



THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

MARCH 15, 2008

STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

April 21-27

Be Yielding, Be Balanced

PAGE 3 SONGS TO BE USED: 8, 177

April 28-May 4

Find Joy in Your Marriage

PAGE 7 SONGS TO BE USED: 117, 89

May 5-11

Jehovah Hears Our Cries for Help

PAGE 12 SONGS TO BE USED: 58, 135

May 12-18

"Who Is Wise and Understanding
Among You?"

PAGE 21 SONGS TO BE USED: 106, 51

May 19-25

Do You View Others as Jehovah Does?

PAGE 25 SONGS TO BE USED: 127, 213



THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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*.

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1, 2 PAGES 3-11

Contrary to the view and attitudes of many, there are good reasons why Christians should work at being yielding. What are they? And how can you be yielding in your marriage?

Study Article 3 PAGES 12-16

Why can we be confident that Jehovah hears and is concerned when we cry out to him? This article answers that question and shows how we can have the strength to endure trials.

Study Articles 4, 5 PAGES 21-29

These two articles will help us to cultivate the right view of others and avoid the common tendency to be judgmental. And we will see the distinction between one who is truly wise and one who is not.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:



Spreading Good News High in the Andes

PAGE 16



A Very Important Appointment

PAGE 19



Jehovah's Word Is Alive—Highlights From the Book of Luke

PAGE 30

BE YIELDING, BE BALANCED

"Continue reminding them . . . to be yielding."—TITUS 3:1, 2, ftn.

JEHOVAH, our loving heavenly Father, is infinitely wise. As his creatures, we look to him for guidance in our lives. (Ps. 48:14) The Christian disciple James tells us that "the wisdom from above is first of all chaste, then peaceable, reasonable [“yielding,” ftn.], ready to obey, full of mercy and good fruits, not making partial distinctions, not hypocritical."—Jas. 3:17.

² "Let your reasonableness [“yieldingness,” *Kingdom Interlinear*] become known to all men," exhorts the apostle Paul.* (Phil. 4:5) Christ Jesus is Lord and Head of the Christian congregation. (Eph. 5:23) How important it is for each of us to act in a reasonable way, yielding to Christ's direction and being yielding in our dealings with other humans!

³ Benefits result when we are disposed to be yielding in a balanced way. To illustrate: After a suspected terrorist plot was uncovered in Britain, airline passengers in general seemed ready to follow regulations against taking on board items they had previously been allowed to carry. When we drive an automobile, we see the need to yield to other drivers, such as when negotiating traffic circles, to make sure that everyone is safe and traffic flows smoothly.

* The apostle Paul used a word that is difficult to render with a single English word. One reference work notes: "Involved is the willingness to yield one's personal rights and to show consideration and gentleness to others." So the word has the sense of being yielding and reasonable, not insisting on carrying out the letter of the law or demanding one's rights.

1, 2. What do the Scriptures say about being yielding, and why is this fitting?

3, 4. (a) Illustrate the benefits that result when we yield. (b) What will we consider?

⁴ For many of us, it is not easy to be yielding. To help us, let us consider three aspects of being yielding, namely, our motive, our attitude toward authority, and the extent to which we should yield.

Why Be Yielding?

⁵ An example from pre-Christian times focuses on the right motive for being yielding. Under the Mosaic Law, Hebrews who had become slaves were to be set free in the seventh year of their servitude or in the Jubilee year, whichever came first. But a slave could choose to remain a slave. (*Read Exodus 21: 5, 6.*) What could prompt a slave to do this? Love prompted the slave to remain in that situation, under the authority of his considerate master.

⁶ In a similar way, our love for Jehovah moves us to dedicate our lives to him and then to live up to our dedication. (Rom. 14: 7, 8) "This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome," wrote the apostle John. (1 John 5:3) This love does not look for its own interests. (1 Cor. 13:4, 5) When we deal with other humans, love of neighbor inclines us to yield and allow them the first place. Instead of allowing selfishness to rule, we consider the interests of others.—Phil. 2:2, 3.

⁷ Neither our speech nor our actions should stumble others. (Eph. 4:29) Indeed, love will impel us to avoid doing anything

5. Under the Mosaic Law, what could prompt a slave to choose to stay with his master?

6. How is love involved in our being yielding?

7. Being yielding plays what part in our ministry?

that might hinder people of different backgrounds and cultures from progressing toward serving Jehovah. This often involves our being yielding. For example, missionary sisters accustomed to wearing cosmetics or nylons do not insist on using them in localities where that might call their morals into question and stumble others.—1 Cor. 10: 31-33.

⁸ Our love for Jehovah helps us to banish pride. After a dispute among the disciples as to who was the greatest, Jesus stood a young child in their midst. He explained: “Whoever receives this young child on the basis of my name receives me too, and whoever receives me receives him also that sent me forth. For he that conducts himself as a lesser one among all of you is the one that is great.” (Luke 9:48; Mark 9:36) Individually, we may find it a real challenge to conduct ourselves as “a lesser one.” Inherited imperfection and a tendency to be proud may motivate us to seek prominence, but humility will help us to yield.—Rom. 12:10.

⁹ To be yielding, we must take into account divinely constituted authority. All true Christians recognize the important principle of headship. The apostle Paul outlined this clearly to the Corinthians: “I want you to know that 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.” —1 Cor. 11:3.

¹⁰ Yielding to God’s authority demonstrates our trust and confidence in him as our loving Father. He is aware of all that happens and can reward us accordingly. It is helpful to bear that in mind when others do not treat us with respect or they become an-

8. How can love for God help us to conduct ourselves as ‘lesser ones’?

9. To be yielding, what must we take into account?

10. Our yielding to Jehovah’s authority demonstrates what?

gry and lose their temper. Paul wrote: “If possible, as far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men.” Paul punctuated that advice with this directive: “Do not avenge yourselves, beloved, but yield place to the wrath; for it is written: ‘Vengeance is mine; I will repay,’ says Jehovah.’”—Rom. 12:18, 19.

¹¹ Divinely constituted authority is also a factor within the Christian congregation. Revelation chapter 1 depicts Christ Jesus as holding the “stars” of the congregation in his right hand. (Rev. 1:16, 20) In a general sense, these “stars” represent the bodies of elders, or overseers, in the congregations. Such appointed overseers yield to Christ’s leadership and imitate his kindly way of dealing with others. All in the congregation submit to the arrangement that Jesus made for “the

11. How can we show that we are yielding to Christ’s headship?

Elders imitate Christ’s kindly way of dealing with others



faithful and discreet slave" to provide spiritual food at the proper time. (Matt. 24:45-47) Today, our willingness to study and apply this material demonstrates that we personally are yielding to Christ's headship, which contributes to peace and unity.—Rom. 14:13, 19.

Yield—To What Extent?

¹² Being yielding does not, however, mean that we compromise our faith or our godly principles. What stand did the early Christians take when ordered by the religious leaders to stop teaching on the basis of Jesus' name? Peter and the other apostles said boldly: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men." (Acts 4:18-20; 5:28, 29) So today, when governmental authorities try to force us to cease preaching the good news, we do not stop, although we may adjust our methods in order to handle the situation tactfully. If there are restrictions on the house-to-house ministry, we may seek out alternative ways to contact householders and continue obeying our God-given commission. Likewise, when "the superior authorities" proscribe our meetings, we meet discreetly in small groups.—Rom. 13:1; Heb. 10:24, 25.

¹³ In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus pointed out the need to yield to authority: "If a person wants to go to court with you and get possession of your inner garment, let your outer garment also go to him; and if someone under authority impresses you into service for a mile, go with him two miles." (Matt. 5:40, 41)* Consideration for others and a desire to help them also move us to go the extra mile, so to speak.—1 Cor. 13:5; Titus 3:1, 2.

* See the article "If You Are Impressed Into Service," in *The Watchtower* of February 15, 2005, pages 23-6.

12. Why does being yielding have limits?
13. What did Jesus say about yielding to those in authority?

¹⁴ Never should our desire to be yielding, though, lead us to compromise with apostates. Our clear, firm stance in this regard is needed to preserve the purity of the truth and the unity of the congregation. Regarding "false brothers," Paul wrote: "To these we did not yield by way of submission, no, not for an hour, in order that the truth of the good news might continue with you." (Gal. 2:4, 5) In the rare instance that apostasy does appear, devoted Christians will remain firm for what is right.

Overseers Need to Be Yielding

¹⁵ One of the qualifications for those appointed to serve as overseers involves being willing to yield. Paul wrote: "The overseer should therefore be . . . reasonable [“yielding,” ftn.]." (1 Tim. 3:2, 3) This is especially vital when appointed men meet to consider congregation matters. Before a decision is reached, each one present is free to express himself clearly, though it is not required that every elder make some comment. During a discussion, an individual's view may change as he hears others direct attention to Scriptural principles that apply. Rather than resisting and holding to a personal view, a mature elder yields. At the outset, there may have been differing views, but prayerful reflection promotes oneness among modest and yielding elders.—1 Cor. 1:10; *Read Ephesians 4:1-3.*

¹⁶ In all his activity, a Christian elder should strive to uphold theocratic order. That spirit ought to carry over even in his shepherding of the flock, helping him to show consideration and gentleness to others. "Shepherd the flock of God in your care," wrote Peter, "not under compulsion,

14. Why should we never yield to apostasy?
15. In what way can Christian overseers be yielding when meeting together?
16. What spirit should a Christian overseer display?



When congregation elders meet, prayerful reflection and a yielding spirit promote unity

but willingly; neither for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly.”—1 Pet. 5:2.

¹⁷ Elderly members of the congregation appreciate the valuable help of those younger in years and treat them with dignity. In turn, youths respect older ones who have years of experience in serving Jehovah. (1 Tim. 5:1, 2) Christian elders seek out qualified men to whom they can delegate certain responsibilities, training them to help care for God’s flock. (2 Tim. 2:1, 2) Each individual Christian ought to value Paul’s inspired advice: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive [“yielding under,” ftn.], for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.”—Heb. 13:17.

Being Yielding as Family Members

¹⁸ A yielding spirit has a place within the family arrangement too. (*Read Colossians 3: 18-21.*) The Bible outlines the respective roles of the various members of a Christian family. The father is both head of his wife and the

17. How can all in the congregation show a yielding spirit in dealing with others?

18. Why is a yielding spirit appropriate within the family?

one primarily responsible for directing the children. The wife is to recognize the authority of her mate, and the children should strive to be obedient, a course that is well-pleasing to the Lord. Each member of the family can contribute to the unity and peace of the household by being yielding in a proper and balanced way. The Bible contains some examples that help to illustrate the point.

¹⁹ When Samuel was just a boy, Eli served as high priest in Israel. However, Eli’s sons, Hophni and Phinehas, were “good-for-nothing men” who did not “acknowledge Jehovah.” Eli heard bad reports about them, including the fact that they were committing fornication with women who served at the entrance of the tent of meeting. How did he react? Eli told them that if their sin was against Jehovah, there was nobody to pray for them. But he failed to correct and discipline them. As a result, Eli’s sons continued in their bad course. Finally, Jehovah justly determined that they merited the penalty

19, 20. (a) Contrast the example of Eli and that of Jehovah in being yielding. (b) What lessons can parents learn from these examples?

How Would You Answer?

- What good fruitage can being yielding produce?
- How can overseers display a yielding spirit?
- Why does a yielding spirit have a place in family life?

of death. Upon hearing the news of their deaths, Eli himself died. What a sad outcome! Clearly, Eli's improperly yielding to their wicked actions—in the sense that he allowed them to continue—was not right.
—1 Sam. 2:12-17, 22-25, 34, 35; 4:17, 18.

²⁰ By way of contrast, consider God's dealings with his angelic sons. The prophet Micahiah had a remarkable vision of a meeting of Jehovah and His angels. Jehovah asked which of the angels could fool King Ahab of Israel to bring about the downfall of the wicked king. Jehovah listened to the suggestions of various spirit sons. Then one angel declared that he would do it. Jehovah asked him how. Satisfied, Jehovah commissioned the angel to carry it out. (1 Ki. 22:19-23) On a

human plane, cannot family members learn from that account lessons about being yielding? A Christian husband and father does well to consider the ideas and suggestions of his wife and children. Conversely, wives and children should see that if they have offered an opinion or a preference, they may then need to be yielding in respecting direction from the one Scripturally authorized to decide.

²¹ How grateful we are for Jehovah's loving and wise reminders to be yielding! (Ps. 119: 99) Our next article will consider how being yielding in a balanced way contributes to finding joy in marriage.

21. What will be considered in the next article?

FIND JOY IN YOUR MARRIAGE

"By wisdom a household will be built up, and by discernment it will prove firmly established." —PROV. 24:3.

OUR wise heavenly Father knows what is good for us. For example, God recognized that for His purpose to be accomplished, it was "not good for the man to continue by himself" in the garden of Eden. A key element of that purpose was for married people to have children and "fill the earth."
—Gen. 1:28; 2:18.

² "I am going to make a helper for him," said Jehovah, "as a complement of him." God then had the first man fall into a deep sleep, and from his perfect body He took a rib and built that into a woman. When Jeho-

vah brought this perfect woman, Eve, to Adam, the man said: "This is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken." Eve was truly a complement of Adam. Each would display particular attributes and qualities, yet both were perfect and made in God's image. Thus Jehovah arranged the first marriage. Adam and Eve had no trouble accepting this divine arrangement that would provide mutual help and support.—Gen. 1:27; 2:21-23.

³ Sadly, a rebellious spirit permeates the world today. The problems it engenders do not originate with God. Many scorn God's

1. How did God show wisdom regarding the first man?
2. What arrangement did Jehovah make for the benefit of mankind?

3. How do many treat the gift of marriage, leading to what questions?

gift of marriage, considering it to be out-of-date, a source of frustration or conflict. Among many who do marry, divorce is common. Children may not be shown natural affection and may become bargaining chips in marital disputes. Many parents refuse to yield, even for the sake of peace and unity. (2 Tim. 3:3) How, then, can joy in marriage be maintained in these critical times? What role does being yielding play in successfully resisting any marriage breakup? What can we learn from modern-day examples of those who have maintained joy in their marriage?

Yielding to Jehovah's Direction

⁴ The Christian apostle Paul gave inspired direction to widows that if they chose to remarry, they should do so "only in the Lord." (1 Cor. 7:39) This was not a new thought for Christians who had a Jewish background. God's Law to Israel clearly directed that they were to "form no marriage alliance" with anyone from the surrounding pagan nations. Jehovah added an explanation that highlights the danger of disregarding this divine standard. "For [a non-Israelite] will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods; and Jehovah's anger will indeed blaze against you, and he will certainly annihilate you in a hurry." (Deut. 7:3, 4) What stand does Jehovah expect his modern-day servants to take in this regard? Plainly, a servant of God should choose as a marriage mate one who is "in the Lord," a dedicated, baptized fellow worshipper. Yielding to Jehovah's direction in connection with this choice is the wise course.

⁵ Marriage vows are sacred in God's eyes. In reference to the first marriage, God's own

4. (a) What direction did Paul give about marriage? (b) How do obedient Christians follow Paul's direction?

5. How do Jehovah and married Christians view marriage vows?

Son, Jesus, stated: "What God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:6) The psalmist reminds us of the seriousness of vows: "Offer thanksgiving as your sacrifice to God, and pay to the Most High your vows." (Ps. 50:14) Although great joy can lie ahead for a married couple, the vows exchanged on the wedding day are serious and bring responsibility.—Deut. 23:21.

⁶ Consider the case of Jephthah, who served as judge in Israel in the 12th century B.C.E. He made this vow to Jehovah: "If you without fail give the sons of Ammon into my hand, it must also occur that the one coming out, who comes out of the doors of my house to meet me when I return in peace from the sons of Ammon, must also become Jehovah's, and I must offer that one up as a burnt offering." On seeing that it was his daughter, his only child, who came out to meet him on his return to his home in Mizpah, did Jephthah seek to break his vow? No. He said: "I have opened my mouth to Jehovah, and I am unable to turn back." (Judg. 11:30, 31, 35) Jephthah kept his promise to Jehovah, even though this meant that he would have no descendant to carry on his name. Jephthah's vow was of a different sort than wedding vows, but his keeping it serves as a fine example for Christian husbands and wives as to their vows.

What Makes a Successful Marriage?

⁷ Many married couples think back on their courtship with great fondness. How delightful it was to get to know their future mate! The more time they spent together, the closer they became. But, whether their marriage followed a period of courtship or was arranged, when they finally became husband and wife, adjustments were vital. One

6. We can learn what from the example of Jephthah?

7. What adjustments do newlyweds need to make?

husband admits: "The major problem we had at the beginning of our marriage was to realize that we were not single anymore. For a while we found it difficult to keep our friendships and family ties in the right place." Another husband, now married for 30 years, realized early in his marriage that to be balanced, he had to "think plural." Before accepting an invitation or taking on a commitment, he consults with his wife and then decides, taking into consideration their mutual interests. In such a situation, being yielding helps.—Prov. 13:10.

⁸ Sometimes marriage unites two people who are from different cultural backgrounds. Here especially there is a need to communicate openly. Styles of communication differ. Observing how your marriage mate talks with relatives can help you understand your spouse better. At times, it is not what is said but how it is conveyed that reveals a person's

- 8, 9. (a) Why is good communication important? (b) In what areas will flexibility be of help, and why?

inner thinking. And much may be learned from what is not said. (Prov. 16:24; Col. 4:6) Discernment is vital for happiness.—*Read Proverbs 24:3.*

⁹ When it comes to choosing hobbies and recreation, many have found it important to be flexible. Before marriage your spouse may have spent time in sports or other recreational pursuits. Would some adjustment now be appropriate? (1 Tim. 4:8) The same might be asked about time spent with relatives. Understandably, a married couple need time so that they can pursue spiritual and other activities together.—Matt. 6:33.

¹⁰ When a man marries, he leaves his father and his mother, and much the same can be said of a woman. (*Read Genesis 2:24.*) Still, the divine guidance to honor one's father and mother comes with no time limit. So even after a couple marry, they will likely spend some time with their parents and

10. How will being yielding contribute to good relations between parents and married children?

Married couples wisely communicate before accepting an invitation or making an appointment



in-laws. One husband, married for 25 years, notes: "At times, it is difficult to balance the various wishes and needs of one's mate with those of one's parents, siblings, and in-laws. In deciding how best to act, I have found Genesis 2:24 helpful. One owes loyalty to and has responsibilities toward other family members, yet this verse showed me that loyalty to my spouse takes precedence." Accordingly, Christian parents who are yielding will respect that their married children are now in a family unit in which the husband is principally responsible for guiding that family.¹¹

¹¹ A good routine of family study is essential. The experience of many Christian families bears out that fact. It may not be easy to establish such a study or to maintain it over time. One family head acknowledges: "If we could go back and change anything, it would be to make sure that we stuck to a good routine of family study from the start of our marriage." He adds: "It is such a wonderful gift to observe the joy my wife expresses when moved by some spiritual gem we find together in our study."

¹² Praying together is another aid. (Rom. 12:12) When husband and wife are united in the worship of Jehovah, their close relationship with God can strengthen the bond they enjoy in marriage. (Jas. 4:8) One Christian husband explains: "Quickly apologizing for mistakes and mentioning those errors when praying together is a way of showing sincere sorrow over even a minor matter that causes upset."—Eph. 6:18.

Be Yielding Within the Marriage

¹³ Married Christians need to avoid practices that degrade marital relations, such as those that are so common in today's sex-

11, 12. Why are family study and prayer important for married couples?

13. What advice did Paul give on intimate relations in marriage?



Strive to settle disagreements the same day, not 'allowing place for the Devil'

mad world. On this subject, Paul counseled: "Let the husband render to his wife her due; but let the wife also do likewise to her husband. The wife does not exercise authority over her own body, but her husband does; likewise, also, the husband does not exercise authority over his own body, but his wife does." Then Paul provided this clear direction: "Do not be depriving each other of it, except by mutual consent for an appointed time." Why? "That you may devote time to prayer and may come together again, that Satan may not keep tempting you for your lack of self-regulation." (1 Cor. 7:3-5) In mentioning prayer, Paul shows the priorities for a Christian. But he also made clear that each married Christian should be sensitive to the physical and emotional needs of his or her mate.

¹⁴ Husband and wife need to be open with each other and realize that a lack of tenderness in intimate relations can lead to problems. (*Read Philippians 2:3, 4; compare Matthew 7:12.*) This has proved true in some religiously divided families. Even if differences exist, the Christian can usually improve matters by good conduct, kindness, and cooperation. (*Read 1 Peter 3:1, 2.*) Love for Jehovah and for one's mate, combined with a yielding spirit, will help in this aspect of marriage.

¹⁵ In other aspects too, the kind husband will treat his wife with respect. For example, he will take her feelings into account, even in small matters. One husband of 47 years admits: "I am still learning in this regard." Christian wives are admonished to have deep respect for their husbands. (Eph. 5:33) Speaking negatively about their husbands, highlighting their faults in front of others, hardly shows respect. Proverbs 14:1 reminds us: "The truly wise woman has built up her house, but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands."

Do Not Yield to the Devil

¹⁶ "Be wrathful, and yet do not sin; let the sun not set with you in a provoked state, neither allow place for the Devil." (Eph. 4:26, 27) When applied, these words can help us to solve or to avoid marital discord. "I don't remember ever having a disagreement and not talking it over with my husband even if this meant spending hours resolving the matter," recalls one sister. At the start of their marriage, she and her husband determined that they would not end the day without solving their differences. "We decided, no

14. How do Scriptural principles apply with regard to intimate relations in marriage?
15. Respect plays what part in a happy marriage?
16. How can couples apply Ephesians 4:26, 27 in their marriage?

matter what the problem was, to forgive and forget and give each day a fresh start." They thus refused to "allow place for the Devil."

¹⁷ But what if you entered into a marriage arrangement unwisely? You may now find yourself in a relationship that may not seem as romantic as others enjoy. Still, your remembering the Creator's view of the marriage bond will help you. Under inspiration, Paul counseled Christians: "Let marriage be honorable among all, and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Heb. 13:4) And not to be overlooked are the words: "A three-fold cord cannot quickly be torn in two." (Eccl. 4:12) When both husband and wife are deeply concerned with the sanctification of Jehovah's name, they are bonded to each other and bonded to God. They ought to work at making their marriage a success, knowing that this will reflect well on Jehovah, the Originator of marriage.—1 Pet. 3:11.

¹⁸ It certainly is possible for Christians to find joy in marriage. To do so takes effort and the displaying of Christian qualities, one of which is being yielding. Today, in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses around the globe, there are countless married couples who prove that it can be done.

17. Even when marriage mates do not seem well-matched, what may help?

18. Of what can you be sure regarding marriage?

How Would You Answer?

- Why is finding joy in marriage not unrealistic?
- What can help a marriage to succeed?
- What qualities do marriage mates need to develop?

JEHOVAH HEARS OUR CRIES FOR HELP

"The eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help."—Ps. 34:15.

ARE you experiencing distress? If so, you are not alone. Millions are struggling to cope with the day-to-day pressures of living in this wicked system of things. For some, it seems almost unbearable. They feel very much as did the psalmist David, who wrote: "I have grown numb and become crushed to an extreme degree; I have roared due to the groaning of my heart. My own heart has palpitated heavily, my power has left me, and the light of my own eyes also is not with me."—Ps. 38:8, 10.

² As Christians, we are not surprised by the distresses of life. We understand that "pangs of distress" are part of the foretold sign of Jesus' presence. (Mark 13:8; Matt. 24:3) The original-language word rendered "pangs of distress" refers to the intense pain experienced during childbirth. How accurately that describes the intensity of people's suffering in these "critical," or "fierce," times that are so "hard to deal with"!—2 Tim. 3:1; *Kingdom Interlinear*.

Jehovah Understands Our Distresses

³ Jehovah's people are keenly aware that they are not immune to the effects of these distresses, and in all likelihood, adverse conditions will get even worse. In addition to what is experienced by mankind in general, as God's servants we also face an "adversary, the Devil," who is determined to undermine

- 1, 2. (a) How do many today feel? (b) Why are we not surprised by this?
3. Of what are God's people keenly aware?

our faith. (1 Pet. 5:8) How easy it would be to feel as David did: "Reproach itself has broken my heart, and the wound is incurable. And I kept hoping for someone to show sympathy, but there was none; and for comforters, but I found none"!—Ps. 69:20.

⁴ Did David mean that he was without any hope at all? No. Notice his further words in that psalm: "Jehovah is listening to the poor ones, and he will indeed not despise his very own prisoners," or "those of his who are prisoners." (Ps. 69:33; ftn.) In a broad sense, we may at times feel as if we were prisoners held captive by our distresses or afflictions. It may appear that others do not truly understand our situation—and perhaps they do not. But like David, we can be comforted in knowing that Jehovah fully understands our distresses.—Ps. 34:15.

⁵ David's son Solomon highlighted this fact at the dedication of the temple in Jerusalem. (*Read 2 Chronicles 6:29-31.*) He implored Jehovah to hear the prayer of each honesthearted one who approached Him concerning "his own plague and his own pain." How would God react to the prayers of these distressed individuals? Solomon expressed his confidence that God would not only hear their prayers but also act in their behalf. Why? Because he truly knows what is in "the heart of the sons of mankind."

4. What comforts us when we are experiencing distresses?
5. King Solomon was confident of what?

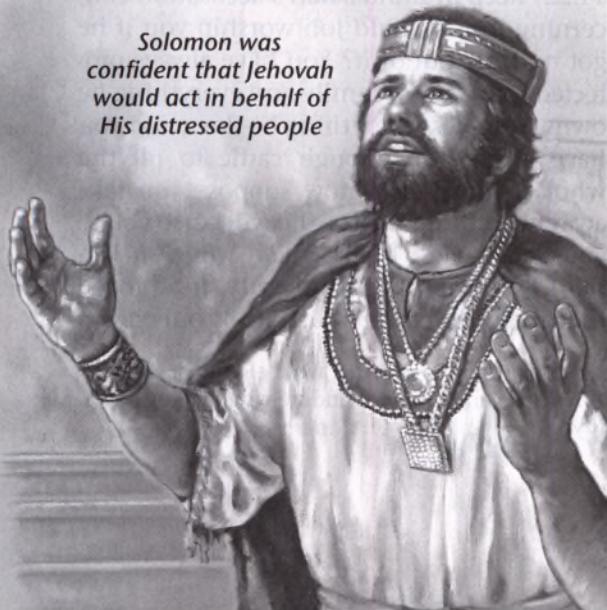
⁶ We can likewise approach Jehovah in prayer concerning ‘our own plague and our own pain,’ our individual distresses. We should be comforted in knowing that he understands our distresses and that he cares about us. The apostle Peter confirmed this when he said: “Throw all your anxiety upon him, because he cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:7) It matters to Jehovah what happens to us. Jesus emphasized Jehovah’s loving care, saying: “Do not two sparrows sell for a coin of small value? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father’s knowledge. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore have no fear: you are worth more than many sparrows.”—Matt. 10:29-31.

Rely on Jehovah’s Help

⁷ We can certainly be assured that Jehovah is willing and able to assist us when we are afflicted with distresses. “God is for us a refuge and strength, a help that is readily to be found during distresses.” (Ps. 34:15-18; 46:1) How does God provide that help? Consider what 1 Corinthians 10:13 says: “God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear, but along with the temptation he will also make the way out in

6. How can we cope with anxiety, and why?
7. What support is assured for us?

Solomon was confident that Jehovah would act in behalf of His distressed people



order for you to be able to endure it.” Jehovah may maneuver matters to remove our adversity, or he may give us the strength we need to endure it. Either way, we are helped.

⁸ How can we avail ourselves of that help? Notice what we are counseled to do: “Throw all your anxiety upon him.” This means that we figuratively hand over to Jehovah the responsibility for all our cares and concerns. We try to stop worrying and patiently trust in him to care for our needs. (Matt. 6:25-32) Such trust requires humility, not relying on our own strength or wisdom. By humbling ourselves “under the mighty hand of God,” we acknowledge our lowly position. (*Read 1 Peter 5:6.*) In turn, this helps us to cope with whatever God permits. We may yearn for immediate relief, but we trust that Jehovah knows precisely when and how to act in our behalf.—Ps. 54:7; Isa. 41:10.

⁹ Recall David’s words recorded at Psalm 55:22: “Throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you. Never will he allow the righteous one to totter.” When David wrote those words, he was greatly distressed. (Ps. 55:4) It is understood that this psalm was written when his son Absalom schemed to steal the kingship from him. David’s most trusted counselor, Ahithophel, joined in the conspiracy. David had to flee Jerusalem for his life. (2 Sam. 15:12-14) Even under those distressing circumstances, David continued to trust in God, and he was not disappointed.

¹⁰ It is imperative that we, like David, approach Jehovah in prayer concerning whatever distresses we may be experiencing. Let us consider what the apostle Paul urged us to do in this regard. (*Read Philippians 4:6, 7.*) What will result from such intense prayer?

8. How can we avail ourselves of God’s help?
9. What type of burden did David need to throw upon Jehovah?
10. What must we do when facing distresses?

"The peace of God that excels all thought will guard [our] hearts and [our] mental powers by means of Christ Jesus."

¹¹ Will prayer lead to a change in your situation? It may. We should realize, though, that Jehovah does not always answer our prayers in the manner that we may want. Nevertheless, prayer helps us to keep our mental balance, so that our distresses do not overwhelm us. "The peace of God" can stabilize us when we are burdened down with distressing emotions. Like a garrison of soldiers assigned to protect a city from hostile invasion, "the peace of God" will protect our hearts and our mental powers. It will also allow us to rise above our doubts, fears, and negative thoughts and prevent us from reacting rashly and unwisely.—Ps. 145:18.

¹² How can we have peace of mind while undergoing distresses? Consider an illustration that in some respects matches our situation. An employee may work under an abusive manager. However, the employee has an opportunity to express his feelings to the owner of the company, who is a kind, reasonable man. The owner assures the employee that he understands the situation and reveals that the manager will soon be removed from his position. How does that make the employee feel? Believing that assurance and knowing what is about to take place will

11. How does "the peace of God" protect our hearts and our mental powers?

12. Illustrate how a person can have peace of mind.

Can You Answer?

- How did David feel about distresses he faced?
- What confidence did King Solomon express?
- What can help us cope with what Jehovah permits?

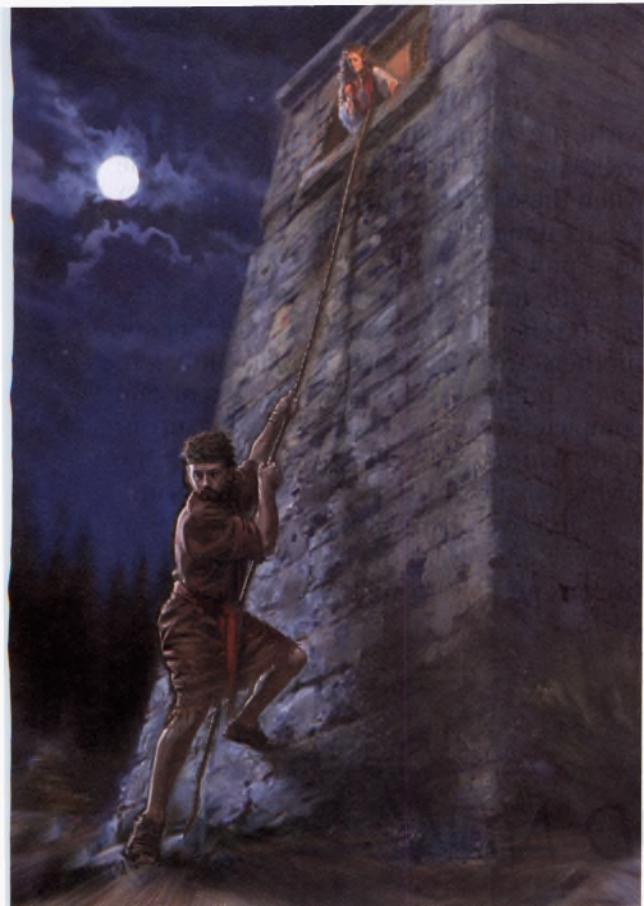
strengthen his resolve to continue on, even if he has to face a few more difficulties in the meantime. Similarly, we know that Jehovah understands our situation, and he assures us that soon "the ruler of this world will be cast out." (John 12:31) How comforting that is!

¹³ Is it enough, then, for us just to take our problems to Jehovah in prayer? No. More is required. We need to act in harmony with our prayers. When King Saul sent men to David's home to put him to death, David prayed: "Deliver me from my enemies, O my God; from those rising up against me may you protect me. Deliver me from the practitioners of what is hurtful, and from bloodguilty men save me." (Ps. 59:1, 2) In addition to praying, David listened to his wife and took the necessary action to escape. (1 Sam. 19:11, 12) In a similar way, we can pray for practical wisdom to help us deal with and perhaps improve our distressing circumstances.—Jas. 1:5.

How We Can Have Strength to Endure

¹⁴ Our adversities may not be removed immediately. They may even continue for some time. If that is the case, what will help us to endure? First, remember that when we continue to serve Jehovah faithfully despite difficulties, we prove our love for him. (Acts 14:22) Keep in mind Satan's accusation concerning Job: "Would Job worship you if he got nothing out of it? You have always protected him and his family and everything he owns. You bless everything he does, and you have given him enough cattle to fill the whole country. But now suppose you take away everything he has—he will curse you to your face!" (Job 1:9-11, *Today's English Version*) By means of his integrity, Job proved that accusation to be a base lie. By our endur-

13. In addition to praying, what else must we do?
14. What can help us to endure when facing adversity?



David threw his burden on Jehovah in prayer and then acted on what he prayed for

ing under distressing circumstances, we too have an opportunity to prove Satan a liar. In turn, our endurance strengthens our hope and confidence.—Jas. 1:4.

¹⁵ Second, keep in mind that “the same things in the way of sufferings are being accomplished in the entire association of your brothers in the world.” (1 Pet. 5:9) Yes, “no temptation has taken you except what is common to men.” (1 Cor. 10:13) You can therefore gain strength and courage by meditating on the examples of others rather than focusing on your own difficulties. (1 Thess. 1:5-7; Heb. 12:1) Take time to think about the example of those you know who have en-

15. What examples can strengthen us?

dured faithfully despite undergoing painful distresses. Have you searched for life experiences that have been published, looking for accounts of those who have gone through something similar to what you face? You may find these to be very strengthening.

¹⁶ Third, remember that Jehovah is “the Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those in any sort of tribulation through the comfort with which we ourselves are being comforted by God.” (2 Cor. 1:3, 4) It is as if God were standing by our side to encourage and strengthen us, not just in our present tribulation but “in *all* our tribulation.” This then enables us to comfort others “in *any sort* of tribulation.” Paul personally experienced the truthfulness of these words.—2 Cor. 4:8, 9; 11:23-27.

¹⁷ Fourth, we have God’s Word, the Bible, which is “beneficial for teaching, for reproofing, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, that the man of God may be fully competent, completely equipped for every good work.” (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) God’s Word does not merely make us “competent” and “equipped for every good work.” It also enables us to deal with life’s distresses. It makes us “*fully* competent” and “*completely* equipped.” The original-language word rendered “completely equipped” literally means “having been fitted out.” This word could have been used in ancient times of a boat that was fitted out with everything needed for a voyage or of a machine that was capable of performing whatever was expected of it. Similarly, Jehovah through his Word provides us with all that we need to handle whatever may come

-
16. How does God strengthen us when we face various trials?
 17. How can the Bible help us deal with life’s distresses?

our way. Accordingly, we can say, "If God permits it, I can take it, with his help."

Deliverance From All Our Distresses

¹⁸ Fifth, always keep in focus the marvelous fact that Jehovah will soon relieve mankind of all distresses. (Ps. 34:19; 37:9-11; 2 Pet. 2:9) Ultimately, our deliverance by God means not only the deliverance from present distresses but also the opportunity to have everlasting life, whether in the heavens with Jesus or on a paradise earth.

¹⁹ Until that time, we continue to deal

18. Focusing on what will further assist us to endure faithfully?

19. How is faithful endurance possible?

with the distressing conditions of this wicked world. How we long for the time when these will no longer exist! (Ps. 55:6-8) Let us remember that our faithful endurance proves the Devil a liar. May we gain strength from our prayers and our Christian brotherhood, keeping in mind that our brothers are experiencing trials similar to ours. Continue to be fully competent and completely equipped by making good use of God's Word. Never allow your trust in the loving care provided by "the God of all comfort" to waver. Remember that "the eyes of Jehovah are toward the righteous ones, and his ears are toward their cry for help."—Ps. 34:15.

SPREADING GOOD NEWS HIGH IN THE ANDES



THREE of us were, 18 of us, on the dirt floor. Shivering in our sleeping bags, we listened to the torrential rain beating on the corrugated iron roof above us. Given the condition of the tiny shed, we wondered whether we were its first human occupants.

Why would 18 people visit this area? The answer centered on our desire to act on Jesus' command to preach the good news "to the most distant part of the earth." (Acts 1:8; Matt. 24:14) We were on a preaching trip to an isolated territory in the Bolivian Andes.

Getting There

The first challenge was just getting there. We learned that public transport to such remote places did not run on a precise schedule. When our bus appeared, we discovered that it was smaller than it was supposed to be, so some of us did not have seats. But we all finally made it to our destination.

Our objective was to reach villages high in the Bolivian Andes. So after the bus trip, those in our group, laden with provisions, picked their way single file along steep mountain paths.



Ready to share the good news

Although the villages seemed small, the houses were very scattered, so it took many hours to visit each village. No matter how far we walked, there always seemed to be another house in the distance. We often got lost in a maze of twisted pathways through the fields.

"Why Didn't You Come Before?"

One lady was so impressed with how far we had walked that she allowed us to use her kitchen and firewood to cook

our lunch. On learning what the Bible teaches concerning the condition of the dead, one man asked, "Why didn't you come before?" He was so interested that when we left his village, he accompanied us to ask further questions along the way. Another man had never heard of Jehovah's Witnesses and showed great interest in our publications. He thanked us profusely for coming and handed us the key to a shed where we could spend the night.

One night, it was so dark that we unwittingly pitched our tents in the middle of a colony of large black ants. They were quick to show their annoyance by biting us. We were too tired to move, and thankfully, before long the ants seemed to ignore our presence.

Initially our backs and ribs ached because we slept on the ground, but during the night we got used to it. And any aches and pains were forgotten in the morning as we viewed the unspoiled valleys with



clouds creeping lazily up their sides and the magnificent snowcapped peaks in the distance. The silence was disturbed only by a gurgling stream and the song of birds.

After washing in the stream, we considered a Bible text together, had breakfast, and started slowly uphill to other distant villages. The climb was well worth the effort. We met an elderly woman who wept when she learned that God's name, Jehovah, is in the Bible. She was overwhelmed. Now she could address God by name in her prayers!

An elderly man declared that God must have remembered him, and he burst into song, singing that the angels had sent us. Another man, too ill to leave his house, told us that no one from his own village took the trouble to visit him. He was amazed that we had come all the way from La Paz. Still another man was deeply impressed that Jehovah's Witnesses call on people in their homes, while other religions just summon them with church bells.

None of the houses in that area have electricity, so people go to bed when it gets dark and rise with the sun. Therefore, to find people at home, we had to start preaching at six o'clock in the morning. Otherwise most people would have gone to work in the fields. Later, some who were already working were willing to stop to listen to our message from God's Word, perhaps allowing the ox a welcome break from drawing the plow. Many of the people found at home put down sheepskins for us to sit on and called the family together to listen. Some farmers contributed large bags of maize out of gratitude for the Bible literature we left with them.

"You Did Not Forget Me"

Of course, for people to progress in knowledge of the Bible, they need more than one visit. Many begged us to return to teach them further. Because of this, we have made several trips to this part of Bolivia.

On a later trip, an elderly lady was happy that we returned, saying: "You are like children to me. You did not forget me." A man thanked us for our work and invited us to stay in his home the next time we came. Perhaps the greatest reward for our efforts was hearing that a lady who was contacted on one of our previous visits had since moved to the city and was now preaching the good news.

By the last day of our first trip, we ran out of kerosene for the camping stove and we had almost exhausted our food supplies. We gathered enough material to make a fire, cooked the last food we had, and started back on foot. We were miles from the town where we could catch a bus. Eventually, we arrived in the dark.

Getting Home

The journey back had its problems because the bus broke down. In time, we were able to get a ride in the back of a truck crammed with people. This gave us the opportunity to preach to fellow passengers who were curious about why we were there. Though reserved by nature, the people are generally warm and friendly.

After a nine-hour ride in the back of that truck, we arrived home—wet and chilled to the bone. Yet, the trip was not in vain. Along the way, we were able to arrange for a Bible study with a lady who lives in the city.

It was indeed a privilege to declare the good news to the people in such isolated areas. We had preached in four villages and countless hamlets. We could not help but think of the words: "How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news, the one publishing peace, the one bringing good news of something better, the one publishing salvation."—Isa. 52:7; Rom. 10:15.



A Very Important Appointment

I HAVE a very important appointment. Let me explain what led me, a young Spanish mother, to make that appointment.

Peace and harmony were lacking in my parents' home. Our family was devastated when my younger brother died in a tragic accident at the age of four. Furthermore, my father's bad habits made it hard for my mother to find much happiness in marriage. That difficulty, however, did not prevent her from inculcating moral values in my older brother and me.

In time, my brother married, and so did I. Soon thereafter, my mother was diagnosed with cancer, which eventually led to her death. But before dying, she bequeathed a treasure to us.

One of her acquaintances had spoken to her about the Scriptural hope of a resurrection, and my mother accepted the offer of a Bible study. During the final part of her life, the Bible's message of hope gave her life meaning and helped her find happiness.

When we saw the positive effect of the Bible's message on her, my brother and I also began studying God's Word. I got baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses a month before the birth of my second child, a beautiful girl whom we named Lucía.

The day of my baptism was very important to me. One reason was that I now belonged to Jehovah, having dedicated myself to him to serve him forever. Another reason was that I could share my faith with my beloved son and daughter.

That second cause of my happiness was soon interrupted, though. When Lucía was four, she began to have severe stomach pains. After several tests, the radiologist explained that attached to her liver was a mass the size of an orange. The doctor explained that Lucía had a neuroblastoma, an aggressive, cancerous tumor. Thus began Lucía's seven-year battle against cancer, which included lengthy hospital stays.

A Self-Sacrificing Spirit

During these difficult years, Lucía often uplifted my spirits with warm hugs and reassuring kisses. The way she coped with the disease also impressed the hospital staff. She was always eager to cooperate with the nurses, helping them to deliver yogurt, juice, and other items to hospitalized children in nearby wards. The nurses even gave Lucía a white coat and a lapel badge identifying her as a "nurse's assistant."

"Lucía touched my heart," remembers one hospital worker. "She was an active, creative child, and she loved painting. She was expressive and mature, very mature."

Lucía drew strength and balance from God's Word. (Heb. 4:12) She was convinced that in the new world, "death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore," as God's Word promises. (Rev. 21:4) Taking an interest in others, she used every occasion available to share the Bible's message. Lucía's firm hope in the resurrection helped her to maintain her composure and cheerfulness despite a grim prognosis. (Isa. 25:8) She kept that attitude until the day that the cancer took her life.

It was on that day that I made the very important appointment. Lucía could hardly open her eyes. Her father held one of her hands while I held the other. "Don't worry, I won't leave you," I whispered. "Just breathe slowly. When you wake up, you will feel fine. You will not suffer pain again, and I will be with you."

Now I have to keep that appointment. I know that the waiting period will not be easy. But I also know that if I have patient trust in Jehovah and maintain my integrity to him, I will be there when she returns in the resurrection.

Lucía's Legacy

Lucía's courageous example, as well as the wonderful support of the congregation, made a deep impression on my husband, who did not share my faith. The day Lucía died, he told me that he had to sort out his thoughts. A few weeks later, he asked an elder in the congregation for a Bible study. Soon my husband began to attend all the meetings. With Jehovah's help he stopped smoking, something he had not been able to do before.

Paradise as drawn by Lucía

The sorrow I feel because of the loss of Lucía has not completely disappeared, yet I am so grateful to Jehovah for the legacy Lucía left. My husband and I comfort each other with the wonderful hope of the resurrection, even imagining the time when we will see Lucía again—her expressive, round eyes and her cheeks dimpled with a smile.

My daughter's tragic experience also affected one neighbor in particular. On a rainy Saturday morning, a lady whose son went to the same school that Lucía had attended came to our home. She had lost another son, then 11 years old, to the same disease. When she learned what had happened to Lucía, the lady found out where we lived and came to visit us. She wanted to know how I was coping with Lucía's death and suggested that we form a self-help group to comfort other mothers in similar circumstances.

I explained that I had personally found true comfort in one of the Bible's promises, one that is far superior to any that humans could ever offer. Her eyes lit up as I read to her the words of Jesus recorded at John 5:28, 29. She accepted a Bible study and soon began to feel "the peace of God that excels all thought." (Phil. 4:7) Often when we study the Bible together, we pause and picture ourselves in the new world, receiving our loved ones back in the resurrection.

Yes, Lucía's short life has left a lasting legacy. Her faith has helped to unite our family in serving God, and it has increased my determination likewise to remain firm in the faith. Without doubt, all of us who have lost loved ones who may be resurrected have a very important appointment.



"WHO IS WISE AND UNDERSTANDING AMONG YOU?"

"Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show out of his fine conduct his works with a mildness that belongs to wisdom."—JAS. 3:13.

WHOM do you think of as truly wise? Perhaps your parents, an aged man, or maybe a college professor? Your view of who is wise may be influenced by your background and circumstances. However, God's servants are primarily interested in his viewpoint.

² Not all whom the world considers wise are truly wise in God's eyes. For example, Job spoke to men who viewed themselves as speaking words of wisdom, but he concluded: "I do not find anyone wise among you." (Job 17:10) As to some who rejected the knowledge of God, the apostle Paul wrote: "Although asserting they were wise, they became foolish." (Rom. 1:22) And through the prophet Isaiah, Jehovah himself said pointedly: "Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes."—Isa. 5:21.

³ Clearly, we need to determine what makes one truly wise and thus a recipient of God's favor. Proverbs 9:10 offers us this insight: "The fear of Jehovah is the start of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Most Holy One is what understanding is." The wise must have a proper fear of God and a respect for his standards. However, more is needed than just intellectual acceptance of God's existence and ways. The disciple James stimulates our thinking about this. (*Read James*

1, 2. What can be said about many who are considered wise?

3, 4. For one to be truly wise, what is required?

3:13.) Notice the expression: "Let him show out of his fine conduct his works." True wisdom should be seen in what you do and say every day.

⁴ True wisdom involves exercising sound judgment and applying knowledge and understanding in a successful way. What actions will reveal that we possess such wisdom? James lists a number of things that will be evident in the actions of those who are wise.* What did he say that can help us to have good relations with fellow believers, as well as with people outside the congregation?

Actions Identify the Truly Wise

⁵ It merits repeating that James tied wisdom to fine conduct. Because the fear of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom, a wise person strives to conduct himself in harmony with God's ways and standards. We are not born with godly wisdom. Still, we can gain it by regular Bible study and meditation. These will help us to do what Ephesians 5:1 urges: "Become imitators of God." The more we conduct ourselves in harmony with Jehovah's personality, the more we will display

* The context indicates that James had first in mind the older men, or "teachers," of the congregation. (Jas. 3:1) These men should certainly be examples in displaying godly wisdom, yet all of us can learn from his counsel.

5. How will a truly wise person conduct himself?

wisdom in our actions. Jehovah's ways are vastly superior to those of humans. (Isa. 55:8, 9) So as we copy Jehovah's way of doing things, outsiders will see that there is something different about us.

⁶ James shows that one way to be like Jehovah is to have "a mildness that belongs to wisdom." Although mildness involves being gentle, at the same time a Christian can have strength of character, which helps him to act in a balanced way. Though limitless in strength, God is mild, and we are not afraid to approach him. God's Son reflected his Father's mildness so well that he could say: "Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls."—Matt. 11:28, 29; Phil. 2:5-8.

⁷ The Bible tells of others who were outstanding in mildness, or meekness. Moses was one. He had great responsibility, yet he is described as "by far the meekest of all the men who were upon the surface of the ground." (Num. 11:29; 12:3) And recall the strength that Jehovah gave Moses to carry out His will. Jehovah was pleased to use mild individuals to fulfill his purpose.

⁸ Clearly, it is possible for imperfect humans to display the "mildness that belongs to wisdom." What about us? How can we improve in showing this quality? Mildness is part of the fruitage of Jehovah's holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) We can pray for his spirit and consciously exert effort to display its fruitage, trusting that God will help us to improve in showing mildness. We find solid motivation

6. Why is mildness evidence of godliness, and what does this quality involve?
7. Why can we look to Moses as a good example of mildness?
8. How can imperfect people display the "mildness that belongs to wisdom"?

to do so in the psalmist's assurance: "[God] will teach the meek ones his way."—Ps. 25:9.

⁹ Nevertheless, it may take real effort to improve in this area. Because of our background, some of us may not be inclined to be mild. Moreover, people around us may encourage an opposite viewpoint, saying that a person has to "fight fire with fire." However, is this really wise? If a small fire broke out in your house, would you douse it with oil or with cool water? Pouring oil on the fire would make matters worse, whereas dousing it with cool water would likely bring the desired result. Likewise, the Bible counsels us: "An answer, when mild, turns away rage, but a word causing pain makes anger to come up." (Prov. 15:1, 18) The next time irritations arise, either inside or outside the congregation, can we see how we can show true wisdom by reacting in a mild way?—2 Tim. 2:24.

¹⁰ As noted above, many who are influenced by the spirit of the world are far from gentle, peaceful, and calm. Rather, we find harsh and arrogant people in abundance. James was aware of this, and he gave warnings so that individuals in the congregation could avoid being corrupted by such a spirit. What more can we learn from the counsel he gave?

Characteristics of the Unwise

¹¹ James wrote very frankly about characteristics that are in direct conflict with godly wisdom. (*Read James 3:14.*) Jealousy and contentiousness are fleshly traits, not spiritual ones. Consider what occurs when fleshly thinking prevails. Six "Christian" groups control parts of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, supposedly built where Jesus was put to death and bur-

- 9, 10. What effort is needed for us to display godly mildness, and why?
11. What characteristics are in conflict with godly wisdom?

ied. Their relationship has been one of ongoing contention. In 2006, *Time* magazine told of an earlier situation when monks there "brawled for hours, . . . clubbing each other with giant candlestick holders." So great is their distrust of one another that the key to the church is entrusted to a Muslim.

¹² Such extreme displays of contentiousness should certainly not be found in the true Christian congregation. Nevertheless, imperfections have at times caused some to manifest a stubbornness for their own views. That could lead to a degree of quarreling and strife. The apostle Paul noticed this in the congregation at Corinth, so he wrote: "Whereas there are jealousy and strife among you, are you not fleshly and are you not walking as men do?" (1 Cor. 3:3) That sad situation did exist for a time in this congregation in the first century. Therefore, we need to be on guard that such a spirit does not enter a congregation today.

¹³ How could such a spirit creep in? It could begin in small ways. For example, when a Kingdom Hall is being built, differences of opinion might arise as to how things should be done. One brother could become contentious if his suggestion is not accepted, perhaps becoming vocal in his criticism of decisions made. He may even refuse to do any further work on the project! One acting that way would be forgetting that accomplishing a task involving the congregation usually depends more on the peaceful spirit of the congregation than on the specific method used. A mild spirit is what Je-

12. When wisdom is lacking, what might happen?

13, 14. Give examples of how a fleshly spirit might be shown.

How could strife creep in today?

hovah will bless, not contentiousness.
—1 Tim. 6:4, 5.

¹⁴ Another example might be if elders in a congregation observe that one elder, though having served for some years, now clearly does not meet the Scriptural qualifications. Noting that the brother has received specific counsel in the past but has failed to improve, the visiting circuit overseer agrees and joins in the recommendation that he be deleted as an elder. How will he view that? Will he accept the elders' unanimous conclusion and Scriptural counsel in a spirit of humility and mildness and be determined to meet the Scriptural qualifications so that he might serve again? Or will he harbor resentment and jealousy over no longer having the privilege that he once had? Why would a brother act as if he qualified as an older man when in reality he did not? How much wiser it would be to show humility and be understanding!

¹⁵ Granted, there are other ways that a similar attitude could appear. But whatever situation develops, we must work to avoid such traits. (*Read James 3:15, 16.*) The disciple James called such attitudes "earthly" because they are fleshly, devoid of spirituality. They

15. Why do you feel that the inspired counsel of James 3:15, 16 is so important?



are “animal” in that they are the product of fleshly inclinations, similar to characteristics of unreasoning creatures. Such attitudes are “demonic,” for they reflect the disposition of God’s spirit enemies. How unfitting for a Christian to display those characteristics!

¹⁶ Each member of the congregation would do well to make a self-examination and work to eliminate such traits. As teachers in the congregation, overseers should be conscious of the need to rid themselves of negative attitudes. It is not easy to succeed in this because of our imperfection and the influence of this world. Doing so might be likened to trying to climb a muddy, slippery slope. Without something to hold on to, we could just slide backward. However, with a firm grip on the counsel found in the Bible, as well as with the help offered by God’s earth-wide congregation, we can move forward.
—Ps. 73:23, 24.

Qualities That the Wise Seek to Display

¹⁷ Read James 3:17. We can benefit by considering some of the qualities that come from displaying “the wisdom from above.” Being chaste involves being pure and un-

16. What adjustments may we need to make, and how can we succeed in doing so?
17. How do the wise usually react when confronted with evil?

Can You Explain?

- What makes a Christian truly wise?
- How can we improve in showing godly wisdom?
- What characteristics are seen in those who do not display “the wisdom from above”?
- What qualities are you determined to cultivate even more?



Is it your automatic reaction to reject evil?

defiled in our actions and motives. We need to reject evil things immediately. Doing so should be an automatic reaction. Perhaps you have had a doctor use a reflex hammer to tap the tendon just below your kneecap. Your leg reflexively straightens with a kick. It is automatic; you do not have to think about it. It should be similar when we are tempted to do evil. Our chasteness and Bible-trained conscience should reflexively move us to reject what is bad. (Rom. 12:9) The Bible provides examples of those who reacted in this way, such as Joseph and Jesus.—Gen. 39:7-9; Matt. 4:8-10.

¹⁸ Divine wisdom requires that we also be peaceable. This involves our avoiding aggressiveness, a belligerent attitude, or actions that would disrupt peace. James expands on this point when he says: “The fruit of righteousness has its seed sown under peaceful conditions for those who are making peace.” (Jas. 3:18) Notice the expression “making peace.” In the congregation, are we known as peacemakers or as peacebreakers? Do we frequently have differences or disagreements with others, being easily offended or offend-

18. What does it mean (a) to be peaceable? (b) to be a peacemaker?

ing others? Do we insist that others accept us as we are, or do we humbly work to eliminate personality traits that others rightly find offensive? Are we known to go out of our way to promote peace, being quick to forgive and putting errors behind us? Honest self-examination can help us to see if we need to improve in displaying divine wisdom in this regard.

¹⁹ James included being reasonable in the description of what reflects the wisdom from above. Are we known for being inclined to give in to others when no Scriptural principle is involved, not being quick to insist that our

19. How does one come to be known as a reasonable person?

own personal standards be followed? Do we have a reputation for being gentle and easy to talk to? These are indications that we have learned to be reasonable.

²⁰ What delightful conditions can exist in a congregation as brothers and sisters work at displaying ever more the godly qualities about which James wrote! (Ps. 133:1-3) Being mild, peaceable, and reasonable with one another will surely result in improved relationships and will make it evident that we have “the wisdom from above.” We will next look at how learning to view others as Jehovah does can help us in this regard.

20. What will result as we manifest the godly qualities just discussed?

DO YOU VIEW OTHERS AS JEHOVAH DOES?

“There should be no division in the body . . . Its members should have the same care for one another.”—1 COR. 12:25.

WHEN we first came out of the wicked world and began associating with Jehovah’s people, we were likely delighted to experience the warm love and care that exist among them. What a contrast to the coarse, hateful, and contentious people under Satan’s control! We came into the spiritual paradise, which is filled with peace and unity.
—Isa. 48:17, 18; 60:18; 65:25.

² As time passes, however, we might begin to look at our brothers through the distorted lens of imperfection. Our imperfection

1. How did you feel when you first entered the spiritual paradise?

2. (a) What may affect our view of others?
(b) What may we need to do?

could cause us to magnify the faults of our brothers instead of looking at their overall spiritual qualities. Simply put, we forget to view them as Jehovah views them. If this happens to us, it is time to give attention to our view and bring it into line with Jehovah’s clear view.—Ex. 33:13.

How Jehovah Sees Our Brothers

³ As recorded at 1 Corinthians 12:2-26, the apostle Paul compared the congregation of anointed Christians to a body with “many members.” Just as body organs vary from one to the other, members of the congregation

3. To what does the Bible compare the Christian congregation?



How can you get to know people of other cultures?

may not be judged." (Matt. 7:1) Notice that Jesus did not say: "Do not judge"; he said: "Stop judging." He knew that many of his listeners were already in the habit of being critical of others. Could it be that we have developed such a habit? If we have that tendency, we ought to work hard to change, so that we are not adversely judged. Really, who are we to judge someone whom Jehovah is using in an appointed position or to say that he should not be part of the congregation? A brother may have some shortcomings, but if Jehovah continues to accept him, would it be proper for us to reject him? (John 6:44) Do we really believe that Jehovah is leading his congregated people and that if adjustments need to be made, he will take action in his due time?—*Read Romans 14:1-4.*

⁶ A marvelous thing about Jehovah is that he can see in individual Christians what they have the potential to be once they reach perfection in the new world. He also knows what spiritual progress they have already made. Therefore, he has no reason to focus on each fleshly weakness. We read at Psalm 103:12: "As far off as the sunrise is from the sunset, so far off from us he has put our transgressions." How thankful we can personally be for that!—Ps. 130:3.

⁷ We see evidence in the Scriptures that Jehovah has the outstanding ability to focus on the good in a person. God described David as "my servant David, who kept my commandments and who walked after me with all his heart by doing only what was right in my eyes." (1 Ki. 14:8) Of course, we know that David did some things that were wrong. Still,

4. Why might we need to adjust our view of our brothers?
5. Why is it inappropriate to judge others?
6. How does Jehovah view his servants?
7. What do we learn from Jehovah's view of David?

vary considerably as to their characteristics and abilities. Yet, Jehovah accepts this variety. He loves and appreciates each member. So, too, Paul advises us that the congregation's members "should have the same care for one another." This may be difficult because others' personalities can differ from our own.

⁴ We may even be inclined to focus on our brothers' weaknesses. In doing so, we are, in effect, using a camera with a lens that focuses on only a small area. Jehovah's view, however, is through a wide-angle lens, which can take in a subject as well as its surroundings. We may tend to zoom in on something we do not like, whereas Jehovah sees the whole person, including all of an individual's good qualities. The more we strive to become like Jehovah, the more we can contribute to the spirit of love and unity in the congregation.—Eph. 4:1-3; 5:1, 2.

⁵ Jesus was keenly aware that imperfect humans often have a tendency to be judgmental. He counseled: "Stop judging that you

4. Why might we need to adjust our view of our brothers?
5. Why is it inappropriate to judge others?

Jehovah chose to focus on the good because he knew that David's heart was upright.
—1 Chron. 29:17.

See Your Brothers as Jehovah Does

⁸ Jehovah can read hearts, while we cannot. This in itself is a good reason for us not to be judgmental. We do not know all of another person's motives. We should try to imitate Jehovah by not fixing our attention on human imperfections, which will eventually disappear. Would it not be a fine goal to be like him in this regard? Our doing so will contribute much toward peaceful relationships with our brothers and sisters.—Eph. 4:23, 24.

⁹ To illustrate, think of a house that is rundown—the gutters are falling off, windows are broken, and ceiling panels are water damaged. Most people might look at that house and conclude that it should be torn down; it is an eyesore. But someone who has a completely different view might come along. He may be able to look beyond the surface problems and see that the structure is sound and that the house can be restored. He buys the house and with some work fixes the surface defects and improves its appearance. Thereafter, passersby comment on what a delightful home it is. Can we be like this person who worked to fix up or restore the house? Rather than focusing on our brothers' surface defects, can we discern their good qualities and their potential for further spiritual growth? If we do so, we will come to love our brothers for their spiritual beauty, as Jehovah does.

—Read Hebrews 6:10.

¹⁰ The apostle Paul gave some advice that can help us in our relationships with all in

8, 9. (a) In what way can we be like Jehovah?
(b) How might this be illustrated, and with what lesson for us?

10. How can the advice found at Philippians 2:3, 4 help us?

the congregation. He urged Christians: “[Do] nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.” (Phil. 2:3, 4) Humility will help us to have the proper view of others. Displaying personal interest in others and looking for the good in them will also help us to view them as Jehovah does.

¹¹ In recent times, global developments have resulted in vast movements of people. Some cities are now inhabited by people from many different lands. Some of the people new to our area have become interested in Bible truth, and they have joined us in worshipping Jehovah. These are “out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Rev. 7:9) As a result, many of our congregations have in a sense become more international.

¹² In our congregation, we may need to pay more attention to maintaining a proper view of one another. That calls for bearing in mind the apostle Peter’s counsel to manifest “unhypocritical brotherly affection” and to “love one another intensely from the heart.” (1 Pet. 1:22) Cultivating genuine love and affection can be a challenge in a multinational setting. Our fellow worshippers’ culture may vary considerably from our own, as may their educational, economic, and ethnic background. Do you find it a challenge to understand the thinking or reactions of some? They may feel the same way about you. Nonetheless, all of us are instructed: “Have love for the *whole* association of brothers.” —1 Pet. 2:17.

11. What changes have affected some congregations?

12. What view of one another do we need to maintain, and why might this be a challenge at times?

¹³ It may be necessary to make some adjustments in our thinking so as to widen out in our love for all our brothers. (*Read 2 Corinthians 6:12, 13.*) Do we ever catch ourselves saying something like “I am not prejudiced, but . . .” and then recounting some negative characteristics that we consider to be common among members of a certain ethnic group? Such feelings may reveal the need for us to rid ourselves of prejudice that we still harbor deep down. We might ask ourselves, ‘Do I make a regular effort to get to know people of a culture different from my own?’ Such self-examination may help us make improvements in accepting and appreciating our international brotherhood.

¹⁴ The Bible gives us fine examples of those who did adjust, one of whom was the apostle Peter. As a Jew, Peter would have avoided entering a Gentile’s home. Just imagine how he felt when he was asked to visit the home of the uncircumcised Gentile Cornelius! Peter made adjustments, perceiving that it was God’s will that people of all nations become part of the Christian congregation. (*Acts 10:9-35*) Saul, who later became the apostle

13. What adjustments in our thinking may we need to make?

14, 15. (a) Give examples of those who adjusted their view of others. (b) How can we imitate them?

Paul, also had to make changes and rid himself of prejudice. He admitted that he had so hated the Christians that “to the point of excess [he] kept on persecuting the congregation of God and devastating it.” Still, when the Lord Jesus corrected Paul, he made big changes and even began to accept direction from those whom he formerly persecuted. —Gal. 1:13-20.

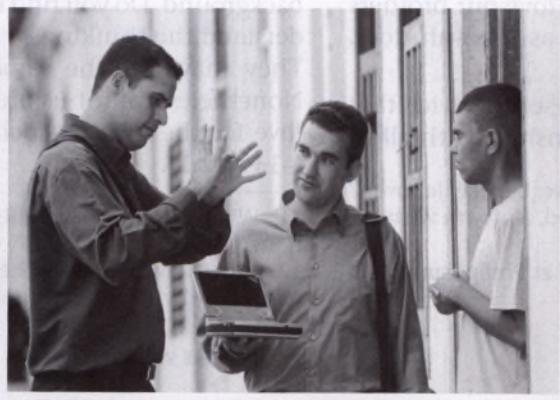
¹⁵ There is no doubt that we can make adjustments in our attitude with the help of Jehovah’s spirit. If we find that there are hidden traces of prejudice in us, let us work to root them out and to “observe the oneness of the spirit in the uniting bond of peace.” (*Eph. 4:3-6*) The Bible encourages us to “clothe [ourselves] with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.” —Col. 3:14.

Imitating Jehovah in Our Ministry

¹⁶ “There is no partiality with God,” wrote the apostle Paul. (*Rom. 2:11*) It is Jehovah’s purpose to include people of all nations in his arrangement for worship. (*Read 1 Timothy 2:3, 4.*) To that end, he has arranged for “everlasting good news” to be declared “to every nation and tribe and tongue and peo-

16. What is God’s will regarding people?

In what ways can you reach more people with the good news?



ple." (Rev. 14:6) Jesus said: "The field is the world." (Matt. 13:38) What significance does that have for you and your immediate family?

¹⁷ Not all are able to go to distant parts of the world to take the Kingdom message to others. Nevertheless, we may well be in a position to take this message to people from all parts of the earth who live in our territory. Are we alert to opportunities to witness to all sorts of people, not just those to whom we have preached for years? Why not make it your determination to reach out to others who have not yet received a thorough witness?—Rom. 15:20, 21.

¹⁸ Jesus keenly felt the need to help all. He did not preach in just one area. One Bible account tells us that he "set out on a tour of all the cities and villages." And then, "on seeing the crowds he felt pity for them" and expressed the need to help them.—Matt. 9:35-37.

¹⁹ What are some ways in which you can display a similar attitude? Some have made it a point to witness in parts of their territory that have not been covered frequently. This may include business districts, parks, transportation terminals, or in front of residential buildings that are not easily accessible. Others have made the effort to learn a new language so as to preach to certain ethnic groups that now live in their area or to groups that have not frequently been witnessed to in the past. Learning how to greet those people in their native tongue may go a long way toward showing how interested you are in their welfare. If we are not in a position to learn another language, can we encourage those who are doing that? Certainly we would not want

17. How can we help all sorts of people?

18. Jesus manifested what concern for people?

19, 20. What are some ways in which we can reflect the concern that Jehovah and Jesus have for all sorts of people?

to be negative or question why others are making such an effort to preach to people from another country. All lives are precious in God's eyes, and we want to view things in the same way.—Col. 3:10, 11.

²⁰ Having God's view of people also means preaching to all, regardless of their circumstances. Some may be homeless, unkempt, or obviously living an immoral life. If certain individuals treat us unkindly, that should not cause us to form negative opinions about their nationality or ethnic group as a whole. Paul was treated badly by some, but he did not allow that to cause him to give up preaching to people of that background. (Acts 14:5-7, 19-22) He trusted that some individuals would respond appreciatively.

²¹ It is now clearer than ever that having a proper view—Jehovah's view—is needed in our dealings with our local brothers, our international brotherhood, and people in the field. The closer we can come to reflecting Jehovah's view, the more we will be a force for peace and unity. And we will be in a better position to help others appreciate Jehovah, the God who "has not shown partiality" but who displays loving interest in all, "for all of them are the work of his hands."—Job 34:19.

21. How will having Jehovah's view of others help you?

Can You Answer?

- What view of our brothers should we strive to avoid?
- How can we imitate Jehovah in how we view our brothers?
- What lessons did you learn about our view of our international brotherhood?
- How can we imitate Jehovah's view of people when we are in the ministry?

Jehovah's Word Is Alive

Highlights From the Book of Luke

MATTHEW'S Gospel is understood to have been written primarily for the Jewish reader, and Mark's Gospel, for the non-Jewish. However, the Gospel of Luke was intended for people of all nations. Written about 56-58 C.E., the book of Luke is a comprehensive account of Jesus' life and ministry.

With the eye of a caring and careful physician, Luke traces "all things from the start with accuracy" and covers a period of 35 years—from 3 B.C.E. to 33 C.E. (Luke 1:3) Nearly 60 percent of the material in Luke's Gospel is unique.

EARLY MINISTRY (Luke 1:1-9:62)

After relating details about the birth of John the Baptizer and of Jesus, Luke tells us that John began his ministry in the 15th year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, that is, in the spring of 29 C.E. (Luke 3:1, 2) Jesus is baptized by John in the fall of that year. (Luke 3: 21, 22) By 30 C.E., 'Jesus returns into Galilee and begins to teach in their synagogues.'—Luke 4:14, 15.

Jesus sets out on his first preaching tour of Galilee. He tells the crowd: "Also to other cities I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God." (Luke 4:43) He takes along with him Simon the fisherman and others. He says: "From now on you will be catching men alive." (Luke 5:1-11; Matt. 4:18, 19) The 12 apostles are with Jesus during his second preaching tour of Galilee. (Luke 8:1) On the third tour, he sends forth the 12 "to preach the kingdom of God and to heal."—Luke 9: 1, 2.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

1:35—Did Mary's egg cell, or ovum, have any part in her pregnancy? For Mary's child to be a true descendant of her ancestors Abraham, Judah, and David, as God had promised, her ovum had to contribute toward her pregnancy. (Gen. 22:15, 18; 49:10; 2 Sam. 7:8, 16) However, Jehovah's holy spirit was used in transferring the perfect life of God's Son and causing the conception. (Matt. 1:18) It would appear that this canceled out any imperfection existing in Mary's ovum and from the very start protected the developing embryo from anything hurtful.

1:62—Did Zechariah become mute and deaf? No. Only his speech was affected. Others asked "by signs" what he wanted to name the child but not because Zechariah was deaf. He very likely heard what his wife had said about naming their son. Perhaps others inquired of Zechariah about this by making a sign or a gesture. The fact that only his speech needed to be restored indicates that Zechariah's hearing had not been affected.—Luke 1:13, 18-20, 60-64.

2:1, 2—How does the reference to "this first registration" help determine the time of Jesus' birth? Under Caesar Augustus, more than one registration took place—the first in 2 B.C.E. in fulfillment of Daniel 11:20 and the second in 6 or 7 C.E. (Acts 5:37) Quirinius served as governor of Syria during both of these registrations, evidently occupying that position twice. Luke's reference to the first registration places the date of Jesus' birth in 2 B.C.E.

2:35—How was "a long sword" to be run through Mary's soul? This refers to the dis-

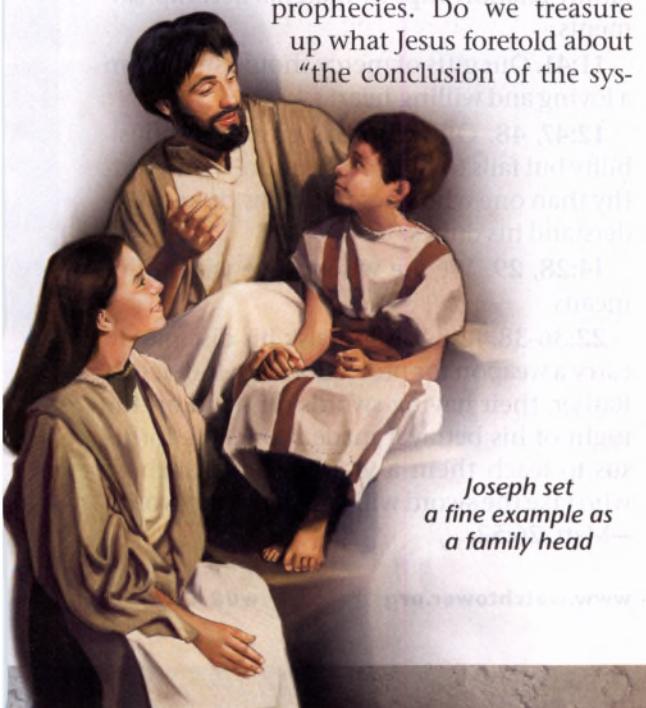
tress Mary would experience upon seeing the majority of the people reject Jesus as the Messiah and the grief she would feel over his painful death.—John 19:25.

9:27, 28—Why does Luke say that the transfiguration took place “eight days” after Jesus promised his disciples that some of them would “not taste death at all” until they had seen him coming in his Kingdom, whereas both Matthew and Mark state that it was “six days later”? (Matt. 17:1; Mark 9:2) Luke apparently includes two additional days—the day of the promise and the day of the fulfillment.

9:49, 50—Why did Jesus not prevent a man from expelling demons, even though the man was not following him? Jesus did not prevent the man because the Christian congregation had not yet been formed. Hence, it was not required that the man physically accompany Jesus in order to exercise faith in Jesus’ name and expel demons. —Mark 9:38-40.

Lessons for Us:

1:32, 33; 2:19, 51. Mary preserved in her heart the events and sayings that fulfilled prophecies. Do we treasure up what Jesus foretold about “the conclusion of the sys-



tem of things,” comparing what he said with what is happening today?—Matt. 24:3.

2:37. Anna’s example teaches us that we should worship Jehovah with constancy, “persevere in prayer,” and not forsake “the gathering of ourselves together” at Christian meetings.—Rom. 12:12; Heb. 10:24, 25.

2:41-50. Joseph put spiritual interests first in his life and cared for the physical and spiritual welfare of his family. In these respects, he set a fine example for family heads.

4:4. We should not let a day go by without considering spiritual matters.

6:40. A teacher of God’s Word must set a proper example for his students. He must practice what he preaches.

8:15. To “retain [the word] and bear fruit with endurance,” we must understand, appreciate, and absorb the Word of God. Prayerful meditation is a must when reading the Bible and Bible-based publications.

JESUS’ LATER MINISTRY (Luke 10:1–24:53)

Jesus sends forth 70 others in advance of him into cities and places in Judea. (Luke 10:1) He journeys “from city to city and from village to village, teaching.”—Luke 13:22.

Five days before the Passover of 33 C.E., Jesus enters Jerusalem riding upon a colt. The time has come for the fulfillment of his words to his disciples: “The Son of man must undergo many sufferings and be rejected by the older men and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised up.”—Luke 9:22, 44.

Scriptural Questions Answered:

10:18—What was Jesus referring to when he told the 70 disciples: “I began to behold Satan already fallen like lightning from heaven”? Jesus was not stating that Satan had already been ousted from heaven. That did not take place until shortly after Christ

was installed as heavenly King in 1914. (Rev. 12:1-10) Although we cannot be dogmatic, by referring to a future event in the past tense, Jesus was evidently emphasizing that it would certainly happen.

14:26—In what sense are Christ's followers to "hate" their relatives? In the Bible, "hate" can refer to loving a person or an object to a lesser degree than another. (Gen. 29:30, 31) Christians are to "hate" their relatives in the sense of loving them less than they do Jesus.—Matt. 10:37.

17:34-37—Who are "the eagles," and what is "the body" where they gather together? Those "taken along," or delivered, are likened to farsighted eagles. "The body" they gather to is the true Christ at his invisible presence and the spiritual food that Jehovah provides for them.—Matt. 24:28.

22:44—Why did Jesus experience so much agony? This occurred for a number of

reasons. Jesus was concerned about how his death as a criminal would affect Jehovah God and His name. Moreover, Jesus knew very well that his eternal life and the future of the entire human race depended on his remaining faithful.

23:44—Did a solar eclipse cause the three-hour-long darkness? No. Solar eclipses take place only at the time of the new moon, not when the moon is full, as is the case at Passover time. The darkness caused on the day of Jesus' death was a miracle from God.

Lessons for Us:

11:1-4. Comparing these instructions with the slightly different wording of the model prayer, given in the Sermon on the Mount some 18 months earlier, clearly shows us that our prayers should not be a mere repetition of certain words.—Matt. 6:9-13.

11:5, 13. Although Jehovah is willing to answer our prayers, we should be persistent when praying.—1 John 5:14.

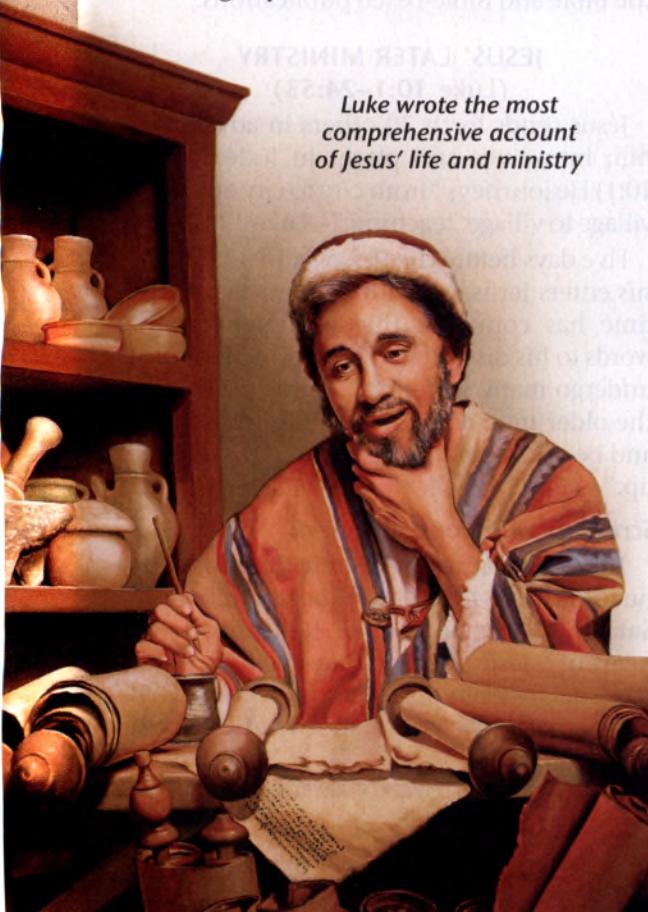
11:27, 28. Genuine happiness comes from faithfully doing God's will and not from family relationships or material accomplishments.

11:41. Our gifts of mercy should stem from a loving and willing heart.

12:47, 48. One who has greater responsibility but fails to care for it is more blameworthy than one who does not know or fully understand his duties.

14:28, 29. We are wise to live within our means.

22:36-38. Jesus did not ask his disciples to carry a weapon for protection or self-defense. Rather, their having swords on hand on the night of his betrayal made it possible for Jesus to teach them a vital lesson: "All those who take the sword will perish by the sword." —Matt. 26:52.



Luke wrote the most comprehensive account of Jesus' life and ministry