obedience from suffering?*

—right through his teenage years. What lesson do you think you can learn from his example?—Deuteronomy 5:16, 29.

Obedience—A Challenge

¹² It is not always easy to be obedient, as illustrated a few years ago when two young girls were about to dash across a six-lane highway rather than take the overpass walkway. “Come on John,” they urged a companion as he headed toward the walkway above. “You’re going with us, aren’t you?” When he hesitated, one girl taunted him, “You’re just a chicken!” John, although unafraid, said, “I just have to listen to my mother.” On the walkway moments later, he heard screeching tires and looked down just as the girls were hit by a car. One girl died, and the other was so badly hurt that her leg had to be amputated. The girls’ mother, who had told them to use the elevated walkway, later said to John’s mother, “I sure wish they had been as obedient as your son.”—Ephesians 6:1.

¹³ Why does God say: “Children, be obedient to your parents”? By obeying your parents, you thereby obey God. Besides that, your parents have more experience than you do. For example, just five years before the accident related above, John’s mother had a friend whose child was killed trying to cross that very highway! True, it may not always be easy to obey your parents, but God

12. How may obedience save your life?
13. (a) Why should you obey your parents?
(b) When would it be proper for a child not to do what a parent tells him to do?



says that you should. On the other hand, if your parents—or others—tell you to lie, steal, or do anything that is disapproved by God, you must “obey God as ruler rather than men.” That is why after saying “be obedient to your parents,” the Bible adds, “in union with the Lord.” This involves your obeying your parents in all things that are in harmony with God’s laws.—Acts 5:29.

¹⁴ Do you think that if you were perfect—that is, “undefiled, separated from the sinners,” as was Jesus—it would always be easy to obey your parents? (Hebrews 7:26) If you were perfect, you would not be inclined to do what is bad, as you are now. (Genesis 8:21; Psalm 51:5) Even Jesus, however, had to learn lessons about obedience. The Bible says: “Although [Jesus] was a Son, he learned obedience from the things he suffered.” (Hebrews 5:8) How did suffering help Jesus to *learn* obedience, a lesson he never had to learn in heaven?

14. Why is obedience easier for someone perfect, yet why would he need to learn about it?

¹⁵ Under Jehovah's direction, Joseph and Mary protected Jesus from harm when he was a child. (Matthew 2:7-23) Eventually, though, God removed supernatural protection from Jesus. Jesus' mental and physical suffering became so great that the Bible says that he "offered up supplications and also petitions . . . with strong outcries and tears." (Hebrews 5:7) When did this happen?

¹⁶ In particular, it occurred during the final hours of Jesus' earthly life when Satan made an all-out attempt to break His integrity. Jesus was evidently so tortured by thoughts of how his death as a supposed evildoer might reflect badly on his Father's reputation that as "he continued praying [in the garden of Gethsemane] his sweat became as drops of blood falling to the ground." A few hours later, his manner of death on a torture stake was so painful that Jesus uttered "strong outcries [with] tears." (Luke 22:42-44; Mark 15:34) He thus "learned obedience from the things he suffered" and thereby made his Father's heart rejoice. Now in heaven, Jesus feels our pain as we often struggle to be obedient.—Proverbs 27:11; Hebrews 2:18; 4:15.

Learning the Lesson of Obedience

¹⁷ When your father and mother discipline you, it shows that they want the best for you, that they love you. "What son is he that a father does not discipline?" the Bible asks. Would it not be sad if your parents did not love you enough to take the time and make the effort to correct you? Similarly, because Jehovah loves you, he corrects you. "True, no discipline seems for the present to be joyous, but grievous; yet afterward

15, 16. How did Jesus learn obedience?

17. How should we view receiving discipline?

to those who have been trained by it it yields peaceable fruit, namely, righteousness."—Hebrews 12:7-11.

¹⁸ A king in ancient Israel, whom Jesus noted for his great wisdom, spoke of the need for loving, parental correction. "The one holding back his rod is hating his son," Solomon wrote, "but the one loving him is he that does look for him with discipline." Solomon even said that a person receiving loving correction may have his very soul delivered from death itself. (Proverbs 13:24; 23:13, 14; Matthew 12:42) One Christian woman recalls that as a child when she misbehaved at Christian meetings, her father would promise to discipline her on returning home. Now she remembers her father with affection for providing her with loving discipline that molded her life in a fine way.

¹⁹ If you have parents who love you enough to take the time and make the effort to discipline you in a loving way, be grateful. Obey them, even as our Lord Jesus Christ obeyed his parents, Joseph and Mary. But obey them especially because your heavenly Father, Jehovah God, says to do so. You will thereby benefit yourself, and it "may go well with you and you may endure a long time on the earth."—Ephesians 6:2, 3.

18. (a) Of what is loving discipline an evidence?
(b) In what positive ways have you seen people molded by such discipline?

19. Why especially should you obey your parents?

How Would You Answer?

- What are the benefits children may receive from obeying their parents?
- As a child, how did Jesus set an example in obeying his parents?
- How did Jesus learn obedience?

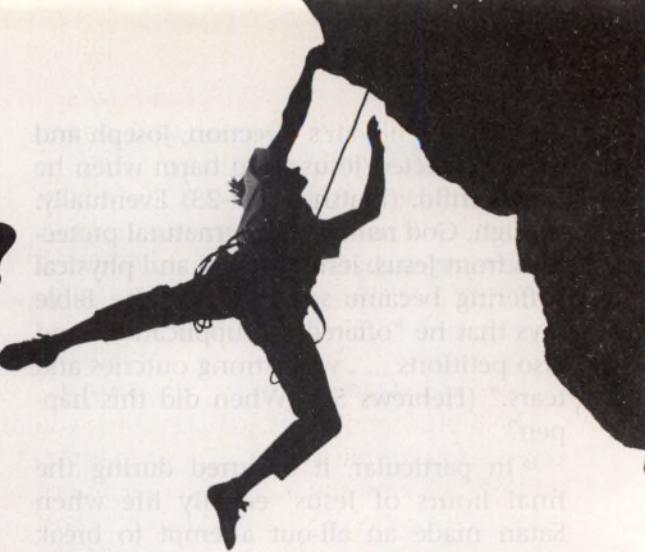
WHY AVOID EXTREMES?

JEHOVAH is the epitome of balance. "Perfect is his activity," and his justice is never harsh, since it always incorporates mercy. (Deuteronomy 32:4) His love is never unprincipled, because he acts in line with perfect laws. (Psalm 89:14; 103:13, 14) Our first parents were created balanced in all respects. They were not inclined to any extremes. The introduction of sin, however, brought a "defect"—imperfection—resulting in the loss of that balance.—Deuteronomy 32:5.

To illustrate: Have you ever ridden in a car or on a bicycle that had a tire with a large bulge? The deformity no doubt made the ride rather bumpy as well as unsafe. Such a tire needs to be repaired before it gets worse or goes flat. Similarly, our imperfect personalities are prone to irregularities. If we allow those "bulges" to grow, our journey through life can be very bumpy, even dangerous.

Sometimes our good qualities, our strengths, can be carried to an extreme. For instance, though the Mosaic Law required the Israelites to wear fringes on their skirts, the Pharisees in Jesus' day, wanting to stand out from the crowd, 'enlarged the fringes of their garments' to an extreme degree. Their motive was to look holier than their fellow men.—Matthew 23:5; Numbers 15:38-40.

Today some people try to get attention by any possible means, even by shocking others. This may actually be a desperate cry: "Notice me! I too am an individual!" But going to extremes in dress, attitude, and actions will not satisfy a Christian's real needs.



A Balanced Attitude Toward Work

Whoever we are and wherever we live, wholesome work is one thing that helps to make our life meaningful. We were created to find satisfaction in such work. (Genesis 2:15) Accordingly, the Bible condemns laziness. The apostle Paul pointedly said: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." (2 Thessalonians 3:10) Indeed, a lax attitude toward work may bring not only poverty and dissatisfaction but also God's disfavor.

Many go to the opposite extreme, becoming workaholics, voluntary slaves to their work. Leaving home early in the morning and coming back late, they may reason that their work is in their families' best interests. Yet, their families may actually be victims of such devotion to work. Says one housewife whose husband often spends extra hours at his job: "I would gladly trade all the things in this luxurious house for the chance to have my husband here with me and our children." Those who choose to overwork should give serious thought to King Solomon's personal experience: "I, even I, turned toward all the works of mine that my hands had done and toward the hard work that I had worked hard to accom-

plish, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving after wind.”—Ecclesiastes 2:11.

Yes, regarding work, we must avoid both extremes. We can be diligent workers, while remembering that becoming a slave to work will rob us of happiness and perhaps of much more.—Ecclesiastes 4:5, 6.

Avoid Extreme Views of Pleasure

The Bible foretold for our time: “Men will be . . . lovers of pleasures rather than lovers of God.” (2 Timothy 3:2, 4) The pursuit of pleasures has become one of Satan’s most effective tools to lure people away from God. Indulgence in recreation and entertainment, such as in extreme or “adrenaline” sports, is flourishing. The list of such activities is constantly getting longer, and the number of those participating in them, greater. Why such popularity? Many people, unsatisfied with their daily lives, search for ever greater excitement. But to maintain such excitement requires increasing levels of risk. Conscientious Christians avoid risky sports out of respect for the gift of life and for its Giver.—Psalm 36:9.

When God created the first human pair, where did he put them? In the garden of Eden, which means “Pleasure,” or “Delight.” (Genesis 2:8, footnote) Obviously, a pleasurable, delightful life was part of Jehovah’s purpose for humans.

Jesus left us a perfect example of a balanced view of pleasure. He was fully devoted to accomplishing Jehovah’s will, and he never took a break from living by God’s laws and principles. He took time for those in need, even when he was tired. (Matthew 14:13, 14) Yes, Jesus accepted invitations to meals and made room in his life for rest and refreshment. He was aware, of course, that some enemies regarded him with a critical eye because of his doing these things. They

said of him: “Look! A man gluttonous and given to drinking wine.” (Luke 7:34; 10:38; 11:37) But Jesus did not believe that true devotion excludes all pleasure from life.

Clearly, we are wise to avoid any extreme in regard to recreation. Making pleasure and entertainment the main thing in life can never bring real happiness. It can result in our neglecting more important things, including our relationship with God. Still, we should not deny ourselves all pleasure nor become critical of others who enjoy life in a balanced way.—Ecclesiastes 2:24; 3:1-4.

Find Happiness in a Balanced Life

The disciple James wrote: “We all stumble many times.” (James 3:2) We may find this to be true in our case as we endeavor to avoid extremes. What can help us to keep our balance? Well, we need to recognize our own strengths and weaknesses. Such objectivity is not easy. We could be moving toward some extreme without being aware of it. We are wise, then, to stay close to other mature Christians and to listen to balanced advice. (Galatians 6:1) We might ask a trusted friend or an experienced elder in the congregation for such. Along with the Scriptures themselves, such Bible-based counsel can serve as “a mirror” for us to check how we really appear before Jehovah.
—James 1:22-25.

Happily, we need not resign ourselves to a life of unavoidable extremes. With determined effort and Jehovah’s blessing, we can become balanced and therefore happy individuals. Our relationships with our Christian brothers and sisters may thus improve, and we can become even better examples for those to whom we preach. Above all, we will imitate more closely our balanced and loving God, Jehovah.—Ephesians 5:1.

Questions From Readers

The Bible does not mention toasting, so why do Jehovah's Witnesses avoid sharing in toasts?

Toasting with a glass of wine (or another alcoholic beverage) is a long-standing and widespread practice, though details may differ from place to place. Sometimes those toasting clink their glasses together. The person offering the toast usually requests or wishes someone happiness, good health, a long life, or the like. Others sharing in the toast may voice their agreement or raise their glasses and drink some wine. For many, this seems a harmless custom or social grace, but there are good reasons why Jehovah's Witnesses do not share in toasting.

It is not because Christians do not hope that someone finds happiness and enjoys good health. In a letter to the congregations, the first-century governing body concluded with a word that can be rendered "good health to you," "keep well," or "fare well." (Acts 15:29) And some true worshippers said to human kings: "Let my lord . . . live to time indefinite" or "Let the king himself live to time indefinite."—1 Kings 1:31; Nehemiah 2:3.

What, though, is the background of the custom of toasting? *The Watchtower* of January 1, 1968, quoted *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (1910), Volume 13, page 121: "The custom of drinking 'health' to the living is most probably derived from the ancient religious rite of drinking to the gods and the dead. The Greeks and Romans at meals poured out libations to their gods, and at ceremonial banquets drank to them and to the dead." The encyclopedia add-

ed: "Intimately associated with these quasi-sacrificial drinking customs must have ever been the drinking to the health of living men."

Is that still valid? The 1995 *International Handbook on Alcohol and Culture* says: "[Toasting] is probably a secular vestige of ancient sacrificial libations in which a sacred liquid was offered to the gods: blood or wine in exchange for a wish, a prayer summarized in the words 'long life!' or 'to your health!'"

Granted, the fact that an object, a design, or a practice has roots or parallels in ancient false religion does not always rule such out for a true worshipper. Consider the pomegranate. A noted Bible encyclopedia reports: "The pomegranate seems also to have been used as a holy symbol in heathen religions." Nevertheless, God had pomegranates made of thread put on the hem of the high priest's garment, and pomegranates decorated the copper pillars of Solomon's temple. (Exodus 28:33; 2 Kings 25:17) Moreover, the wedding ring at one time had religious significance. Yet, most people today do not know that, considering a wedding ring a mere evidence that someone is married.

What about using wine in connection with religious acts? For instance, at one point Baal-worshipping men of Shechem "went into the house of their god and ate and drank and called down evil upon Abimelech," Gideon's son. (Judges 9:22-28) Do you think one loyal to Jehovah would have shared in that drinking, perhaps calling for a divine influence against Abimelech? Describing a time when many in Israel revolted

against Jehovah, Amos said: "They stretch themselves out beside every altar; and the wine of those who have been fined they drink at the house of their gods." (Amos 2:8) Would true worshippers have shared in such, whether the wine was poured out as a libation to the gods or just drunk in that connection? (Jeremiah 7:18) Or would a true worshipper lift up a glass of wine and ask for a divine influence on someone or a blessed future for him?

Interestingly, worshippers of Jehovah at times raised their hands and asked for a good outcome. They lifted their hands to the true God. We read: "Solomon began standing before the altar of Jehovah . . . and he now spread his palms out to the heavens; and he went on to say: 'O Jehovah the God of Israel, there is no God like you . . . and may you yourself hear at the place of your dwelling, in the heavens, and you must hear and forgive.'" (1 Kings 8:22, 23, 30) Similarly, "Ezra blessed Jehovah . . . at which all the people answered, 'Amen! Amen!' with the lifting up of their hands. They then bowed low and prostrated themselves to Jehovah." (Nehemiah 8:6; 1 Timothy 2:8)

Clearly, those loyal ones were not lifting their hands heavenward for a blessing from some god of luck.—Isaiah 65:11.

Many people today who share in toasts may not think that they are requesting response or blessing from some god, but neither can they explain why they lift their wine glasses heavenward. Nevertheless, the fact that they do not think the matter through is no reason for true Christians to feel obliged to imitate their gestures.

It is common knowledge that on other matters also, Jehovah's Witnesses abstain from making gestures that most people do perform. For instance, many people make gestures toward national emblems, or flags; they do not view such gestures as acts of worship. True Christians do not interfere with such gestures, but they do not personally participate. Knowing when such a ceremony may occur, many Witnesses have acted with discretion so as not to offend others. In any case, they are determined not to make patriotic gestures, which are out of harmony with the Bible. (Exodus 20:4, 5; 1 John 5:21) Toasting today may not be viewed by many as a religious gesture. Still, there are valid reasons why Christians do not share in toasting, which has a religious background and even now can be viewed as asking 'heaven' for a blessing, as if seeking aid from a super-human force.—Exodus 23:2.



An Example of Honesty

NELMA, who works as a hairdresser in Cruzeiro do Sul, Brazil, recently faced a test of her Christian integrity. When a flood hit her area, Nelma received some donated clothing from one of her clients. While sorting through the clothes, she found money equivalent to \$1,000 (U.S.) in the pockets of some trousers.

The money Nelma found represented about seven months' wages for her, and she really needed it. Her own house had been damaged by the flood, and her father and siblings lost most of their belongings. With the money, she could finish the repairs on her home and still have some left over to help her relatives. However, Nelma's Bible-trained conscience did not allow her to keep the money.—Hebrews 13:18.

Early the next day, she went to work before normal business hours and contacted the businesswoman who had donated the clothing. Nelma thanked her for the clothes but added that she could not keep what she had found inside.

The lady was overjoyed to receive the money. She had set it aside to pay her employees. "Honesty is something you don't find very often," said the businesswoman.

Indeed, some may feel that being honest has no special merit. Yet, honesty is a quality that is highly valued by those striving to please the true God, Jehovah. (Ephesians 4:25, 28) "I wouldn't be able to sleep at night if I had acted any differently," said Nelma.

