

DECEMBER 2019

# THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:  
FEBRUARY 3–MARCH 1, 2020

**SONG 143**

Keep Working, Watching,  
and Waiting

**PREVIEW**

The Scriptures teach us how to have a balanced view of work and rest. Using the weekly Sabbath given to the Israelites as an example, this article will help us to analyze our attitude toward work and rest.

## “There Is an Appointed Time” for Work and for Rest

*“Come . . . into an isolated place and rest up a little.”*

—MARK 6:31.

HOW do most people where you live view work? In many countries, people are working harder and longer than ever before. Overworked people are often too busy to rest, to spend time with their families, or to satisfy their spiritual need. (Eccl. 2:23) On the other hand, some people do not like to work at all and make excuses for not working.—Prov. 26:13, 14.

<sup>2</sup> In contrast with the world’s unbalanced attitudes, consider the way that Jehovah and Jesus view work. There is no question that Jehovah is a worker. Jesus made that clear, saying: “My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.” (John 5:17) Think of all the work God did as he created countless spirit creatures and the vast universe. We also see ample evidence of God’s creative works on the beautiful earth where we live. The psalmist rightly said: “How many your works are, O Jehovah! You have made all of them in wisdom. The earth is full of what you have made.”—Ps. 104:24.

<sup>3</sup> Jesus imitated his Father. The Son, as wisdom personified, was involved when God “prepared the heavens.” He was with Jehovah “as a master worker.” (Prov. 8:27-31) Much later, when Jesus was on earth, he did outstanding work. That work was like food for him, and his works proved that God had sent him.—John 4:34; 5:36; 14:10.

1. What views do many people have about work?

2-3. Jehovah and Jesus set what examples regarding work?

<sup>4</sup> Do the examples set by Jehovah and Jesus in working hard imply that it is not necessary for us to rest? Not at all. Jehovah never gets tired, so he does not need physical rest. The Bible does say that after Jehovah created the heavens and the earth, “he rested and refreshed himself.” (Ex. 31:17) However, that evidently means that Jehovah paused and found satisfaction in what he had made. And although Jesus worked hard while he lived on earth, he still made time to rest and to enjoy meals with his friends.—Matt. 14:13; Luke 7:34.

<sup>5</sup> The Bible encourages God’s people to be workers. His servants are to be industrious rather than lazy. (Prov. 15:19) Perhaps you work secularly to care for your family. And all disciples of Christ have the responsibility to share in the work of preaching the good news. Still, you also need to get sufficient rest. Do you sometimes struggle to balance time for secular work, for the ministry, and for rest? How do we know how much to work and how much to rest?

#### FINDING THE BALANCE

<sup>6</sup> Regarding work, balance is important. King Solomon was inspired to write: “There is an appointed time for . . . every activity.” He mentioned planting, building, weeping, laughing, dancing, and other activities. (Eccl. 3:1-8) Clearly, two fundamental aspects of life are work and rest. Jesus had a balanced view of work

and rest. On one occasion, the apostles returned from a preaching tour. They were so busy that “they had no leisure time even to eat a meal.” Jesus said: “Come, you yourselves, privately into an isolated place and rest up a little.” (**Read Mark 6:30-34.**) Even though he and his disciples were not always able to get the rest they wanted, Jesus knew that they all needed to rest.

<sup>7</sup> At times, some rest or some change truly is needed. We can see that from an arrangement that God made for his ancient people—the weekly Sabbath. We are not under the Mosaic Law, yet we can benefit from considering what it said about the Sabbath. What we learn can help us to analyze our view of work and rest.

#### THE SABBATH—A TIME FOR REST AND WORSHIP

<sup>8</sup> God’s Word states that after six “days” of creating, God paused from his works as regards the earth. (Gen. 2:2) Yet, Jehovah loves to work, and in other respects he “has kept working.” (John 5:17) The provision for the weekly Sabbath follows a pattern similar to that of Jehovah’s day of rest described in Genesis. God said that the Sabbath was a sign between him and Israel. It was a day of “complete rest . . . , something holy to Jehovah.” (**Read Exodus 31:12-15.**) The prohibition against work applied to everyone, including children, slaves, and even domestic animals. (Ex. 20:10) It

---

4. What can we learn from Jehovah and Jesus about rest?

5. What struggle do many face?

6. How does Mark 6:30-34 show that Jesus had a balanced view of work and rest?

---

7. How will a consideration of the Sabbath law help us?

8. According to Exodus 31:12-15, the Sabbath was a day for what?





### Jesus' family used the Sabbath to focus on spiritual matters

(See paragraph 10)

allowed the people to give more attention to spiritual matters.

<sup>9</sup> The Sabbath day was good for God's people; however, many religious leaders in Jesus' time took an extreme, rigid view of it. They claimed that it was unlawful on the Sabbath even to pluck some heads of grain or to heal a person who was ill. (Mark 2:23-27; 3:2-5) Such views did not reflect God's thinking, and Jesus made that clear to those who would listen.

<sup>10</sup> Jesus and his Jewish followers observed the Sabbath because they were

under the Mosaic Law.\* But Jesus showed by word and deed that keeping the Sabbath was to be reasonable and that kind and helpful actions were allowable. He plainly said: "It is lawful to do a fine thing on the Sabbath." (**Read Matthew 12:9-12.**) He did not view performing kind and helpful actions as a violation of the Sabbath. Jesus' actions highlighted a key feature of the Sabbath. Because God's people rested from their daily labor, they were able to focus on spiritual things. Jesus grew up in a family that must have used the Sabbath for spiritual benefit. That is reflected in

9. What unbalanced view of the Sabbath existed in Jesus' day?

10. What can we learn from Matthew 12:9-12 about Jesus' view of the Sabbath?

\* The disciples had so much respect for the Sabbath law that they stopped preparations for Jesus' burial until the Sabbath day was over.—Luke 23:55, 56.

what we read about Jesus when he was in his hometown of Nazareth: “According to [Jesus’] custom on the Sabbath day, he entered the synagogue and stood up to read.”—Luke 4:15-19.

#### WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD WORK?

<sup>11</sup> Joseph surely shared God’s view of work as he taught Jesus, his adopted son, to be a carpenter. (Matt. 13:55, 56) And Jesus would have seen Joseph working hard day after day to support his sizable family. Interestingly, Jesus later told his disciples: “The worker is worthy of his wages.” (Luke 10:7) Yes, Jesus was familiar with hard work.

<sup>12</sup> It was similar with the apostle Paul. His primary activity was bearing witness to Jesus’ name and message. Yet, Paul worked to support himself. The Thessalonians were aware of his “labor and toil,” his “working night and day” so that he would not put “an expensive burden” on anyone. (2 Thess. 3:8; Acts 20:34, 35) Paul may have been referring to his work as a tentmaker. While in Corinth, he stayed with Aquila and Priscilla and “worked with them, for they were tentmakers by trade.” That Paul worked “night and day” did not mean that he worked nonstop. He took breaks from tentmaking, such as on the Sabbath. That day provided him with opportunities to witness to Jews, who also were not working on the Sabbath.—Acts 13:14-16, 42-44; 16:13; 18:1-4.

11. What good example did Jesus have regarding work?

12. What scriptures show the Bible’s approach to hard work?

<sup>13</sup> The apostle Paul set a good example. He had to do secular work; still, he made sure to share regularly “in the holy work of the good news of God.” (Rom. 15:16; 2 Cor. 11:23) He urged others to do likewise. Consequently, Aquila and Priscilla were his “fellow workers in Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 12:11; 16:3) Paul urged the Corinthians to have “plenty to do in the work of the Lord.” (1 Cor. 15:58; 2 Cor. 9:8) Jehovah even inspired the apostle Paul to write: “If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat.”—2 Thess. 3:10.

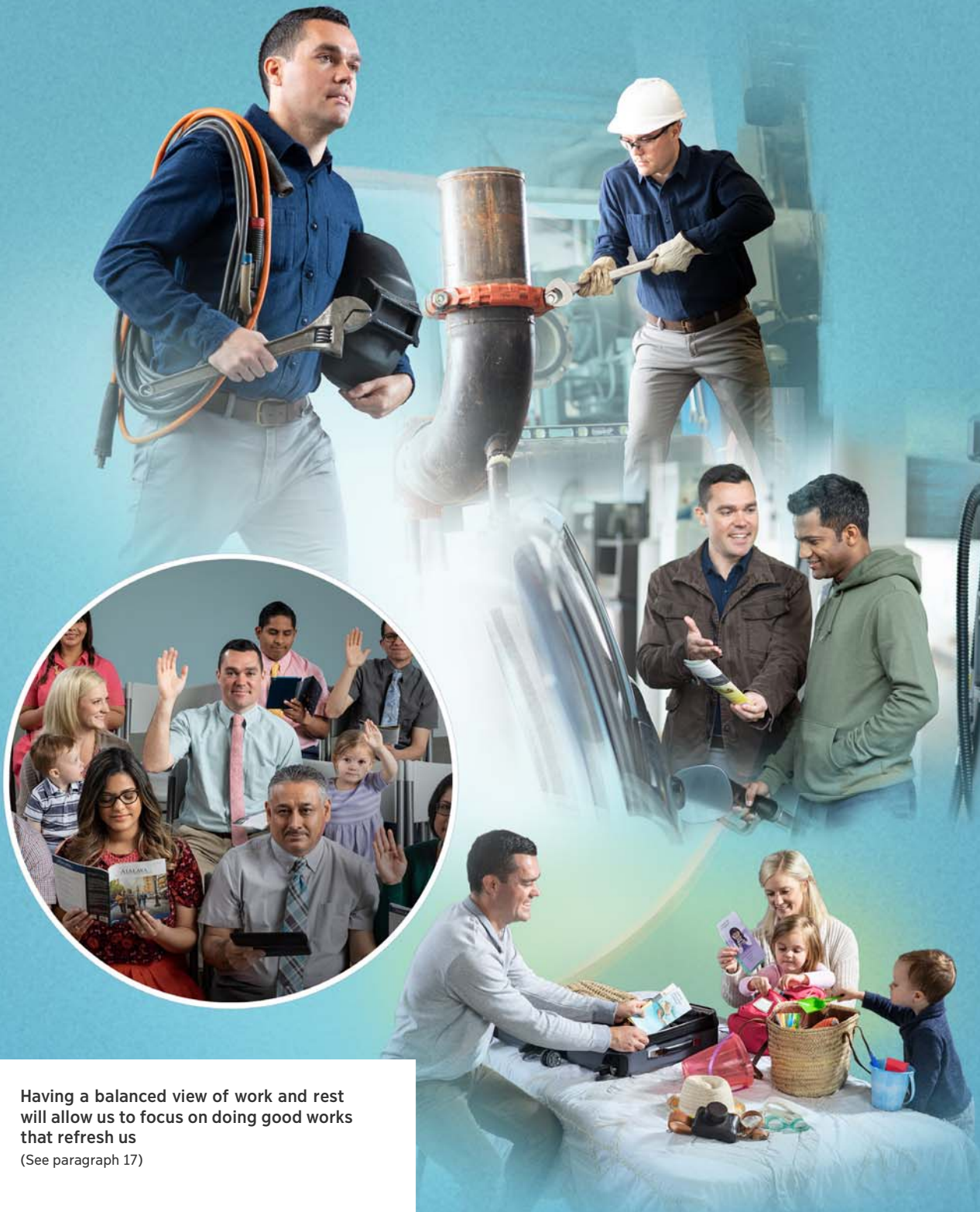
<sup>14</sup> The most important work in these last days is that of preaching and disciple-making. In fact, Jesus foretold that his disciples would do works even greater than his! (**Read John 14:12.**) He did not mean that we would perform miracles as he did. Rather, his followers would preach and teach in a larger territory, to more people, and for a longer period of time than he did.

<sup>15</sup> If you have a secular job, ask yourself these questions: ‘Am I known at my workplace as a hard worker? Do I complete my work on time and to the best of my ability?’ If you can answer yes, then you will likely earn your employer’s trust. You will also make the Kingdom message more appealing to those who are observing you. When it comes to the preaching and teaching work, ask yourself these questions: ‘Am I known as a hard worker in the ministry? Do I

13. What can we learn from Paul’s example?

14. What did Jesus mean when he made the statement recorded at John 14:12?

15. What questions should we ask ourselves, and why?



Having a balanced view of work and rest  
will allow us to focus on doing good works  
that refresh us

(See paragraph 17)



prepare well for initial calls? Do I return promptly to talk with interested people? And do I have a regular share in various aspects of the ministry? If you can answer yes, you will find joy in your work.

### WHAT IS YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD REST?

<sup>16</sup> Jesus knew that at times he and the apostles needed some rest. However, many people back then and many today can be likened to the rich man in Jesus' illustration. That man convinced himself: "Take it easy, eat, drink, enjoy yourself." (Luke 12:19; 2 Tim. 3:4) He set his heart on rest and pleasures. In contrast, Jesus and the apostles did not center their lives on pleasing themselves.

<sup>17</sup> Today, we try to imitate Jesus by using the time we have off from work not only to rest but also to do good by witnessing to others and attending Christian meetings. In fact, to us, disciple-making and meeting attendance are so

---

16. What difference is there between the attitude of Jesus and the apostles toward rest and that of many today?

17. How do we use the time that we have off from secular work?

important that we make every effort to engage regularly in those sacred activities. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Even when we are on vacation, we keep to our regular spiritual routine of attending meetings wherever we are, and we look for opportunities to have conversations with those whom we meet.—2 Tim. 4:2.

<sup>18</sup> How grateful we are that our King, Christ Jesus, is reasonable and helps us to have a balanced view of work and rest! (Heb. 4:15) He wants us to get the rest we need. He also wants us to work hard to provide for our physical needs and to engage in the refreshing work of making disciples. In the next article, we will discuss the role that Jesus plays in liberating us from a cruel form of slavery.

---

18. What does our King, Christ Jesus, want us to do?

---

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 4:** Joseph takes his family to the synagogue on the Sabbath.

**Page 6:** A father who works to support his family uses his time off for theocratic activity, even when he and his family are on vacation.

---

### HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| ■ What can we learn from the examples set by Jehovah and Jesus regarding work? | ■ The Sabbath provided what for the Israelites, and what does that suggest for us? | ■ Why is it important to be balanced about rest and work? |
|--|--|---|

## SONG 22

The Kingdom Is in Place  
—Let It Come!

## PREVIEW

Jehovah made a special arrangement for liberty, or freedom, to be declared in ancient Israel. It was the Jubilee. Christians are not under the Mosaic Law; yet, the Jubilee has meaning for us. In this article, we will see how the ancient Jubilee reminds us of a provision Jehovah has made for us and how we can benefit from it.

## Jehovah Provides for Your Liberty

*“You must . . . proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants.”*—LEV. 25:10.

IN SOME countries, special celebrations are arranged to mark the 50th year of the reign of a king or queen. That 50th year is often known as the sovereign’s jubilee year. The festivities that accompany the jubilee might go on for a day, a week, or even longer, but they eventually come to an end, and the joy they brought is soon forgotten.

<sup>2</sup> We will examine a better jubilee, even better than the year-long festival that was proclaimed every 50 years in ancient Israel. That ancient Jubilee brought liberty to the people who observed it. Why is that of interest to us today? Because Israel’s Jubilee year reminds us of a wonderful provision for lasting liberty that Jehovah is making even now, liberty that Jesus spoke about.—**Read Luke 4:16-18.**

<sup>3</sup> We can better understand what Jesus meant when he spoke of liberty by first considering the Jubilee that God arranged for his ancient people. Jehovah told the Israelites: “You must sanctify the 50th year and proclaim liberty in the land to all its inhabitants. It will become a Jubilee for you, and each of you will *return to his property* and each of you should *return to his family*.” (**Read Leviticus 25:8-12.**) In the preceding article, we considered

1-2. (a) What is a jubilee? (See the box “What Was the Jubilee?”)  
(b) As recorded at Luke 4:16-18, what did Jesus speak about?

3. As outlined at Leviticus 25:8-12, how did the Israelites benefit from the Jubilee?





The Jubilee in Israel produced rejoicing, as those who had been slaves returned to their family and their land (See paragraph 3)

how the Israelites benefited from the weekly Sabbath. How, though, did the Israelites benefit from the Jubilee? Well, suppose an Israelite had fallen into debt and, as a result, had been forced to sell his land to pay off the debt. During the Jubilee year, that land was to be returned to him. Therefore, the man could “return to his property,” and the future inheritance of his children would not be lost. In another case, a man who fell on hard times might have had to sell one of his children—or even himself—into slavery in order to pay a debt. During the Jubilee year, the slave was to “return to his family.” So no one would become a slave permanently with no hope! How thoughtful of Jehovah!

<sup>4</sup> What was another benefit of the Jubilee? Jehovah explained: “No one among you should become poor, for Jehovah will surely bless you in the land

4-5. Why should the ancient Jubilee interest us today?

that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance.” (Deut. 15:4) What a contrast to what is happening in the world today, where the rich often get richer and the poor, poorer!

<sup>5</sup> As Christians, we are not under the Mosaic Law. This means that we are not holding to the ancient Jubilee arrangement about freeing slaves, forgiving debts, and returning inherited land. (Rom. 7:4; 10:4; Eph. 2:15) Nonetheless, we have reason to be interested in the Jubilee. Why? Because we can enjoy liberty, or freedom, that reminds us of what Jehovah set in place for the Israelites.

### JESUS PROCLAIMED LIBERTY

<sup>6</sup> All of us need to be liberated because we are slaves in one grim sense—slaves to sin. As a result of being sinners, we are subject to aging, sickness, and death. Many see evidence of that when they

6. From what does mankind need to be liberated?

## What Was the Jubilee?

A jubilee is a special anniversary. The Israelites were to celebrate their Jubilee every 50 years. Starting with the time of entering the Promised Land, the nation of Israel was to count six years during which the land was sown, cultivated, and harvested. The seventh year was to be a sabbath year, during which no sowing or pruning could be done. Seven of these seven-year periods ( $7 \times 7 = 49$ ) were to be counted, and the following year, the 50th, was to be a Jubilee year. Starting the count of years with the entry of the Israelites into the Promised Land, their first Jubilee year began in Tishri, 1424 B.C.E.—Lev. 25:2-4, 8-10.

look into a mirror or go to a doctor for treatment. We are also discouraged when we commit sins. The apostle Paul admitted that he was led “captive to sin’s law that [was in his] body.” He added: “Miserable man that I am! Who will rescue me from the body undergoing this death?”—Rom. 7:23, 24.

<sup>7</sup> Happily, God arranged a way for us to be rescued, or freed from sin. Jesus is the key to that liberation. In the eighth century before our Common Era, the prophet Isaiah foretold a future grand liberation. That grand liberation would

accomplish far more than did the liberation during Israel’s Jubilee year. He wrote: “The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, because Jehovah anointed me to declare good news to the meek. He sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, **to proclaim liberty to the captives.**” (Isa. 61:1) To whom does that prophecy apply?

<sup>8</sup> That important prophecy about liberation began to be fulfilled after Jesus started his ministry. When he went to the synagogue in his hometown of Nazareth, Jesus read those very words of Isaiah to the Jews assembled there. Jesus applied to himself the words: “Jehovah’s spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away free, to preach Jehovah’s acceptable year.” (Luke 4:16-19) How did Jesus fulfill that prophecy?

### THE FIRST TO BE LIBERATED

<sup>9</sup> The liberty, or freedom, that Isaiah foretold and that Jesus read about began to be granted in the first century. Jesus confirmed this when he announced: “**Today** this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.” (Luke 4:21) Many who heard what Jesus read were probably looking for some political change, for liberation from Rome. They may have felt like the two men who said: “We were hoping that this man was the one

8. To whom does Isaiah’s prophecy about liberation apply?

9. Many in Jesus’ time hoped for what sort of liberation?

7. What did Isaiah foretell about liberty?

who was going to deliver Israel.” (Luke 24:13, 21) But you know that Jesus did not urge his followers to revolt against the heavy yoke of Rome. Instead, he instructed them to pay “Caesar’s things to Caesar.” (Matt. 22:21) So how did Jesus bring freedom at that time?

<sup>10</sup> God’s Son came to help people gain liberty, or freedom, in two ways. First, Jesus opened the way to liberty from the oppressive doctrines taught by the religious leaders. Many Jews back then were enslaved to traditions and mistaken beliefs. (Matt. 5:31-37; 15:1-11) Those who presumed to be spiritual guides were in a sense blind. In rejecting the Messiah and the spiritual enlightenment he offered, they remained in darkness and in sin. (John 9:1, 14-16, 35-41) By his correct teachings and good example, Jesus made known to meek ones a spiritual liberation.—Mark 1:22; 2:23-3:5.

<sup>11</sup> The second way in which Jesus provided liberation involved freeing mankind from enslavement to inherited sin. On the basis of Jesus’ sacrifice, God could forgive the sins of those who show faith and who accept the ransom He provided. (Heb. 10:12-18) Jesus said: “If the Son sets you free, you will be truly free.” (John 8:36) That freedom was certainly greater than what could be gained during Israel’s Jubilee year! For instance, a man set free during the Jubilee might again become a slave, and in any case, he would eventually die.

---

10. Jesus opened the way to liberty from what?

11. What was the second way in which Jesus provided liberation?



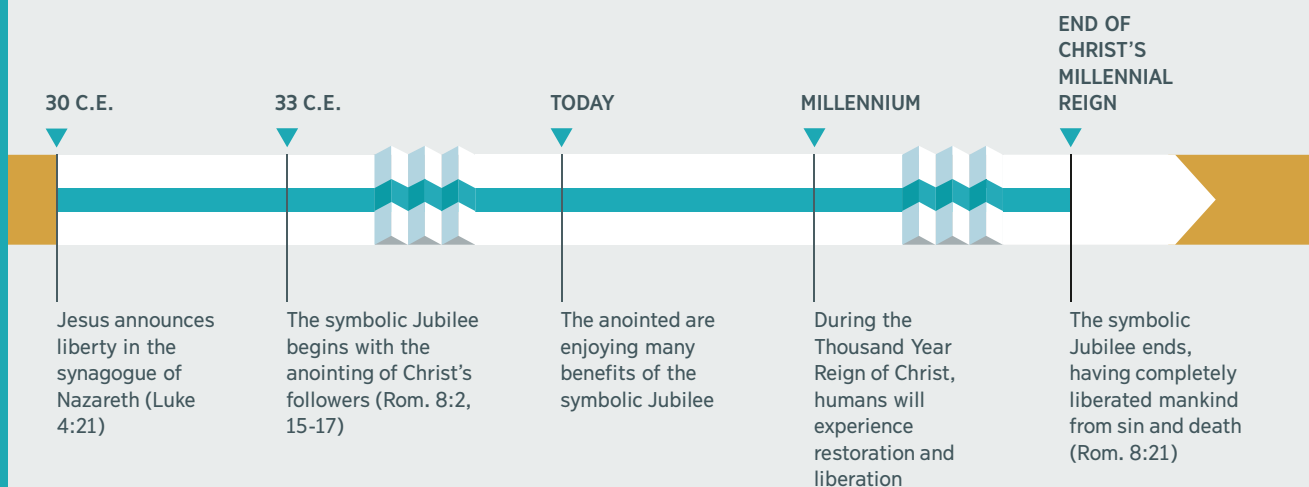
Jesus announces liberty in the synagogue of Nazareth  
(See paragraphs 8-9)

<sup>12</sup> On the day of Pentecost 33 C.E., Jehovah anointed with holy spirit the apostles and other faithful men and women. He adopted them as his sons so that in time they would be resurrected to heaven to reign with Jesus. (Rom. 8:2, 15-17) These were the first to benefit from the liberty that Jesus announced in the synagogue of Nazareth. Those men and women were no longer enslaved to false teachings and unscriptural practices of the Jewish religious leaders. God also considered them liberated from the deadly effects of sin. The

---

12. Who were the first to benefit from the liberty announced by Jesus?

## Aspects of the Symbolic Jubilee



symbolic Jubilee that began with the anointing of Christ's followers in 33 C.E. will end at the conclusion of Jesus' Thousand Year Reign. What will have been accomplished by that time?

### MILLIONS MORE TO BE LIBERATED

<sup>13</sup> In modern times, millions of sincere people out of all nations are of the "other sheep." (John 10:16) They have not been called by God to reign in heaven with Jesus. Rather, they have the Bible-based prospect of living forever on earth. Is that your hope?

13-14. Besides anointed Christians, who can receive the liberty that Jesus announced?

<sup>14</sup> Even now you are receiving some benefits enjoyed by those who will be part of God's heavenly Kingdom. By your faith in Jesus' shed blood, you can ask for forgiveness of your sins. That results in a right standing with God and a good conscience before him. (Eph. 1:7; Rev. 7:14, 15) Think, too, of the blessings you enjoy because you have been liberated from long-held unscriptural beliefs. Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." (John 8:32) What a joy to have such freedom!

<sup>15</sup> You can expect greater freedom to

15. What freedom and blessings can we expect in the future?



come. In the near future, Jesus will act decisively to eliminate false religion and corrupt human rulership. God will protect “a great crowd” who serve him, and then he will allow them to enjoy blessings in an earthly paradise. (Rev. 7:9, 14) A vast number will be resurrected and will have the opportunity to be liberated from all the effects of Adam’s sin.—Acts 24:15.

<sup>16</sup> During the Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his corulers will help to raise mankind to perfect physical and spiritual health. This time of restoration and liberation will be like the Jubilee in Israel. The result for all on earth who serve Jehovah loyally will be human perfection, free from sin.

<sup>17</sup> A prophetic description of life on earth is found at **Isaiah 65:21-23**. **(Read.)** That life will not be a life of idleness. Rather, the Bible indicates that

---

16. What grand liberation awaits mankind?

17. Isaiah 65:21-23 foretells what for God’s people? (See cover picture.)

God’s people at that time will be doing useful, satisfying work. At the end of that period, we can be sure that “the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.”—Rom. 8:21.

<sup>18</sup> Just as Jehovah arranged for the Israelites to balance work and rest, so it will be for his people in the coming Thousand Year Rule of Christ. There will certainly be time for spiritual activities. Worship of God is essential to happiness today, and it will be so in the new world. Yes, we have good reason to rejoice over the good work and spiritual activity that we can expect when believing mankind enjoys life during Christ’s Millennial Reign.

---

18. Why can we trust that a bright future awaits us?

---

**PICTURE DESCRIPTION Page 9:** During the Jubilee, men who had been slaves were freed and could return to their family and their land.

---

## HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| ■ What was the Jubilee in Israel, and how did the nation benefit from it? | ■ How has Jehovah extended liberty to the anointed? | ■ How will Jehovah extend complete liberty to the “other sheep”? |
|---|---|--|

The Bible says that at least two witnesses are needed to establish a matter. (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 1 Tim. 5:19) But under the Law, if a man raped an engaged girl “in the field” and she screamed, she was innocent of adultery and he was not. Given that others did not witness the rape, why was she innocent while he was guilty?

■ The account at Deuteronomy 22:25-27 is not primarily about proving the man’s guilt, because that was acknowledged. This law focused on establishing the woman’s innocence. Note the context.

The preceding verses speak of a man who had sex with an engaged woman “in the city.” In doing that, he was guilty of adultery, since the engaged woman was viewed as married. What about the woman? “She did not scream in the city.” If she had done so, others would certainly have heard her and would have defended her. But she did not scream. Thus, she was sharing in the adultery, so both were judged guilty.—Deut. 22: 23, 24.

The Law next outlined a different situation: “If, however, the man happened to meet the engaged girl in the field and the man overpowered her and lay down with her, the man who lay down with her is to die by himself, and you must do nothing to the girl. The girl has not committed a sin deserving of death. This case is the same as when a man attacks his fellow man and murders him. For he happened to meet her in the field, and the engaged girl screamed, but there was no one to rescue her.”—Deut. 22:25-27.

In that case, the woman was given the benefit of the doubt. In what sense? It was assumed that she “screamed, but there was no one to rescue her.” So she was not committing adultery. The man, however, was guilty of rape and adultery because he “overpowered her and lay down with her,” the engaged woman.

Hence, even though this law focused on the woman’s innocence, the account rightly described the man as guilty of rape and adultery. We can be confident that the judges would “investigate the matter thoroughly” and render a decision in line with the standard that God had set out plainly and repeatedly.—Deut. 13:14; 17:4; Ex. 20:14.



---

When Satan told Eve that she would not die if she ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, was he introducing to her the idea common today of the immortality of the soul?

■ Apparently not. The Devil did not tell Eve that if she ate of the fruit forbidden by God, she would only appear to die but an invisible part of her (what some refer to today as an immortal soul) would keep living elsewhere. Speaking through the serpent, Satan claimed that if Eve ate of the fruit of that tree, ‘she certainly would not die’ at all. He implied that she would keep on living, enjoying a better life on earth, a life independent from God.—Gen. 2:17; 3:3-5.

If the false doctrine of the immortality of the soul as taught today did not originate in Eden, when was it conceived? We cannot say for sure. We do know that all false worship was wiped out in the Flood of Noah’s day. No erroneous religious ideas survived the Flood because only Noah and his family—true worshippers—survived.

So in its present form, the teaching of the immortality of the human soul must have come about after the Flood. When God confused the languages at Babel and people were scattered “over the entire face of the earth,” no doubt they carried with them the idea that humans have an immortal soul. (Gen. 11:8, 9) Regardless of when the false concept originated, we can be sure that “the father of the lie,” Satan the Devil, was behind it and was pleased to see it spread widely. —John 8:44.

**SONG 56**

Make the Truth Your Own

**PREVIEW**

Many people believe that God exists, but they do not really know him. What does it mean to know Jehovah, and what can we learn from Moses and King David about how to build a strong relationship with Him? This article will answer those questions.

## How Well Do You Know Jehovah?

*“Those knowing your name will trust in you;  
you will never abandon those seeking you, O Jehovah.”*

—PS. 9:10.

ARE you being raised by parents who are Jehovah’s Witnesses? If so, bear in mind that you cannot inherit a personal relationship with Jehovah from them. Whether our parents serve God or not, each of us must build his own friendship with Jehovah.

<sup>2</sup> Consider the experience of a brother named Angelito. He was raised in a Witness family. However, when he was younger, he did not feel particularly close to God. He admits, “I was serving Jehovah simply because I wanted to do what my family was doing.” However, Angelito decided to invest time in reading God’s Word and meditating on it, and he began praying to Jehovah more frequently. The result? Angelito says, “I learned that the only way to be close to my dear Father, Jehovah, is to get to know him myself.” Angelito’s experience raises some important questions: What is the difference between being acquainted with Jehovah and knowing him well? And how do we come to know Jehovah?

<sup>3</sup> We can say that a person knows about Jehovah if he is aware of God’s name or is familiar with some of the things that He has said or done. But to know Jeho-

---

1-2. As illustrated by Angelito’s experience, what must each of us do?

3. What is the difference between knowing about Jehovah and knowing him well?



vah well involves more. We need to spend time learning about Jehovah and his wonderful qualities. Only then can we begin to understand what motivates him to speak and to act. That will help us to discern whether he approves of our opinions, decisions, and actions. Once we have discerned Jehovah's will for us, we need to act on what we have learned.

<sup>4</sup> Some people may ridicule us for wanting to serve Jehovah, and they may oppose us even more when we start to associate with his people. Yet, if we trust in Jehovah, he will never let us down. We will be laying a foundation for friendship with God that will last a lifetime. Can we really know Jehovah that well? Yes, we can! The examples set by imperfect men, such as Moses and King David, prove that it is possible. As we consider their actions, we will answer two questions: How did they come to know Jehovah? And what lessons can we learn from their examples?

#### MOSES SAW

##### "THE ONE WHO IS INVISIBLE"

<sup>5</sup> *Moses acted on what he learned.* When he was about 40 years old, Moses chose to associate with God's people, the Hebrews, rather than to be known as "the son of Pharaoh's daughter." (Heb. 11:24) Moses gave up a prominent position. By siding with the Hebrews, who were slaves in Egypt, he risked the wrath of Pharaoh, a powerful ruler who was viewed as a god. What an outstanding act of faith! Moses trusted in Jehovah.

4. How will considering examples in the Bible help us?

5. What did Moses choose to do?

Such trust is a foundation stone of a lasting relationship.—Prov. 3:5.

<sup>6</sup> What is the lesson for us? Like Moses, all of us have a decision to make: Will we choose to serve God and associate with his people? We may have to make sacrifices to serve God, and we risk being opposed by those who do not know Jehovah. But if we trust in our heavenly Father, we can count on his support!

<sup>7</sup> *Moses continued to learn about Jehovah's qualities and to do His will.* For example, when Moses was asked to lead the nation of Israel out of captivity, he lacked confidence and repeatedly told Jehovah that he felt unqualified. God responded with real *compassion*, providing help for Moses. (Ex. 4:10-16) As a result, Moses was able to deliver powerful judgment messages to Pharaoh. Moses then saw Jehovah use His *power* as He saved the Israelites but destroyed Pharaoh and his forces in the Red Sea.—Ex. 14:26-31; Ps. 136:15.

<sup>8</sup> After Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt, they constantly found things to complain about. Even so, Moses observed Jehovah's great *patience* in dealing with the people He had freed from slavery. (Ps. 78:40-43) Moses also saw Jehovah show remarkable *humility* when He changed His mind after Moses asked Him to do so.—Ex. 32:9-14.

<sup>9</sup> After the Exodus, Moses' relationship with Jehovah became so close that

6. What can we learn from Moses' example?

7-8. What did Moses continue to learn?

9. According to Hebrews 11:27, how close was Moses' relationship with Jehovah?



1



2



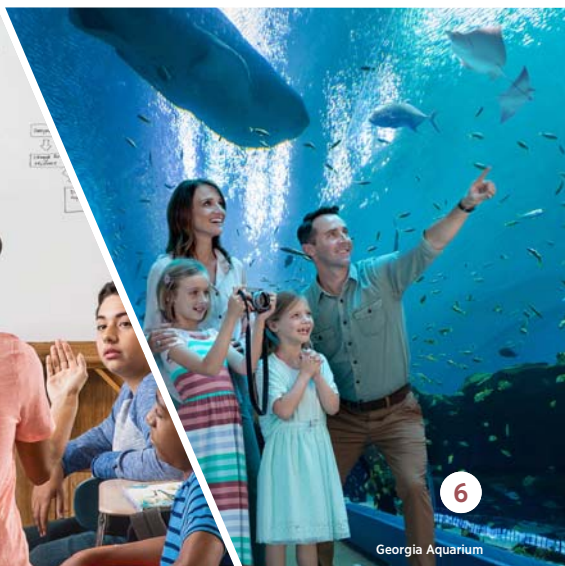
3



4



5



6

## Show That You Know Jehovah

Spend time learning about Jehovah.  
Then let your actions show that you know him.

**1-2.** Help others to learn about Jehovah.

**3.** Pray to him regularly.

**4.** Promote peace even in challenging situations.

**5.** Courageously defend the truth about God.

**6.** Continue to admire Jehovah's handiwork,  
and draw closer to him.

it was as if he could see his heavenly Father. **(Read Hebrews 11:27.)** Indicating how intimate that relationship was, the Bible says: “Jehovah spoke to Moses face-to-face, just as one man would speak to another man.”—Ex. 33:11.

<sup>10</sup> What is the lesson for us? To know Jehovah well, we not only have to learn about his qualities but also have to do his will. Jehovah’s will today is that “all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth.” (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) One way we do God’s will is by teaching others about Jehovah.

<sup>11</sup> It is often when we are teaching others about Jehovah that we ourselves come to know him better. For example, we see direct evidence of Jehovah’s **compassion** when he guides us to those who have the right heart condition. (John 6:44; Acts 13:48) We see the **power** of God’s Word at work as we watch those with whom we study break free from bad habits and begin to put on the new personality. (Col. 3:9, 10) And we see proof of God’s **patience** as he gives many in our territory numerous opportunities to learn about him and be saved.—Rom. 10:13-15.

<sup>12</sup> **Moses did not take his relationship with Jehovah for granted.** Even after performing powerful works in God’s name, Moses respectfully asked that he be allowed to know Jehovah better.

**(Read Exodus 33:13.)** Moses was in his 80’s when he made that request, but he knew that he still had much to learn about his loving heavenly Father.

<sup>13</sup> What is the lesson for us? No matter how long we have been serving Jehovah, we should never take our relationship with him for granted. One of the most obvious ways we can prove that we value our friendship with God is by talking to him in prayer.

<sup>14</sup> Good communication is the lifeblood of a strong relationship. So draw close to God by praying often, never being afraid to express your innermost thoughts to him. (Eph. 6:18) Krista, who lives in Turkey, says: “My love for Jehovah and my trust in him grow each time I express my thoughts to him in prayer and then see him help me. Seeing how Jehovah answers my prayers has helped me to view Jehovah as a Father and Friend.”

#### A MAN AGREEABLE TO JEHOVAH’S HEART

<sup>15</sup> King David was born into a nation that was dedicated to Jehovah God. But David did more than just follow his family’s religious traditions. He built his own relationship with God, and Jehovah had special affection for him. Jehovah himself described David as “a man agreeable to [His] heart.” (Acts 13:22) How did David come to be so close to Jehovah?

---

10. To know Jehovah well, what do we have to do?

11. As we teach others about Jehovah, how do we come to know him better?

12. As shown at Exodus 33:13, what did Moses ask for, and why?

13. What is one way we can prove that we value our friendship with God?

14. Why is prayer a key to learning more about God?

15. How did Jehovah describe King David?

<sup>16</sup> **David learned about Jehovah from creation.** When David was young, he spent many hours outdoors, caring for his father's sheep. Perhaps it was then that he began to meditate on the things Jehovah had made. For example, as David gazed up at night, not only would he have seen a canopy of stars but he would also have discerned the qualities of the One who made them. David was moved to write: "The heavens are declaring the glory of God; the skies above proclaim the work of his hands." (Ps. 19:1, 2) When David reflected on the way humans were made, he saw Jehovah's wonderful wisdom at work. (Ps. 139:14) As David tried to comprehend Jehovah's works, he felt humbled.—Ps. 139:6.

<sup>17</sup> What is the lesson for us? Be interested in creation. Do more than just exist in this beautiful world that Jehovah has created; be amazed by it! In your daily life, meditate on what the creation around you—the plants, animals, and people—teaches you about Jehovah. Then each new day will be full of lessons about your loving Father. (Rom. 1:20) And each day you will see your love for him grow more intense.

<sup>18</sup> **David recognized that Jehovah was helping him.** For example, when David defended his father's sheep from a lion and from a bear, he recognized that it was Jehovah who was helping him over-

come those powerful predators. When he defeated the giant warrior Goliath, David saw clearly that it was Jehovah who was guiding him. (1 Sam. 17:37) And when he escaped from jealous King Saul, David acknowledged that it was Jehovah who had saved him. (Ps. 18, superscription) A proud man might have taken credit for those accomplishments. But David was humble, so he was able to recognize Jehovah's hand in his life.—Ps. 138:6.

<sup>19</sup> What is the lesson for us? We need to do more than just ask for Jehovah's help. We must also try to recognize when and how he gives us help. If we humbly acknowledge our limitations, we will clearly see that Jehovah makes up for what we lack. And each time we see Jehovah help us, our relationship with him will grow stronger. Isaac, a brother in Fiji who has served Jehovah for many years, found this to be true. He says: "Looking back on my life, I can see how Jehovah has helped me from the time I began to study the Bible until today. As a result, Jehovah is very real to me."

<sup>20</sup> **David imitated Jehovah's qualities.** Jehovah created us with the ability to imitate his qualities. (Gen. 1:26) The more we learn about the qualities that make up Jehovah's personality, the better we will be able to imitate him. David came to know his heavenly Father well, so he was able to imitate Him when dealing with others. Consider just one ex-

---

16. What did David learn about Jehovah by looking at creation?

17. What can we learn if we meditate on creation?

18. As shown in Psalm 18, what did David acknowledge?

---

19. What can we learn from David's example?

20. What can we learn from David's relationship with God?



ample. David sinned against Jehovah when he committed adultery with Bathsheba and then had her husband killed. (2 Sam. 11:1-4, 15) But Jehovah chose to show mercy to David, a man who had shown mercy to others. Because David had such a good relationship with Jehovah, he became one of Israel's most beloved kings and the standard by which Jehovah measured other kings of Israel.—1 Ki. 15:11; 2 Ki. 14:1-3.

<sup>21</sup> What is the lesson for us? We need to be “imitators of God.” Doing so not only benefits us but also helps us to get to know him. When we model our personality after his, we prove that we are his children.—**Read Ephesians 4:24; 5:1.**

---

21. In line with Ephesians 4:24 and 5:1, what are the results of our being “imitators of God”?

### SEEKING TO KNOW JEHOVAH BETTER

<sup>22</sup> As we have seen, Jehovah reveals himself to us through creation and through his Word, the Bible. That unique book is full of examples of faithful servants of God whom we can imitate, such as Moses and David. Jehovah has done his part. It is up to us to keep our eyes, ears, and heart open to him.

<sup>23</sup> We will never stop learning about Jehovah. (Eccl. 3:11) The important thing is, not how much we know about him, but what we do with what we know. If we apply what we learn and try to imitate our loving Father, he will continue to draw close to us. (Jas. 4:8) Through his Word, he assures us that he will never abandon those seeking him.

---

22-23. What will happen if we apply what we learn about Jehovah?

---

### WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT KNOWING JEHOVAH FROM . . .

■ Moses?

■ King David?

■ creation?

**SONG 134**

Children Are a Trust  
From God

**PREVIEW**

Should a married couple have children? If they do, how many children should they have? And how can they train their children to love and serve Jehovah? This article presents modern-day examples and points to Bible principles that can help us answer those questions.

## Parents—Train Your Children to Love Jehovah

*“Children are an inheritance from Jehovah.”*—PS. 127:3, ftn.

JEHOVAH created the first couple with the desire to have children. The Bible rightly says: “Children are an inheritance from Jehovah.” (Ps. 127:3, ftn.) What does that mean? Imagine that a close friend asks you to look after a large amount of money for him. How would you feel? Likely, you would be honored that he trusts you. But you might worry about how you will keep the fortune safe. Jehovah, our closest Friend, gives parents something to look after that is far more valuable than money. He entrusts them with the welfare and happiness of their children.

<sup>2</sup> Who should decide if and when a married couple will have children? And what can parents do to help their children have a happy life? Consider just some of the principles found in God’s Word that can help Christian couples to make wise decisions.

### RESPECT A COUPLE’S DECISION

<sup>3</sup> In some cultures, newly married couples are expected to start having children as soon as possible. They may even feel pressure from their family and others to follow that custom. Jethro, a brother in Asia, says, “In the congregation, some who have children pressure the childless

1. Jehovah entrusts parents with what?
2. What questions will we discuss?
3. (a) Who should decide if a couple will have children? (b) What Bible principle should a couple’s friends and family keep in mind?



When deciding whether to have children and how many to have, wise couples “calculate the expense”

(See paragraph 7)

couples to start a family.” Jeffrey, another brother in Asia, observes, “Some tell childless couples that they will have no one to take care of them when they grow old.” However, each couple should decide for themselves whether to have children. That is for them to decide; it is their responsibility. (Gal. 6:5, ftn.) Understandably, friends and family want a newly married couple to be happy. But all need to remember that the decision whether to have children or not belongs to the couple.—1 Thess. 4:11.

<sup>4</sup> A couple who decide to have children do well to discuss two important questions: First, *when* do they want to have children? Second, *how many* children do they want? When is the best time for a couple to have such a discussion? And why are those two subjects so important?

<sup>5</sup> In most cases, before they get married, a couple do well to address the subject of having children. Why then? One good reason is that being of the same

mind on this matter is important. Also, they will need to consider whether they are ready for that responsibility. Some couples have decided to wait at least a year or two after their wedding before having children because becoming parents will consume much time and energy. They reason that by waiting for a while, they will give themselves time to adjust to married life and draw closer to each other.—Eph. 5:33.

<sup>6</sup> Other Christians have chosen to consider the pattern set by Noah’s three sons and their wives. Those three couples did not have children immediately. (Gen. 6:18; 9:18, 19; 10:1; 2 Pet. 2:5) Jesus likened our time to “the days of Noah,” and there is no doubt that we are living in “critical times hard to deal with.” (Matt. 24:37; 2 Tim. 3:1) With that reality in mind, some couples have concluded that they would like to postpone having children so that they can devote more time to sharing in the Christian ministry.

4-5. What two subjects do couples need to discuss, and when is it best to have such a discussion? Explain.

6. How have the times in which we live affected some couples?



A loving husband will do what  
he can to support his wife  
(See paragraph 8)

<sup>7</sup> When deciding whether to have children and how many children to have, wise couples “calculate the expense.” **(Read Luke 14:28, 29.)** Experienced parents confirm that raising children not only costs money but also costs time and energy. Thus, it is important for a couple to consider such questions as: ‘Would both of us have to work to supply the family’s basic needs? Do we agree on what our “basic needs” are? If we both would have to work, who would look after our children? Who would influence their thinking and actions?’ Couples who calmly discuss those questions take to heart the words of **Proverbs 21:5**. —**Read.**

7. How can the principles found at Luke 14:28, 29 and Proverbs 21:5 help a couple?

<sup>8</sup> A child requires and deserves considerable time and energy from each parent. So if a couple have a number of children who are close in age, the parents may find it challenging to give each child the needed attention. Some couples who had a number of young children confessed that they felt overwhelmed. A mother may struggle with feeling drained physically and emotionally. Could that have an impact on her being able to study, pray, and share in the ministry regularly? A related challenge is being able to pay attention during Christian meetings and to benefit from them. Of course, a loving husband will do what he can to support his wife when their children need attention, both at meetings and at home. For example, he could help his wife with household chores. He will work hard to ensure that all benefit from a regular Family Worship program. And Christian fathers will regularly accompany the family in field service.

### TEACHING CHILDREN TO LOVE JEHOVAH

<sup>9</sup> What are some things that parents can do to help their children learn to love Jehovah? How can they protect their children from moral dangers? Consider some steps that parents can take.

<sup>10</sup> **Pray for Jehovah’s help.** Note the example set by Manoah and his wife, who became the parents of Samson. When Manoah found out that he and his wife

8. What challenges do Christian mates need to anticipate, and what will a loving husband do?

9-10. What is vital for parents who want to help their children?



were going to have a son, he pleaded with Jehovah for guidance on how to raise their child.

<sup>11</sup> Nihad and Alma, from Bosnia and Herzegovina, learned from Manoah's example. They explain: "Like Manoah, we pleaded with Jehovah to instruct us how to be good parents. And Jehovah answered our prayers in various ways—through the Scriptures, Bible literature, congregation meetings, and conventions."—**Read Judges 13:8.**

<sup>12</sup> **Teach by example.** What you say is important; however, what you do will likely have a bigger impact on your child. We can be sure that Joseph and Mary set an excellent example for their children, including Jesus. Joseph worked hard to support his family. In addition, Joseph encouraged his household to appreciate spiritual things. (Deut. 4:9, 10) Though Joseph was not required by the Law to take his family with him to Jerusalem "from year to year" to celebrate the Passover, he did. (Luke 2:41, 42) Some fathers in his day may have viewed such a family trip as inconvenient, time-consuming, and expensive. Yet, Joseph obviously appreciated spiritual things and taught his children to do the same. Also, Mary knew the Scriptures well. By her words and actions, she no doubt taught her children to love God's Word.

<sup>13</sup> Nihad and Alma, mentioned earlier,

---

11. How can parents imitate Manoah's example, as related at Judges 13:8?

12. What example did Joseph and Mary set for their children?

13. How did one couple follow the example of Joseph and Mary?

wanted to follow the example set by Joseph and Mary. How did that help them to raise their son to love and serve God? They say, "By our way of life, we tried to show our son how good it is to live according to Jehovah's principles." Nihad adds, "Be the kind of person you want your child to be."

<sup>14</sup> **Help your children to choose good associates.** Both mother and father need to know whom their children are associating with and what they are doing. That includes the parents' knowing whom their children are communicating with through social media and on their mobile phone. Those associates can impact how the children think and act.—1 Cor. 15:33.

<sup>15</sup> What can parents do if they are unfamiliar with computers or mobile devices? Jessie, a father in the Philippines, says: "We knew little about technology. But that did not stop us from making our children aware of the possible dangers of electronic devices." Jessie did not ban his children from using such devices just because he was unfamiliar with them. He explains: "I encouraged my children to use their electronic devices to learn a new language, to study for the meetings, and to read the Bible daily." If you are parents, have you read and discussed with your children the balanced advice about texting and online photo sharing that you can find on the "Teenagers" section of [jw.org](http://jw.org)<sup>®</sup>? Have you reviewed with them the videos *Who's in Control—You*

---

14. Why do parents need to know whom their children associate with?

15. What can parents learn from the example of Jessie?

or *Your Devices?* and *Be Social-Network Smart?*\* That material can be valuable as you teach your children how to use electronic devices wisely.—Prov. 13:20.

<sup>16</sup> Many parents exert themselves to arrange opportunities for their children to associate with those who set a good example in serving God. For instance, N'Déni and Bomine, a couple in Côte d'Ivoire, often invited the circuit overseer to stay in their home. N'Déni relates: "This had a very good effect on our son. He began pioneering and now serves as a substitute circuit overseer." Can you arrange similar association for your children?

<sup>17</sup> ***Start training children as early as possible.*** The earlier parents begin training their children, the better. (Prov.

---

\* See also *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1, chap. 36, and Volume 2, chap. 11.

16. What have many parents done, and with what result?

17-18. When should parents begin training children?

22:6) Consider Timothy, who in time traveled with the apostle Paul. Timothy's mother, Eunice, and his grandmother Lois trained him "from infancy." —2 Tim. 1:5; 3:15.

<sup>18</sup> Another couple in Côte d'Ivoire, Jean-Claude and Peace, were able to raise all six of their children to love and serve Jehovah. What helped them to be successful? They followed the example of Eunice and Lois. They say, "We inculcated God's Word in our children from infancy, starting shortly after they were born."—Deut. 6:6, 7.

<sup>19</sup> What does it mean to "inculcate" Jehovah's Word in your children? "To inculcate" means "to teach and impress by frequent repetitions." To do so, parents need to spend time regularly with their young ones. It could at times seem frustrating to have to repeat instructions to the children. However, parents can strive to see this as a way to help their

19. What is involved in inculcating God's Word in your children?

Parents need to determine how to train each of their children  
(See paragraph 20)



children understand God's Word and apply it.

<sup>20</sup> **Be discerning.** Psalm 127 compares children to arrows. (**Read Psalm 127: 4.**) Just as arrows can be made from different materials and can vary in size, no two children are precisely alike. So parents need to determine how to train each of their children. A couple in modern-day Israel who successfully raised two children to serve Jehovah tell what they found to be helpful, "We conducted a Bible study with each child separately." Of course, each family head will decide whether studying in that way is necessary or possible.

#### JEHOVAH WILL HELP YOU

<sup>21</sup> Parents may at times feel overwhelmed by the challenges they face, but children are a gift from Jehovah. He is always available to help. He willingly listens to the prayers of parents. And he answers those prayers by means of the Bible, our publications, and the example

---

20. Explain how Psalm 127:4 can be applied to raising children.

21. What help can parents expect from Jehovah?

and advice of other mature parents in the congregation.

<sup>22</sup> It has been said that raising children is a 20-year project, but parents never really stop being parents. Among the very best things they can give their children are love, time, and Bible-based training. Each child will respond differently to the training. However, many of them who have been raised by parents who love Jehovah feel as does Joanna Mae, a sister in Asia: "Looking back on the training I received from my parents, I am so thankful that they disciplined me and taught me to love Jehovah. They did not just give me life, they gave me a meaningful life." (Prov. 23:24, 25) Millions of Christians could express similar sentiments.

---

22. What are among the best things parents can provide?

---

**PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS** **Page 23:** A Christian couple discuss whether they will have children, evaluating both the joys and the obligations.

**Page 26:** A couple study separately with their children because of the children's ages and abilities.

---

#### WHAT WOULD YOU SAY?

- Why should couples not feel pressured to have children?
- What factors should a couple consider when deciding whether to have children?
- How can parents train their children to love Jehovah?

# “Give Thanks for Everything”

DO YOU view yourself as a grateful, thankful person? That is a question for each of us to consider. The Bible foretold that in our time, many people would be “unthankful.” (2 Tim. 3:2) You have likely met some who feel entitled to everything they have, as if most things were owed to them. It seems they feel that they do not need to be grateful for what they receive. Have you found that it is unpleasant to be around such people?

In contrast, Jehovah’s servants are told: “Show yourselves thankful.” We are to “give thanks for everything.” (Col. 3:15; 1 Thess. 5:18) In fact, cultivating a spirit of gratitude is good for us. There are a number of reasons why that is so.

## GRATITUDE AND A BALANCED VIEW OF SELF

One solid reason for us to cultivate a grateful spirit is that it can contribute to a positive view of ourselves. A person who offers thanks is likely inclined to feel good about himself, and the one who receives the thanks feels better too. Why does gratitude produce both effects? Well, consider this example: When you realize that others are willing to do something for you, does that not suggest that you must be worth the effort? They care for you. When you sense that care, it should make you feel good about yourself. We can imagine that was so in the case of Ruth. Boaz showed generosity to Ruth. No doubt it made Ruth very happy to realize that someone cared about her.—Ruth 2:10-13.

It is especially appropriate to be grateful to God. No doubt, you have at times thought about the many spiritual and physi-

cal gifts he has provided and continues to provide. (Deut. 8:17, 18; Acts 14:17) But rather than give God’s goodness just a brief thought, why not take some time to **ponder** the many blessings that God has poured out on you and your loved ones. Meditating on your Creator’s generosity will intensify your appreciation for him and reinforce your sense of how much he loves and appreciates you.—1 John 4:9.

But go beyond just thinking about his generosity and pondering his blessings; give thanks to Jehovah for his goodness. (Ps. 100:4, 5) It has been said that “the expression of gratitude contributes in an important way to human happiness.”

## GRATITUDE DRAWS PEOPLE CLOSER TOGETHER

Another reason why gratitude is good for you is that it strengthens friendship. All of us need to feel appreciated. When you sincerely thank another person for a kind act, the two of you are drawn closer to each other. (Rom. 16:3, 4) Furthermore, grateful people are more likely to be helpful people. They notice kindnesses expressed to them and feel moved to be kind in return. Yes, helping others leads to happiness. It is just as Jesus said: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”—Acts 20:35.

Robert Emmons, codirector of a University of California study project on gratitude, made this point: “Seeing with grateful eyes requires that we see the web of interconnection in which we alternate between being givers and receivers.” The fact is that our lives are sustained and supported by



others in many ways. For example, they may provide our food or give us medical attention. (1 Cor. 12:21) The grateful person clearly appreciates what others do for him. That being so, have you made it a habit to express gratitude for what others do for you?

### **GRATITUDE AND YOUR OUTLOOK ON LIFE**

Another reason to cultivate gratitude is that being thankful helps you to focus on the positive rather than on the negative. In a sense, your mind works like a filter. It allows you to concentrate on certain aspects of your surroundings while blocking out other aspects. You tend to see positive things and pay less attention to problems. The more grateful you are, the more good you can see, which in turn makes you even more grateful. Having a grateful perspective on life will help you to do what the apostle Paul urged: “Always rejoice in the Lord.”—Phil. 4:4.

You will find that gratitude tends to neutralize negativity. Is it not hard to feel grateful and at the same time envious, sad, or resentful? Grateful people also tend to be less materialistic. They appreciate what they have and do not focus on getting more.—Phil. 4:12.

### **COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS!**

As a Christian, you realize that Satan would like you to be downhearted and demoralized by the hardships you face in these last days. He would love it if you adopted a negative, complaining spirit. Such a spirit could make you less effective as a bearer of good news. Actually, gratitude goes hand in hand with the fruitage of God’s spirit,

including joy over the good that God has given you and faith in all his promises.—Gal. 5:22, 23.

Being one of Jehovah’s people, you probably agree with what has been said in this article about gratitude. Still, you realize that a grateful, optimistic outlook does not come naturally. Do not let that discourage you, though. You **can** develop and maintain a grateful outlook. How? Take time each day to think about some aspects of your life for which you can be grateful. The more you do that, the more natural the tendency to be grateful will become. That will make you far happier than are those who focus on life’s difficulties. Dwell on the good things that God and others do that uplift you, that give you pleasure. You might even start a journal. In it, you can record two or three things that make you feel grateful that day.

Some who have studied the matter say that “regular practice of gratitude can change the way our brain neurons fire into more positive automatic patterns.” A grateful person is a happier person. So count your blessings, savor your positive experiences in life, practice gratitude! Rather than take good things for granted, “give thanks to Jehovah, for he is good.” Yes, “give thanks for everything.”—1 Chron. 16:34; 1 Thess. 5:18.

## Can you answer these questions based on *The Watchtower* of 2019?

---

### **What is the meaning of God's promise: "No weapon formed against you will have any success"? (Isa. 54:17)**

We can trust that God will protect us from such destructive forces as "the blast of the tyrants." (Isa. 25:4, 5) Our enemies will not be able to cause us any lasting harm.—w19.01, pp. 6-7.

### **How did God's dealings with the Canaanites and the wayward Israelites reflect his justice?**

God brought judgment on those sharing in defiling sexual acts or in victimizing women and children. He blessed people who were obedient to him and who treated others justly.—w19.02, pp. 22-23.

### **What should we do if we are present when an unbeliever prays?**

We can remain silent and respectful but not say "amen" or hold hands with others present. We can silently say our own prayer.—w19.03, p. 31.

### **How serious is child abuse?**

Child abuse is a sin against the victim, the congregation, secular authorities, and God. Where secular law calls for reporting allegations of abuse, elders comply.—w19.05, pp. 9-10.

### **How can you change or improve your dominant mental attitude?**

Key steps are: Talk to Jehovah in prayer. Meditate with the goal of analyzing yourself. Choose your associations wisely.—w19.06, p. 11.

### **What can we do now to prepare for persecution?**

We need to strengthen our bond with Jehovah. Trust that he loves us and will

never abandon us. Read the Bible daily, and pray regularly. Be convinced that Kingdom blessings will come true. Memorize favorite scriptures and songs of praise.—w19.07, pp. 2-4.

### **What can we do to help our relatives be saved?**

It is important that we show empathy, let our fine conduct give a good witness, and be patient and tactful.—w19.08, pp. 15-17.

### **How are we refreshed, as Jesus promised at Matthew 11:28?**

We have loving Christian overseers, the best companions, and the best work.—w19.09, p. 23.

### **How can God give us the desire and the power to act? (Phil. 2:13)**

As we read God's Word and meditate on it, God can energize us, giving us the desire to do his will and the power to act. His spirit can enhance our abilities.—w19.10, p. 21.

### **What wise steps should we take before making a serious decision?**

Five steps are: Do thorough research. Pray for wisdom. Analyze your motives. Be specific. Be realistic.—w19.11, pp. 27-29.

### **Does the idea of an immortal soul trace back to what Satan told Eve?**

Apparently not. Satan told Eve that she would not die, not that she would only appear to die. Any false religious ideas would not have survived the Flood. Belief in an immortal soul likely came about before God scattered the people who were building the tower of Babel.—w19.12, p. 15.

## FOR THE WATCHTOWER AND AWAKE! 2019

Indicating the issue in which each article appears

### STUDY EDITION OF THE WATCHTOWER

#### BIBLE

Ancient Scroll “Unwrapped,” **June**

#### CHRISTIAN LIFE AND QUALITIES

Faith—A Strengthening Quality, **Aug.**

“Give Thanks for Everything,” **Dec.**

Goodness—How to Cultivate It, **Mar.**

Lesson in Maintaining Joy (John the Baptist), **Aug.**

#### JEHOVAH

Give Enough Warning? **Oct.**

Values Your “Amen,” **Mar.**

#### JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

1919—One Hundred Years Ago, **Oct.**

New Member of Governing Body

(K. Cook, Jr.), **Jan.**

#### JESUS CHRIST

Really Die for Me? **July**

#### LIFE STORIES

Jehovah’s Blessings Surpassed

All My Expectations (M. Tonak), **July**

Rich Christian Heritage Allowed Me to

Flourish (W. Mills), **Feb.**

We Found the “Pearl of High Value”

(W. and P. Payne), **Apr.**

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Origin of the Synagogue, **Feb.**

Protection From a Satanic Trap

(pornography), **June**

Role of Stewards in Bible Times, **Nov.**

Sea Passage in Ancient Times, **Apr.**

#### QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Did teaching of immortal soul originate

in Eden? (Ge 3:4), **Dec.**

Why girl raped “in the field” judged

innocent without two witnesses?

(De 22:25-27), **Dec.**

#### STUDY ARTICLES

Accept Jehovah’s Help to Resist Wicked

Spirits, **Apr.**

Adjusting to a New Assignment, **Aug.**

Are You Fully Accomplishing Your

Ministry? **Apr.**

Are You Maintaining Your “Large

Shield of Faith”? **Nov.**

Armageddon Is Good News! **Sept.**

Build Strong Friendships Before the

End Comes, **Nov.**

“Come to Me, . . . and I Will Refresh

You,” **Sept.**

“Complete What You Started to Do,”

**Nov.**

“Do Not Be Anxious, for I Am Your God,”

**Jan.**

Do Not Be Fooled by “the Wisdom of

This World,” **May**

Give Jehovah Exclusive Devotion, **Oct.**

“Go . . . Make Disciples,” **July**

Help Others Deal With Stress, **June**

How Can You Safeguard Your Heart?

**Jan.**

How Holy Spirit Helps Us, **Nov.**

How Well Do You Know Jehovah? **Dec.**

Imitate Jesus and Remain at Peace, **Apr.**

Improve Your Study Habits! **May**

Jehovah Provides for Your Liberty, **Dec.**

Jehovah Values His Humble Servants,

**Sept.**

Keep Busy During the Last of “the Last

Days,” **Oct.**

Keep Worshipping Jehovah When Under

Ban, **July**

Keep Your Integrity! **Feb.**

Lessons We Can Learn From the Book

of Leviticus, **Nov.**

Let Your Love Abound, **Aug.**

Listen to Jehovah’s Voice, **Mar.**

“Look! A Great Crowd,” **Sept.**

“Look Out That No One Takes You

Captive”! **June**

Love and Justice in Ancient Israel, **Feb.**

Love and Justice in the Christian

Congregation, **May**

Love and Justice in the Face of

Wickedness, **May**

Overturn Every Reasoning That Is

Against the Knowledge of God! **June**

Parents—Train Your Children to Love

Jehovah, **Dec.**

Praise Jehovah in the Congregation, **Jan.**

Prepare Now for Persecution, **July**

Providing Comfort for Victims of

Abuse, **May**

Reaching the Hearts of Nonreligious

People, **July**

Readily Submit to Jehovah—Why and

How? **Sept.**

Rely on Jehovah When Under Stress,

**June**

Seek Meekness and Please Jehovah, **Feb.**

Show Concern for the Feelings of

Others, **Mar.**

Show Fellow Feeling in Your Ministry,

**Mar.**

Stay Faithful Through the “Great

Tribulation,” **Oct.**

“There Is an Appointed Time” for Work

and for Rest, **Dec.**

“Those Who Listen to You” Will Be

Saved, **Aug.**

Uphold the Truth About Death, **Apr.**

“We Do Not Give Up”! **Aug.**

What a Simple Meal Teaches Us About

a Heavenly King, **Jan.**

What Our Attendance at Meetings Says

About Us, **Jan.**

What Prevents Me From Getting

Baptized? **Mar.**

What Will Jehovah Cause You to

Become? **Oct.**

Why Express Appreciation? **Feb.**

### PUBLIC EDITION OF THE WATCHTOWER

Is Life Worth Living? **No. 2**

Is This Life All There Is? **No. 3**

Who Is God? **No. 1**

### AWAKE!

Can the Bible Make Your Life Better?

**No. 3**

Six Lessons Children Need to Learn,

**No. 2**

Will We Ever Feel Safe and Secure? **No. 1**

## IN THIS ISSUE

Study Article 49: February 3-9	2
<b>“There Is an Appointed Time” for Work and for Rest</b>	
Study Article 50: February 10-16	8
<b>Jehovah Provides for Your Liberty</b>	
QUESTIONS FROM READERS	14
Study Article 51: February 17-23	16
<b>How Well Do You Know Jehovah?</b>	
Study Article 52: February 24–March 1	22
<b>Parents—Train Your Children to Love Jehovah</b>	
<b>“Give Thanks for Everything”</b>	28
DO YOU REMEMBER?	30
SUBJECT INDEX FOR <i>THE WATCHTOWER</i> AND <i>AWAKE!</i> 2019	31

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. To make a donation, please visit [donate.jw.org](https://donate.jw.org).

Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

*The Watchtower* (ISSN 0043-1087) December 2019 is published by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; Harold L. Corkern, President; Mark L. Questell, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. © 2019 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

## FEATURED CONTENT IN *JW LIBRARY* AND ON *JW.ORG*

### YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

#### **How Can I Manage My Time?**

Five tips can help you to avoid wasting your valuable time.

In *JW Library*, go to PUBLICATIONS > ARTICLE SERIES > YOUNG PEOPLE ASK.

On [jw.org](https://jw.org), go to BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS > YOUNG PEOPLE ASK.

### WAS IT DESIGNED?

#### **The Glue of the Barnacle**

The barnacle's glue is said to be far superior to any synthetic products. But how barnacles adhere to wet surfaces remained a mystery until recently.

In *JW Library*, go to PUBLICATIONS > ARTICLE SERIES > WAS IT DESIGNED?

On [jw.org](https://jw.org), go to BIBLE TEACHINGS > SCIENCE & THE BIBLE > WAS IT DESIGNED?

### COVER PICTURE:

In the new world, we will enjoy doing useful and satisfying work (See study article 50, paragraph 17)

Visit the [jw.org](https://jw.org)® website, or scan code

