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THE WATCHTOWER[®]

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

(Pages 3-16, 24-32)

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE
WEEKS OF:

December 27–January 2

Young Ones—Be Guided
by God's Word

PAGE 3 SONGS TO BE USED: 37, 57

January 3-9

Young Ones—Resist Peer Pressure

PAGE 7 SONGS TO BE USED: 24, 52

January 10-16

Young Ones—What Will You
Do With Your Life?

PAGE 12 SONGS TO BE USED: 95, 89

January 17-23

Jehovah Is Our Sovereign Lord!

PAGE 24 SONGS TO BE USED: 23, 91

January 24-30

We Shall Walk in Our Integrity!

PAGE 28 SONGS TO BE USED: 29, 45

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1-3 PAGES 3-16

These articles are especially designed for youths. The first article shows how young ones can be guided by the advice found in God's Word, the Bible. The second discusses how they can resist peer pressure. And the final article considers what realistic goals youths can set for themselves.

STUDY ARTICLES 4, 5 PAGES 24-32

Learn how you can uphold Jehovah God's sovereignty. Consider what it means to be an integrity keeper. Review features of the life of upright Job. These articles show how you, like Job and others in the past, can walk in your integrity and stick to Jehovah as your Sovereign Lord.

YOUNG ONES —BE GUIDED BY GOD’S WORD

“Acquire wisdom, acquire understanding.”—PROV. 4:5.

“WHEN I wish to do what is right, what is bad is present with me.” Do you know who said those words? It was none other than the apostle Paul. Although Paul loved Jehovah, there were times when he found it a struggle to do what was right. How did he feel about this conflict within himself? “Miserable man that I am!” he wrote. (Rom. 7:21-24) Can you relate to the way Paul felt? Do you sometimes find it difficult to do the right thing? Does that make you feel frustrated, as it did Paul? If so, do not be discouraged. Paul successfully dealt with the challenges he faced, and so can you.

² Paul succeeded because he allowed himself to be guided by “healthful words.” (2 Tim. 1:13, 14) As a result, he gained the wisdom and understanding needed to cope with challenges and to make good decisions. Jehovah God can help you to acquire wisdom and understanding. (Prov. 4:5) He has provided the best possible advice in his Word, the Bible. (*Read 2 Timothy 3:16, 17.*) Consider how you can benefit from the principles found in the Scriptures when dealing with your parents, when handling money, and when you are alone.

Guided by God’s Word in the Family

³ Do you find it a challenge to live by your parents’ rules? Why might that be the case?

1, 2. (a) What helped the apostle Paul to cope with conflicts within himself? (b) How can you acquire wisdom and understanding?

3, 4. Why might you find it challenging to obey your parents’ rules, but why do parents make rules?

One reason could be that you desire a measure of independence. This inclination is normal. It is part of growing to adulthood. While at home, though, you have an obligation to obey your parents.—Eph. 6:1-3.

⁴ Gaining the right perspective of your parents’ rules and requirements can make it easier for you to abide by them. True, you may at times feel as did 18-year-old Brielle,* who said of her parents: “They have completely forgotten what it’s like to be my age. They don’t want me to have my say, make a choice, or be an adult.” Like Brielle, you might feel that your parents withhold more freedom than you think they should. However, your parents make rules primarily because they are concerned about you. In addition, Christian parents know that they are accountable to Jehovah for the way they care for you.—1 Tim. 5:8.

⁵ Really, obeying your parents’ rules is like paying off a debt that you owe to a bank—the more reliable you are in making your payments, the more inclined the bank will be to extend credit to you. Similarly, you owe your parents respect and obedience. (*Read Proverbs 1:8.*) The more obedient you are, the more likely your parents will be to extend greater freedom to you. (Luke 16:10) Of course, if you continually break the rules, do not be surprised if your parents reduce or even close down your “line of credit.”

* Names have been changed.

5. How may obedience to your parents benefit you?

⁶ One way parents can help their young ones to obey the rules they make is by example. Their own willing obedience to what Jehovah requires should demonstrate that God's rules are reasonable. This will make it easier for young people to view parental rules in the same light. (1 John 5:3) Moreover, the Bible mentions occasions when Jehovah even gave his servants an opportunity to express themselves regarding certain matters. (Gen. 18:22-32; 1 Ki. 22:19-22) Might there be times when parents could give their children a chance to comment on various subjects?

⁷ Young ones may also face the challenge of dealing with what they view to be unfair criticism from their parents. At times, you may have felt like a young man named Craig, who said, "My mother seemed like a police detective—always looking for areas where I failed."

⁸ Correction or discipline often comes in the form of criticism. The Bible acknowledges that discipline, even when completely justified, is hard to bear. (Heb. 12:11) What can help you to benefit from discipline you receive? An important point to remember is that your parents' counsel is likely motivated by their love for you. (Prov. 3:12) They want to save you from falling into bad habits and help you to cultivate good ones. Your parents likely realize that if they fail to correct you, it is the same as showing hatred toward you! (*Read Proverbs 13:24.*) Also, understand that making mistakes is part of the learning process. So when you are corrected, why not look for nuggets of wisdom in what is being said? "Having [wisdom] as gain is

better than having silver as gain and having it as produce than gold itself."—Prov. 3:13, 14.

⁹ Parents, however, do make mistakes. (Jas. 3:2) When disciplining you, they may sometimes speak thoughtlessly. (Prov. 12:18) What could cause your parents to act this way? They may be under stress, or they may view your mistakes as a failure on their part. Rather than dwelling on what you feel is an injustice, why not show appreciation for their earnest desire to be helpful? The ability to accept discipline will serve you well when you reach adulthood.

¹⁰ Would you like to cope more effectively with your parents' rules and correction? If so, you need to improve your communication skills. How may you do that? The first step is to listen. "Be swift about hearing," says the Bible, "slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (Jas. 1:19) Rather than being quick to justify yourself, try to control your emotions and absorb what your parents have to say. Focus on what is said, not on how it is delivered. Then, rephrase your parents' comments in your own words and respectfully repeat their remarks back to them. Your doing so will reassure them that you heard what they said. What if you want to give an explanation for your speech or actions? In most cases, it is wise to 'keep your lips in check' until after you have complied with your parents' wishes. (Prov. 10:19) Once your parents see that you have listened to them, they will be far more inclined to listen to you. Such a mature approach proves that you are being guided by God's Word.

6. How can parents help young ones to be obedient?

7, 8. (a) What challenge do some young ones face? (b) What realization can help you to benefit from discipline?

9. Rather than dwelling on a seeming injustice, what can young ones do?

10. How can you cope more effectively with parental rules and correction?

Guided by God's Word When Managing Money

¹¹ “Money is for a protection,” states the Bible. But this same verse shows that wisdom is even more valuable than money. (Eccl. 7:12) God’s Word encourages us to respect money, not to love it. Why should you avoid developing love for money? Consider this illustration: In the hands of a skilled chef, a sharp knife is a useful tool. But the same knife in the hands of someone inattentive or careless can cause serious harm. If handled skillfully, money too can be useful. However, those who are “determined to be rich” often sacrifice friendships, family relationships, and even their relationship with God. As a result, they stab themselves “all over with many pains.”—*Read 1 Timothy 6: 9, 10.*

¹² How can you learn to manage money skillfully? Why not ask your parents for advice on how to budget your money? “A wise person will listen and take in more instruction, and a man of understanding is the one who acquires skillful direction,” wrote Solomon. (Prov. 1:5) A young woman named Anna asked for skillful direction from her parents. She says, “My father taught me how to make a budget, and he showed me how important it is to be organized in managing

11, 12. (a) Regarding money, what does God’s Word encourage us to do, and why? (b) How might your parents help you to manage money?

How Would You Answer?

- What can young ones do to cope with and benefit from parental rules and correction?
- Why is it important to gain a balanced view of money?
- How can you remain loyal to Jehovah even when alone?

ing family funds.” Anna’s mother likewise taught her practical lessons. “She showed me the value of comparing prices before buying,” says Anna. How has Anna benefited? She answers: “I am now able to care for my own finances. I carefully control my spending, so I have the freedom and the peace of mind that come from avoiding unnecessary debt.”

¹³ You may find yourself quickly plunging into debt if you buy items on impulse or spend money just to impress your friends. What might help you to avoid these traps? When it comes to spending money, you must learn to discipline yourself. This is what Ellena, who is in her early 20’s, does. “When I go out with friends,” she says, “I plan ahead and calculate a limit to my spending. . . . I also find it wise to go shopping only with those of my friends who are careful with their money and who will encourage me to shop around and not buy the first thing I see.”

¹⁴ Making and managing money is an important part of life. However, Jesus said that real happiness comes to those who are “conscious of their spiritual need.” (Matt. 5:3) He warned that a person’s interest in spiritual matters can be choked by such things as “the deceptive power of riches.” (Mark 4:19) How important it is, then, that you let yourself be guided by God’s Word and maintain a balanced view of money!

Guided by God's Word When Alone

¹⁵ When do you think your loyalty to God will be tested the most—when you are with others or when you are alone? Well, when

13. How might you discipline yourself when it comes to spending money?

14. Why should you be on guard against “the deceptive power of riches”?

15. When will your loyalty to God likely be tested the most?

you are at school or at work, your spiritual defenses are likely up. You are alert to possible spiritual danger. It is when you are relaxing and your guard is down that you become most vulnerable to an attack on your moral standards.

¹⁶ Why should you want to obey Jehovah even when you are alone? Remember this: You are able either to hurt Jehovah's feelings or to make his heart rejoice. (Gen. 6:5, 6; Prov. 27:11) Jehovah is affected by your actions because "he cares for you." (1 Pet. 5:7) He wants you to listen to him so that you can benefit yourself. (Isa. 48:17, 18) When some of Jehovah's servants in ancient Israel ignored his counsel, they caused him to feel pain. (Ps. 78:40, 41) On the other hand, Jehovah felt deep affection for the prophet Daniel, for an angel called him a "very desirable man." (Dan. 10:11) Why? Daniel remained loyal to God not only when in public but also in private.—*Read Daniel 6:10.*

¹⁷ To remain loyal to God when you are by yourself, you must develop your "perceptive powers . . . to distinguish both right and wrong" and then train those powers "through use" by acting on what you know is right. (Heb. 5:14) For example, when choosing the music you listen to, the movies you watch, or the Internet sites that you visit, here is what will help you choose what is right and avoid what is wrong. Ask yourself the following questions: 'Will this material encourage me to be tenderly compassionate or will it influence me to rejoice "at another's disaster"?' (Prov. 17:5) 'Will it help me to "love what is good" or will it make it difficult for me to "hate what is bad"?' (Amos 5:15) What you do when you

16. Why should you want to obey Jehovah even in private?

17. What questions could you ask yourself when choosing entertainment?



Will you remain loyal to God when alone?

are alone reveals the values you really treasure.—Luke 6:45.

¹⁸ What should you do if you have secretly been engaging in conduct that you know to be wrong? Remember, "he that is covering over his transgressions will not succeed, but he that is confessing and leaving them will be shown mercy." (Prov. 28:13) How unwise it would be to continue in a wrong course and "be grieving God's holy spirit"! (Eph. 4:30) You really owe it to God, to your parents, and to yourself to confess any wrongdoing. In this regard, "the older men of the congregation" can do a great deal for you. The disciple James says: "Let them pray over [the wrongdoer], greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah. And the prayer of faith will make the indisposed one well, and Jehovah will raise him up. Also, if he has committed sins, it will be forgiven him." (Jas. 5:14, 15) Admittedly, this may result in some

18. What should you do if you have secretly been engaging in wrong conduct, and why?

embarrassment and perhaps some unpleasant consequences. But if you have the courage to ask for help, you will spare yourself any further damage and will feel the relief that comes from regaining a clear conscience.—Ps. 32:1-5.

Make Jehovah's Heart Glad

¹⁹ Jehovah is “the happy God,” and he wants you to be happy. (1 Tim. 1:11) He is keenly interested in you. Even if no one else notices the effort you put forth to do what is

19, 20. What does Jehovah want for you, but what must you do?

right, he does. Nothing is hidden from Jehovah's eyes. He looks on, not to find fault, but to support your endeavor to do good. God's “eyes are roving about through all the earth to show his strength in behalf of those whose heart is complete toward him.” —2 Chron. 16:9.

²⁰ Therefore, allow yourself to be guided by God's Word, and apply its advice. You will thus gain the wisdom and understanding needed to overcome thorny problems and to make difficult choices in life. You will not only please your parents and Jehovah but also enjoy a genuinely happy life.

YOUNG ONES —RESIST PEER PRESSURE

“Let your utterance be . . . seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one.”—COL. 4:6.

UNDoubtedly, not only have you heard the phrase “peer pressure” but you have also come to know what it is by personal experience. At one time or another, perhaps someone has urged you to do something that you know is wrong. How do you feel when that happens? “Sometimes I wish I could just disappear,” says 14-year-old Christopher, “or else be like the rest of my schoolmates so I wouldn't have to stand out as different.”

² Do your peers exert a powerful influence on you? If so, why? Could it be that you want them to accept you? In itself, that desire is not wrong. In fact, adults want to be

1, 2. How do many youths feel about standing out as different, and why?

accepted by their peers too. No one—young or old—savors the bitter taste of rejection. Realistically, though, standing up for what is right will not always win praise from others. Even Jesus had to deal with that reality. Still, Jesus always did the right thing. While some followed him and became his disciples, others despised the Son of God and “held him as of no account.”—Isa. 53:3.

The Pressure to Conform —How Powerful?

³ At times, you might be tempted to conform to your peers' standards just to avoid their disapproval. That would be a

3. Why is it a mistake to conform to your peers' standards?

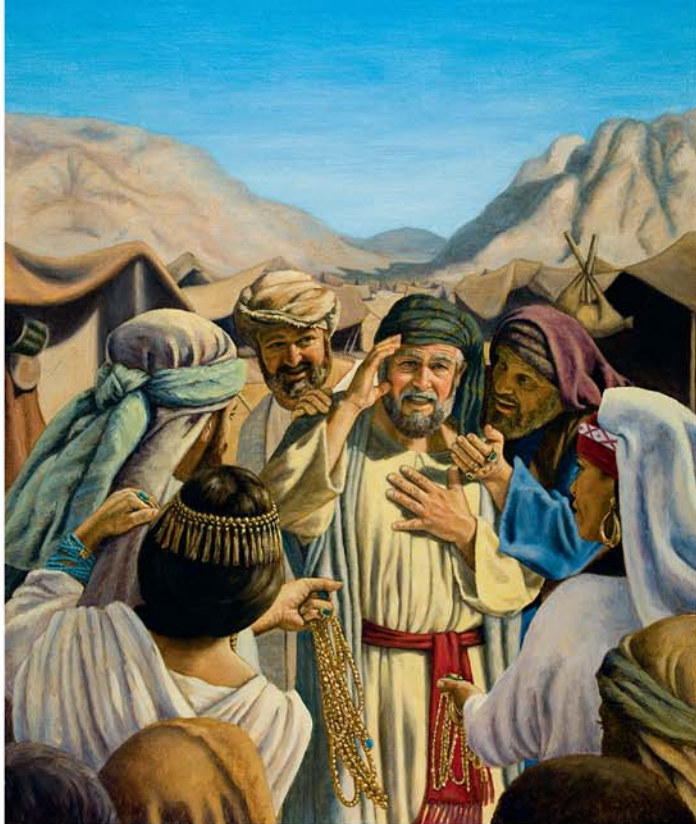
***Why did Aaron consent
to making the golden calf?***

mistake. Christians should not “be babes, tossed about as by waves.” (Eph. 4:14) Little children may easily be swayed by others. As a youth, however, you are on the road to adulthood. Hence, if you believe that Jehovah’s standards are for your good, you owe it to yourself to live by your convictions. (Deut. 10:12, 13) To do otherwise would be to give up control of your life. The fact is, when you yield to pressure from others, you become little more than their puppet.—*Read 2 Peter 2:19.*

⁴ On one occasion, Moses’ brother, Aaron, succumbed to peer pressure. When the Israelites urged him to make a god for them, he did so. Aaron was not a weakling. Previously, he stood with Moses when they confronted Pharaoh, the most powerful man in Egypt. Aaron then spoke boldly, declaring God’s message to him. But when fellow Israelites put pressure on him, Aaron caved in. What power peer pressure can exert! Aaron found it easier to stand up to the king of Egypt than to stand up to his peers.—Ex. 7:1, 2; 32:1-4.

⁵ As the example of Aaron shows, peer pressure is not limited to those who are young, nor is it a problem just for those who are inclined toward badness. Peer pressure can affect even those who sincerely want to do what is right, including you. Your peers

4, 5. (a) How did Aaron succumb to pressure, and what lessons can you learn from this? (b) What methods might your peers use to try to pressure you?



may try to coerce you into wrongdoing by means of a dare, an accusation, or a taunt. Whatever form it takes, peer pressure is difficult to face. Resisting it successfully starts with developing confidence in what you believe.

***“Keep Proving What You
Yourself Are”***

⁶ To handle peer pressure, you first have to be convinced that your beliefs and standards are right. (*Read 2 Corinthians 13:5.*) Conviction will help you to be bold, although you may be timid by nature. (2 Tim. 1:7, 8) But even if a person is normally bold, it may be quite difficult for him to stand up for something that he only halfheartedly believes in. So why not prove to yourself that what you have been taught from the Bi-

6, 7. (a) Why is conviction in your beliefs important, and how can you develop it? (b) What questions can you ask yourself to strengthen your conviction?

ble is indeed the truth? Start with the basics. For example, you believe in God and you have heard others express why they have faith in his existence. Well, then, ask yourself, ‘What convinces *me* that God exists?’ The purpose of that question is not to arouse skepticism but to strengthen your faith. In a similar vein, ask yourself, ‘How do I know that the Scriptures are inspired of God?’ (2 Tim. 3:16) ‘Why am I convinced that these are “the last days”?’ (2 Tim. 3:1-5) ‘What makes me believe that Jehovah’s standards are for my good?’—Isa. 48:17, 18.

⁷ You might hesitate to ask yourself such questions, fearing that you will not have the answers. That, though, would be like hesitating to look at the fuel gauge on the dashboard of your car, fearing that the needle is pointing to “Empty”! If there is no fuel in the tank, you need to find out so that you can do something about it. Similarly, it is best for you to address any lack of conviction you may detect in yourself.—Acts 17:11.

⁸ Consider an example. The Bible urges you to “flee from fornication.” Ask yourself, ‘Why is that a wise command?’ Think of all the reasons why your peers engage in such conduct. Reflect also on various reasons why the person who practices fornication “is sinning against his own body.” (1 Cor. 6:18) Now analyze the reasons, and ask yourself: ‘Which is the best course to follow? Is it really worth it to engage in sexual misconduct?’ Give the matter even further thought, asking yourself, ‘How would I feel if I gave in to sexual immorality?’ You might gain the immediate approval of some peers, but how would you feel later on when you are with your parents or fellow Christians at

8. Explain how you might strengthen your confidence in the wisdom of God’s command to abstain from fornication.

the Kingdom Hall? What would your feelings be when you tried to pray to God? Would you really be willing to sacrifice a clean standing with God just to please your classmates?

⁹ If you are an adolescent, you are at a time of life in which your “power of reason” is developing as never before. (*Read Romans 12:1, 2.*) Use this period to give serious thought to what being one of Jehovah’s Witnesses means to you personally. Such meditation will help you to build confidence in your beliefs. Then, when you are faced with peer pressure, you will be able to reply promptly and with confidence. You will feel as does one young Christian sister, who states: “When I take a stand, all I’m doing is letting others know who I am. This is not just ‘some religion.’ It is the core of my thinking, goals, morals, and existence.”

¹⁰ Yes, it takes effort to remain firm for what you know is right. (Luke 13:24) And you may wonder if it is worth it. But remember this: If you appear apologetic or ashamed of your stand, others will sense that, and they may well add even more pressure. If you speak with conviction, however, you may be surprised how quickly your peers will back off.—Compare Luke 4:12, 13.

‘Meditate so as to Answer’

¹¹ Another important step in resisting peer pressure is preparation. (*Read Proverbs 15:28.*) Being prepared means thinking in advance about what situations are likely to arise. Sometimes a little forethought can help you to prevent a big confrontation. For example, suppose you see a group of

9, 10. How will confidence in your beliefs enable you to be more confident when you are with your peers?

11. Of what benefit is it to prepare for peer pressure?



Be prepared—decide in advance what you will say

your schoolmates up ahead and they are smoking. How likely is it that they will offer you a cigarette? Anticipating a problem, what can you do? Proverbs 22:3 states: “Shrewd is the one that has seen the calamity and proceeds to conceal himself.” By taking a different route, you may be able to avoid the encounter altogether. That is not a matter of being fearful; it is the course of wisdom.

¹² What if you must face a situation head-on? Suppose a peer asks in disbelief, “Are you still a virgin?” The key is to follow the admonition of Colossians 4:6: “Let your utterance be always with graciousness, seasoned with salt, so as to know how you ought to give an answer to each one.” As this scripture indicates, how you go about addressing the challenge will depend on the circumstances. You probably do not need to launch into a Bible lecture. Perhaps a firm, simple answer will suffice. For example, in reply to the question about being a virgin, you might simply say, “Yes I am,” or, “That’s really a personal matter.”

12. How might you diffuse a pressure-charged situation?

¹³ Jesus often gave a brief reply when little good would have been accomplished by saying more. In fact, when he was questioned by Herod, Jesus said nothing at all. (Luke 23:8, 9) Silence is often a good way to handle impertinent questions. (Prov. 26:4; Eccl. 3:1, 7) On the other hand, you may detect a measure of sincerity in someone who is puzzled by your course—regarding, say sexual morality—even if that one initially spoke abusively of

you. (1 Pet. 4:4) In that case, a more thorough explanation of your Bible-based stand may be in order. If it is, do not hold back out of fear. Always be “ready to make a defense.” —1 Pet. 3:15.

¹⁴ In some situations, you may be able to return the pressure. However, you must try to do this tactfully. For instance, if a schoolmate dares you to accept a cigarette from him, you could say, “No thanks” and then add, “I thought you were too smart to smoke!” Do you see how the pressure is returned? Rather than your having to explain why you do not smoke, your peer is compelled to think about why he does.*

¹⁵ What if despite your efforts, the pressure persists? In that case, it is best just to walk away. The longer you stay, the greater the chance that you will compromise

* See the chart entitled “Peer-Pressure Planner” in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2, pages 132 and 133.

13. What part can discernment play in answering a taunt from a peer?

14. How might you tactfully return peer pressure in some situations?

15. When is it appropriate to walk away from peers who try to pressure you, and why?

in some way. Therefore, leave the scene. You can do so without feeling defeated. After all, you took control of the situation. You did not become a puppet of your peers, and you made Jehovah's heart rejoice.—Prov. 27:11.

Have 'Plans That Make for Advantage'

¹⁶ At times, pressure to engage in unwholesome activity may come from other youths who claim to be servants of Jehovah. For example, what if you arrive at a gathering arranged by such a person and discover that there is no adult supervision? Or what if a youth claiming to be a Christian brings alcohol to a gathering and you and others present are not of legal age to drink? A number of situations may arise in which you will need to follow your Bible-trained conscience. One teenage Christian relates: "My sister and I walked out of a movie that contained a lot of swearing. Others in the group decided to stay. Our parents praised us for what we did. However, the others in the group were angry because we made them look bad."

¹⁷ As the foregoing experience shows, following your Bible-trained conscience may put you in an awkward position. But stay true to what you believe to be the right course. Be prepared. If you are going to a gathering, have an exit plan in case things are not as you expected them to be. Some youths have an agreement with their parents that a simple phone call is all that will be needed to get an early ride home. (Ps. 26:4, 5) Such 'plans make for advantage.' —Prov. 21:5.

16. How might pressure come from some who claim to be Christians?

17. When attending a gathering, what practical measure can you take to abide by God's standards?

'Rejoice in Your Youth'

¹⁸ Jehovah created you with the capacity for enjoying life, and he wants you to be happy. (*Read Ecclesiastes 11:9.*) Remember that what many of your peers experience is only "the temporary enjoyment of sin." (Heb. 11:25) The true God wants you to have something far beyond that. He wants you to be happy forever. Hence, when you face temptation to do something that you know is bad in God's eyes, remember that in the long run, what Jehovah asks of you is always in your best interests.

¹⁹ As a youth, you need to realize that even if you were to gain the approval of your peers, years from now most of them likely will not even remember your name. In contrast, when you resist peer pressure, Jehovah takes note of it, and he will never forget you or your faithfulness. He will "open to you . . . the floodgates of the heavens and actually empty out upon you a blessing until there is no more want." (Mal. 3:10) Moreover, he generously supplies his holy spirit to make up for any lack you may now have. Yes, Jehovah can help you to resist pressure from your peers!

18, 19. (a) Why can you be sure that Jehovah wants you to be happy? (b) How does God feel about those who resist peer pressure?

Do You Recall?

- What power can peer pressure exert?
- What part does conviction play in resisting peer pressure?
- How can you prepare to face peer pressure?
- How do you know that Jehovah values your faithfulness?

YOUNG ONES —WHAT WILL YOU DO WITH YOUR LIFE?

*“The way I am directing my blows
is so as not to be striking the air.”—1 COR. 9:26.*

IF YOU were going to travel on an unfamiliar trail, you might want to take along a map and a compass. The map would help you to identify your current position and aid in plotting out a course. The compass would allow you to orient yourself. However, both the map and the compass would be of little use if you did not know where you were headed. To avoid wandering aimlessly, you would need a clearly defined destination.

² You face a similar situation as you grow toward adulthood. You have available both a reliable map and a compass. The Bible is a map that can help you to know which path to choose. (Prov. 3:5, 6) If properly trained, your conscience can be a great help in keeping you on the right course. (Rom. 2:15) It can serve as a compass. For your life to be successful, though, you also need to know where you are headed. You need clearly defined goals.

³ The apostle Paul summed up the benefits of setting goals and endeavoring to reach them when he wrote: “The way I am running is not uncertainly; the way I am directing my blows is so as not to be striking the air.” (1 Cor. 9:26) If you have goals, you can run with certainty. Soon, you will have

to make some major decisions regarding worship, employment, marriage, and family, to name a few. At times, you may feel as though you are facing a maze of options. But if you plot out your course ahead of time, basing your decisions on the truths and principles found in God’s Word, you will not be tempted to head in the wrong direction.—2 Tim. 4:4, 5.

⁴ If you do not set goals for yourself, your peers and teachers are likely to influence you to do what they feel is right for you. Of course, even if you have clear goals, some may still offer their opinions. When listening to their suggestions, ask yourself, ‘Would the goals they mention help me to remember my Creator while I am young or would they distract me from doing so?’—*Read Ecclesiastes 12:1.*

⁵ Why should your choices in life be governed by a desire to please God? One reason is that Jehovah gave us every good thing we have. (Jas. 1:17) Really, everyone owes Jehovah a debt of gratitude. (Rev. 4:11) What better way could there be for you to show your appreciation than keeping Jehovah in mind when you set goals? Let us consider what goals are worth attaining and what you must do to reach them.

1, 2. For you to be successful as you grow toward adulthood, what do you need to have?

3. What benefits of having goals does Paul refer to at 1 Corinthians 9:26?

4, 5. (a) What can happen if you do not set goals for yourself? (b) Why should your choices be governed by a desire to please God?

What Goals Can You Set?

⁶ As mentioned in the preceding article, a fundamental goal that you can set is to prove to yourself that what is said in the Bible is true. (Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 13:5) Your peers may believe in evolution or in various false religious doctrines because others have told them that this is what they should believe. However, you can rise above such thinking when it comes to your own beliefs. Remember, Jehovah wants you to serve him with your whole mind. (*Read Matthew 22: 36, 37.*) Our heavenly Father wants you to build your faith on evidence.—Heb. 11:1.

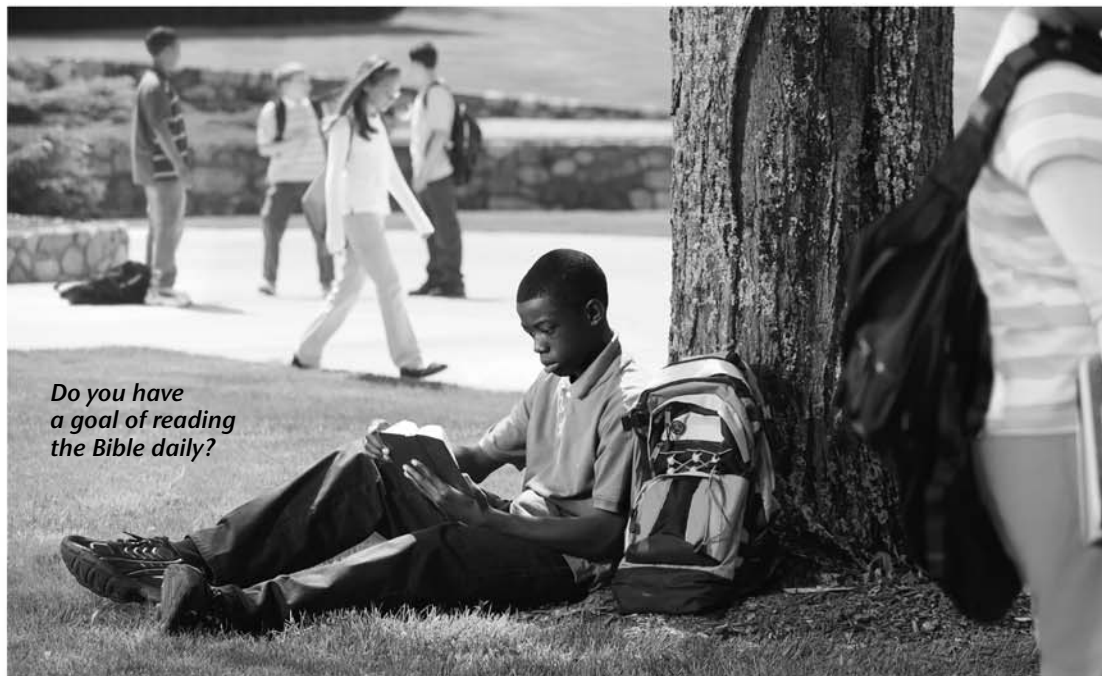
⁷ To help strengthen your faith, why not set some short-term goals? One goal could be to pray each day. To help keep your

6. What fundamental goal could you set, and why?
7, 8. (a) Setting what short-term goals will help you to strengthen your faith? (b) What will you experience as you reach some of your short-term goals?

prayers fresh and specific, you could make a mental or a written note of a day's specific events that you want to include in your prayers. Be sure to mention not only the challenges you faced but also the things you enjoyed. (Phil. 4:6) Another goal is to read the Bible each day. Did you know that if you read about four pages a day, you will complete the whole Bible in just one year?* "Happy is the man . . . [whose] delight is in the law of Jehovah," states Psalm 1:1, 2, "and in his law he reads in an undertone day and night."

⁸ A third short-term goal you could set is that of preparing an answer for each congregation meeting. At first, you may want to read the answer or a scripture. Later, you could have the goal of answering in your own words. Really, each time you answer, you are offering a gift to Jehovah.

* See *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2009, pages 15-18.



(Heb. 13:15) Once you have reached some of these goals, your confidence will grow, as will your appreciation for Jehovah, and you will be ready to set long-term goals.

⁹ What long-term goals could you set for yourself? If you have not yet started to proclaim the good news publicly, your long-term goal might be to become a Kingdom publisher. Once you reach this honorable goal, you will want to be regular and effective, never missing a month of service. You will also want to learn to use the Bible in the ministry. As you do, you will probably discover that you enjoy the preaching work more. You could then increase the amount of time you spend in the house-to-house work or even endeavor to conduct a Bible study. As an unbaptized publisher, what better goal could you have than to qualify for baptism and become a dedicated and baptized Witness of Jehovah God?

¹⁰ If you are already a baptized servant of Jehovah, here are some long-term goals you can reach out for. You might occasionally want to help congregations to preach in seldom worked territory. You may also choose to use your strength and good health in the auxiliary or regular pioneer work. Tens of thousands of happy pioneers will tell you that full-time service is a rewarding way to remember your Creator during your youth. These are goals that you can achieve while living at home. Your local congregation will also benefit from your reaching them.

¹¹ Other long-term goals could lead you beyond your home congregation. For example, you could plan to serve in another area or country where the need is greater. You might want to help construct Kingdom

Halls or branch facilities in foreign lands. You may even be able to enter Bethel service or become a missionary. Of course, the first milestone you will need to reach before you can move on to most of the long-term goals mentioned here is that of getting baptized. If you are not yet baptized, consider what is involved in reaching this milestone in your life.

Reaching the Goal of Baptism

¹² How would you describe the purpose of baptism? Some might think that it is to protect them from giving in to sin. Others may feel that they should get baptized because their peers have been immersed. Other young ones may want to please their parents. However, baptism is not a contract that restrains you from doing things that you would secretly like to do; nor should you get baptized in response to pressure from others. You should get baptized when you are fully aware of what being one of Jehovah's Witnesses involves and when you are sure that you are ready and willing to take on this responsibility.—Eccl. 5:4, 5.

¹³ One reason to undergo baptism is that Jesus commissioned his followers to “make disciples . . . , baptizing them.” He also set an example by getting baptized. (*Read Matthew 28:19, 20; Mark 1:9.*) Moreover, baptism is an important step for those who want to be saved. After mentioning Noah's constructing of the ark in which he and his family were preserved during the Flood, the apostle Peter stated: “That which corresponds to this is also now saving you, namely, baptism, . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.” (1 Pet. 3:20, 21) This does not mean, though, that baptism is like an insur-

9. If you are not yet a Kingdom publisher, what long-term goals could you set for yourself?

10, 11. What long-term goals can baptized youths set for themselves?

12. For what reasons do some get baptized, and why are these not sufficient?

13. Why should you get baptized?



What will help you to reach the goal of getting baptized?

ance policy that you obtain in case a disaster should strike. Instead, you get baptized because you love Jehovah and want to serve him with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength.—Mark 12:29, 30.

¹⁴ Some may hesitate to get baptized out of fear that they may be disfellowshipped at a later time. Do you have this fear? If so, such fear is not necessarily unhealthy in itself. It can mean that you appreciate the serious responsibility that comes with being one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Might there also be another reason? Maybe you are not yet convinced that living by God's standards is the best way of life. In that case, thinking about the consequences that come

14. Why might some hold back from baptism, but what assurance do you have?

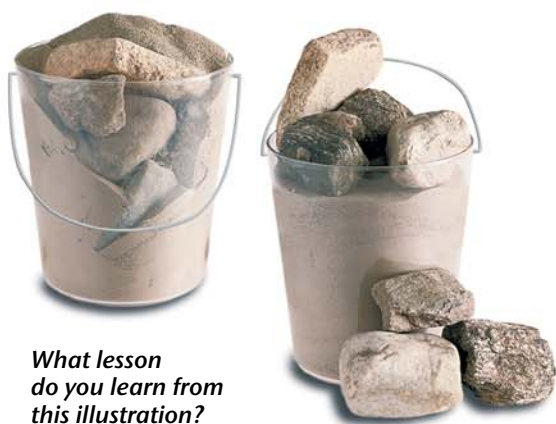
to those who ignore Bible standards can help you to make up your mind. On the other hand, it could be that you love God's standards but do not trust yourself to be able to live up to them. Actually, that can be a good sign, for it shows humility on your part. After all, the Bible says that all imperfect human hearts are treacherous. (Jer. 17:9) But you can be successful if you constantly 'keep on guard according to God's word.' (Read *Psalm 119:9*.) Whatever reasons there are for your hesitation to get baptized, you need to resolve such issues and concerns.*

¹⁵ How, though, can you tell whether you are ready for baptism? One way is to ask yourself such questions as: 'Can I explain basic Bible teachings to others? Do I engage in the ministry even when my parents do not? Do I endeavor to attend all Christian meetings? Can I recall specific instances when I resisted peer pressure? Would I continue to serve Jehovah even if my parents and friends stopped doing so? Have I prayed about my relationship with God? And have I actually made an unreserved dedication to Jehovah in prayer?'

¹⁶ Baptism is a life-altering step that should not be taken lightly. Are you mature enough to consider this step seriously? Maturity means more than being able to give good talks from the platform or impressive answers during a meeting. It requires being able to make decisions based on an understanding of Bible principles. (Read *Hebrews 5:14*.) If you are at a stage in life where you can do that, then what lies before you is the greatest privilege of all—that of serving Jehovah wholeheartedly and living in a way

* For help in this regard, see the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2, chapter 34.

15, 16. How can you tell if you are ready for baptism?



**What lesson
do you learn from
this illustration?**

that shows that you are truly dedicated to him.

¹⁷ Immediately after baptism, you may feel a surge of enthusiasm for serving God. Soon, though, you may face trials that will test your faith and resilience. (2 Tim. 3:12) Do not feel that you have to deal with these trials alone. Seek your parents' advice. Look to mature ones in the congregation for help. Maintain friendships with those who will support you. Never forget that Jehovah cares for you, and he will give you the strength needed to face any circumstance that may arise.—1 Pet. 5:6, 7.

How Can You Reach Your Goals?

¹⁸ Despite your best intentions, does it seem that you just never have enough time to do what you want and need to do? If so, you should examine your priorities. To illustrate: Take a plastic bucket and place several large rocks inside it. Then fill the bucket with sand. You have a bucket full of rocks and sand. Empty the bucket but keep the same sand and rocks. This time, fill the

17. What will help you cope with trials that may follow your baptism?

18, 19. How can you benefit from examining your priorities?

bucket with the sand first, and then try to place the rocks inside the bucket. No room? That is because you put the sand in the bucket first.

¹⁹ You face a similar challenge when managing your time. If you put things like recreation in first place, you will never seem to have enough room in your life for the big things—spiritual pursuits. But if you follow the Bible's admonition to "make sure of the more important things," you will find that you have room for both Kingdom interests and a measure of recreation.—Phil. 1:10.

²⁰ As you strive to reach your goals, including baptism, you may at times experience anxiety and doubts. When you do, "throw your burden upon Jehovah himself, and he himself will sustain you." (Ps. 55:22) At present, you have the opportunity to share in the most exciting and important work in human history, a worldwide preaching and teaching campaign. (Acts 1:8) You could choose to be a spectator and watch others do this work. Or you could be part of the action. Do not hold back from contributing your talents toward furthering Kingdom interests. You will never regret serving "your Creator in the days of your youth." —Eccl. 12:1, *New International Version*.

20. If you experience anxiety and doubts as you strive to reach your goals, what should you do?

How Would You Answer?

- Why should you set goals?
- What are some goals that are worth achieving?
- What is involved in reaching the goal of baptism?
- How can examining your priorities help you to attain your goals?

JEHOVAH IS OUR SOVEREIGN LORD!

“In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge.”—PS. 73:28.

“THE scene of this world is changing.” The apostle Paul said so. (1 Cor. 7:31) Evidently, he was likening the world to a stage, with actors in a drama playing their roles as good or bad characters until a change of scenes.

² Today, a drama of utmost importance is under way—and it involves you! Especially does it relate to the vindication of Jehovah God’s sovereignty. This drama can be illustrated by a situation that might exist in a certain land. On the one hand, there is the duly constituted government that maintains order. On the other hand, there is a criminal entity ruling by fraud, violence, and murder. The illegal organization is a challenge to the sovereign rulership and tests the loyalty of all citizens to their government.

³ A similar situation exists on a universal scale. There is the legally constituted government of the “Sovereign Lord Jehovah.” (Ps. 71:5) But mankind is now threatened by a criminal organization headed by “the wicked one.” (1 John 5:19) It presents a challenge to the duly constituted government of God and tests the loyalty of all people to his sovereign rulership. How did this state of affairs come about? Why does God permit it? What can we do about it as individuals?

1. With his words recorded at 1 Corinthians 7:31, Paul was evidently alluding to what?

2, 3. (a) To what can the challenge to Jehovah’s sovereignty be compared? (b) What questions will we consider?

Features of the Drama

⁴ This unfolding universal drama involves two interrelated issues: Jehovah’s sovereignty and human integrity. In the Scriptures, Jehovah is often called “the Sovereign Lord.” With complete trust in him, for instance, the psalmist sang: “In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge.” (Ps. 73:28) “Sovereignty” is supremacy in power or rulership. A sovereign exercises supreme authority. There are good reasons for viewing Jehovah God as the Supreme One.—Dan. 7:22.

4. The unfolding universal drama involves what two interrelated issues?

Satan induced Adam and Eve to become disloyal to Jehovah



⁵ As the Creator, Jehovah God is the Sovereign of the earth and the entire universe. (*Read Revelation 4:11.*) Jehovah is also our Judge, Statute-Giver, and King, for within himself he combines the judicial, legislative, and executive branches of universal government. (Isa. 33:22) Since we owe our very existence to God and are dependent on him, we should view him as our Sovereign Lord. We will be motivated to uphold his lofty position if we always bear in mind that “Jehovah himself has firmly established his throne in the very heavens; and over everything his own kingship has held domination.”—Ps. 103:19; Acts 4:24.

⁶ To support Jehovah’s sovereignty, we must maintain our integrity to him. “Integrity” is moral soundness or completeness. An integrity keeper is one who is blameless and upright. The patriarch Job was such a man.—Job 1:1.

How the Drama Began

⁷ Some 6,000 years ago, a spirit creature challenged the rightfulness of Jehovah’s sovereignty. A selfish desire to be worshipped was at the root of that rebel’s words and actions. He induced the first human pair, Adam and Eve, to become disloyal to divine sovereignty and tried to tarnish Jehovah’s name by claiming that He had lied. (*Read Genesis 3:1-5.*) The rebel became the great Adversary, Satan (Resister), Devil (Slanderer), serpent (deceiver), and dragon (devourer).—Rev. 12:9.

⁸ Satan set himself up as a rival ruler. Faced with this challenge, what would the Sovereign Lord Jehovah do? Would he immediately destroy the three rebels—Satan,

Adam, and Eve? He surely had the power to do so, and such action would have settled the question of who had supreme power. It would also have proved that Jehovah had told the truth about the penalty for violating his law. Why did God not take such action?

⁹ By lying and turning Adam and Eve away from God, Satan called into question Jehovah’s right to require obedience of mankind. Moreover, by inducing the first human pair to disobey God, Satan also called into question the loyalty of all intelligent creatures. As revealed in the case of Job, who was loyal to Jehovah’s sovereignty, Satan claimed that he could turn all humans away from God.—Job 2:1-5.

¹⁰ By postponing the asserting of his sovereignty, Jehovah has allowed Satan time to prove his claim. God has also given humans the opportunity to demonstrate their loyalty to his sovereignty. What has happened with the passing of the centuries? Satan has built up a powerful criminal organization. Jehovah will eventually destroy it and the Devil, giving overwhelming proof of God’s rightful sovereignty. Jehovah God was so certain of a positive outcome that he foretold it when the rebellion took place in Eden.—Gen. 3:15.

¹¹ Many humans have exercised faith and maintained their integrity with respect to Jehovah’s sovereignty and the sanctification of his name. Their number includes Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Sarah, Moses, Ruth, David, Jesus, the early disciples of Christ, and millions of integrity keepers today. Such upholders of divine sovereignty share in proving Satan a liar and in clearing

5. Why should we be moved to uphold Jehovah’s sovereignty?

6. What is integrity?

7, 8. How did Satan challenge the rightfulness of Jehovah’s sovereignty?

9. What did Satan call into question?

10. By postponing the asserting of his sovereignty, what has God allowed?

11. What have many humans done with respect to Jehovah’s sovereignty?

Jehovah's name of the reproach that the Devil has heaped upon it by boasting that he could turn all mankind away from God. —Prov. 27:11.

The Outcome Is Certain

¹² We can be certain that Jehovah will soon assert his sovereignty. He will not endlessly tolerate wickedness, and we know that we are living in the last days. Jehovah took action against the wicked during the Flood. He destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah and Pharaoh and his forces. Sisera and his army and Sennacherib and his Assyrian troops were no match for the Most High. (Gen. 7:1, 23; 19:24, 25; Ex. 14:30, 31; Judg. 4:15, 16; 2 Ki. 19:35, 36) We can therefore be confident that Jehovah God will not indefinitely put up with disrespect for his name and mistreatment of his Witnesses. Furthermore, we now see evidence of the sign of Jesus' presence and of the conclusion of this wicked system of things.—Matt. 24:3.

¹³ To escape being destroyed along with God's enemies, we must prove loyal to Jehovah's sovereignty. How can we do so? By keeping separate from Satan's criminal rule and refusing to be intimidated by his agents. (Isa. 52:11; John 17:16; Acts 5:29) Only under those circumstances can we uphold our heavenly Father's sovereignty and have the hope of being spared when Jehovah clears his name of reproach and demonstrates that he is the Universal Sovereign.

12. How can we be sure that God will not endlessly tolerate wickedness?

13. How can we escape being destroyed along with Jehovah's enemies?

*Be determined to uphold
Jehovah's sovereignty*

¹⁴ Details regarding mankind and Jehovah's sovereignty are presented throughout the Bible. The first three chapters tell us about creation and the fall of man into sin, whereas the last three deal with mankind's recovery. The intervening pages provide details regarding steps taken by the Sovereign Lord Jehovah to accomplish his purpose for humankind, the earth, and the universe. Genesis shows how Satan and wickedness entered the world, and the concluding portion of Revelation reveals how evil will be eliminated, the Devil will be destroyed, and the will of God is to be done on the earth as it is in heaven. Indeed, the Bible reveals the cause of sin and death and shows how they will be removed from the earthly scene and be replaced by unbounded joy and life eternal for integrity keepers.

¹⁵ Soon the scene of this world will change completely. The curtain will fall on the

14. What is revealed in various portions of the Bible?

15. To benefit personally when the drama involving sovereignty ends, what must we do?



centuries-old drama involving sovereignty. Satan will be removed from the stage, headed for eventual oblivion, and God's will shall certainly prevail. But to benefit from this and enjoy the many blessings foretold in God's Word, we must uphold Jehovah's sovereignty now. We cannot straddle the fence. To be able to say: "Jehovah is on my side," we must remain on his side.—Ps. 118:6, 7.

We Can Maintain Integrity!

¹⁶ We can uphold Jehovah's sovereignty and maintain our integrity, for the apostle Paul wrote: "No temptation has taken you except what is common to men. But 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 order for you to be able to endure it." (1 Cor. 10:13) What is the source of the temptation mentioned by Paul, and how does God make the way out for us?

¹⁷ As illustrated by Israel's experiences in the wilderness, the "temptation" comes through circumstances that could induce us to break God's law. (*Read 1 Corinthians 10:6-10.*) The Israelites could have resisted temptation, but they desired "injurious things" when Jehovah miraculously provided a month's supply of quail for them. Even though the people had been without meat for some time, God had given them enough manna to eat. Yet, they gave way to the temptation of yielding to unrestrained greed when gathering the quail.—Num. 11:19, 20, 31-35.

¹⁸ Earlier, while Moses was receiving the Law on Mount Sinai, the Israelites became idolaters, engaging in calf worship and sen-

sual pleasures. The absence of their visible leader meant that temptation was unchecked. (Ex. 32:1, 6) Just before entering the Promised Land, thousands of Israelites were seduced by Moabite women, with whom they committed sexual immorality. On that occasion, thousands of Israelites died for their sin. (Num. 25:1, 9) At times, the people of Israel succumbed to the temptation to complain rebelliously, on one occasion speaking against Moses as well as against God himself! (Num. 21:5) The people of Israel even murmured after the destruction of wicked Korah, Dathan, Abiram, and their associates, wrongly reasoning that the execution of the rebels was unjust. As a result, 14,700 Israelites perished from a divinely sent scourge.—Num. 16:41, 49.

¹⁹ None of the temptations just mentioned were of such a nature that the Israelites could not have resisted them. The people yielded to temptation because they lost faith and forgot Jehovah, his loving care for them, and the rightness of his ways. As in the case of the Israelites, the temptations that we face are common to human experience. If we put forth needed effort to resist them and rely on God to sustain us, we can maintain our integrity. We can be confident of this because "God is faithful" and does not allow us to be "tempted beyond what [we] can bear." Jehovah never forsakes us to

How Would You Answer?

- Why should we recognize Jehovah as our Sovereign Lord?
- What does it mean to maintain our integrity to God?
- How do we know that Jehovah will soon assert his sovereignty?
- In view of 1 Corinthians 10:13, why is it possible to maintain integrity?

16. Why can we be certain that it is possible for humans to maintain integrity to God?

17-19. (a) To what temptation did the Israelites succumb in the wilderness? (b) Why is it possible for us to maintain our integrity to Jehovah?

the point of permitting us to come into situations that make it humanly impossible to do his will.—Ps. 94:14.

²⁰ By strengthening us to resist temptation, Jehovah makes “the way out.” For example, persecutors may subject us to physical abuse in an effort to make us renounce our faith. Such treatment may tempt us to compromise so as to escape further beatings, torture, or possibly death. On the basis of Paul’s inspired assurance recorded at 1 Corinthians 10:13, however, we know that the situation giving rise to temptation is only temporary. Jehovah will not allow it to develop to the point where we cannot remain faithful to him. God can fortify our faith and give us the spiritual strength we need in order to maintain integrity.

²¹ Jehovah sustains us by means of his
20, 21. When we are tempted, how does God make “the way out”?

holy spirit. That spirit also brings back to our mind Scriptural thoughts that we need in order to resist temptation. (John 14:26) Consequently, we are not deceived into following a wrong course. For instance, we understand the related issues of Jehovah’s sovereignty and human integrity. With that knowledge, many have been sustained by God to remain faithful to death. But it was not death that made the way out for them; it was Jehovah’s help that made it possible for them to endure to the end without yielding to temptation. He can do the same for us. In fact, he also uses his faithful angels in our behalf as public servants “sent forth to minister to those who are going to inherit salvation.” (Heb. 1:14) As the next article shows, only integrity keepers can hope to have the joyful privilege of upholding God’s sovereignty forever. We can be among them if we cling to Jehovah as our Sovereign Lord.

WE SHALL WALK IN OUR INTEGRITY!

“As for me, in my integrity I shall walk.”—PS. 26:11.

IN ANCIENT times, objects were often weighed on a beam scale. It usually consisted of a horizontal beam, or bar, that pivoted on a peg at its center. A pan hung from each end of the bar. The object being weighed was put in one pan and a weight in the other. God’s people were to use honest scales and weights.—Prov. 11:1.

1, 2. What did Job say about his integrity, and what is indicated regarding him in Job chapter 31?

² When the godly man Job was suffering under satanic attack, he said: “[Jehovah] will weigh me in accurate scales and God will get to know my integrity.” (Job 31:6) In that regard, Job mentioned a number of situations that could put an integrity keeper to the test. But Job actually passed the test successfully, as implied by his words recorded in Job chapter 31. His fine example may well move us to act in similar ways and say with

conviction as did the psalmist David: “As for me, in my integrity I shall walk.”—Ps. 26:11.

³ Although Job was sorely tested, he remained faithful to God. Some might even say that Job’s severe tests and staunch integrity keeping were of heroic proportions. We are not suffering exactly as Job did. However, we must be faithful to God in matters large and small if we are to bolster our position as integrity keepers and supporters of his sovereignty.—*Read Luke 16:10.*

Moral Integrity Essential

⁴ To maintain our integrity to Jehovah, we must adhere to his moral standards, just as Job did. He declared: “A covenant I have concluded with my eyes. So how could I show myself attentive to a virgin? . . . If my heart has been enticed toward a woman, and I kept lying in wait at the very entrance-way of my companion, let my wife do the grinding for another man, and over her let other men kneel down.”—Job 31:1, 9, 10.

⁵ Determined to maintain integrity to God, Job avoided gazing at a woman lustfully. As a married man, he did not flirt with a

3. Why is it important to be faithful to God in both large and small matters?

4, 5. As an integrity keeper, what conduct did Job avoid?

single woman or pursue romantic objectives with another man’s wife. In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus made a powerful statement regarding sexual morality—surely a point integrity keepers need to keep in mind.—*Read Matthew 5:27, 28.*

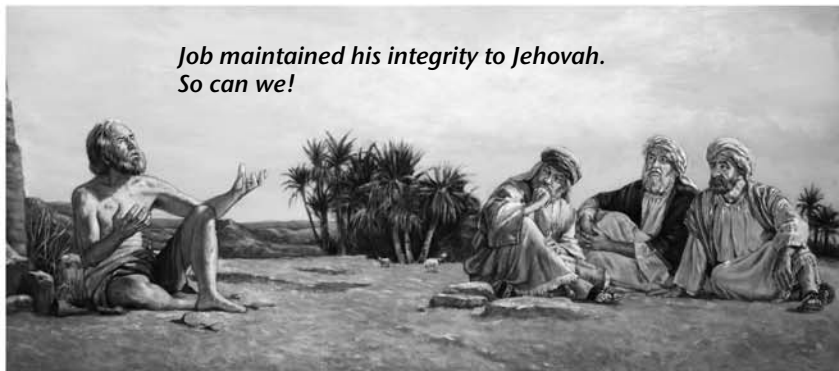
Never Resort to Devious Methods

⁶ We cannot resort to devious means if we are to be counted among integrity keepers. (*Read Proverbs 3:31-33.*) Job said: “If I have walked with men of untruth, and my foot hastens to deception, he [Jehovah] will weigh me in accurate scales and God will get to know my integrity.” (Job 31:5, 6) Jehovah weighs all mankind in “accurate scales.” As in Job’s case, God uses his perfect standard of justice to measure our integrity as his dedicated servants.

⁷ If we were to become devious or deceptive, we would not be maintaining our integrity to God. Integrity keepers have “renounced the underhanded things of which to be ashamed” and are not “walking with cunning.” (2 Cor. 4:1, 2) But what if we were devious in word or action, thus causing a fellow believer to petition God for help? Then, too bad for us! “To Jehovah I called in the distress of mine, and he proceeded to answer me,” sang the psalmist. “O Jehovah, do deliver my soul from false lips, from the tricky tongue.” (Ps. 120:1, 2) It is good to remember that God can look into our very depths, “testing out heart and kidneys” to determine whether we are genuine integrity keepers.—Ps. 7:8, 9.

6, 7. (a) As in the case of Job, God uses what to measure our integrity? (b) Why must we not be devious or deceptive?

*Job maintained his integrity to Jehovah.
So can we!*



Be Exemplary in Dealing With Others

⁸ To maintain our integrity, we need to be like Job, who was just, humble, and considerate of others. He said: “If I used to refuse the judgment of my slave man or of my slave girl in their case at law with me, then what can I do when God rises up? And when he calls for an accounting, what can I answer him? Did not the One making me in the belly make him, and did not just One proceed to prepare us in the womb?”—Job 31:13-15.

⁹ Apparently, there was no complicated procedure for handling legal cases in Job’s day. Cases were conducted in an orderly way, and courts were available even to slaves. Job was just and merciful in dealing with his servants. If we are to walk in our integrity, we must display such qualities, especially if we serve as elders in the Christian congregation.

Be Generous, Not Covetous

¹⁰ Job was generous and helpful, not selfish and covetous. He said: “If . . . the eyes of the widow I would cause to fail, and I used to eat my morsel by myself, while the fatherless boy did not eat from it . . . If I used to see anyone perishing from having no garment . . . If I waved my hand to and fro against the fatherless boy, when I would see need of my assistance in the gate, let my own shoulder blade fall from its shoulder, and let my own arm be broken from its upper bone.” And Job would not have kept his integrity if he had said to gold: “You are my trust!”—Job 31:16-25.

8. How did Job treat others?

9. What qualities did Job display in dealing with his servants, and how should we act in this regard?

10, 11. (a) How do we know that Job was generous and helpful? (b) Job 31:16-25 may remind us of what later Scriptural counsel?

¹¹ Such poetic expressions may remind us of these words of the disciple James: “The form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father is this: to look after orphans and widows in their tribulation, and to keep oneself without spot from the world.” (Jas. 1:27) We may also recall Jesus’ warning: “Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness, because even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses.” Jesus then gave an illustration about a covetous rich man who died as one “not rich toward God.” (Luke 12:15-21) To be integrity keepers, we must not succumb to sinful covetousness or greed. Covetousness is idolatry because the object of a greedy person’s craving diverts attention from Jehovah and thus becomes an idol. (Col. 3:5) Integrity and greed do not mix!

Hold Firmly to True Worship

¹² Integrity keepers do not deviate from pure worship. Job did not do so, for he declared: “If I used to see the light when it would flash forth, or the precious moon walking along, and my heart began to be enticed in secrecy and my hand proceeded to kiss my mouth, that too would be an error for attention by the justices, for I should have denied the true God above.”—Job 31:26-28.

¹³ Job did not worship inanimate things. If his heart secretly became enticed upon beholding heavenly bodies, such as the moon, and if his ‘hand kissed his mouth,’ perhaps throwing a kiss with his hand in an idolatrous act, he would be an idolater who denied God. (Deut. 4:15, 19) To maintain

12, 13. What example did Job set in avoiding idolatry?

our integrity to God, we must avoid all idolatry.—*Read 1 John 5:21.*

Do Not Be Vindictive or Hypocritical

¹⁴ Job was neither malicious nor cruel. He knew that such traits would betray a lack of integrity, for he said: “If I used to rejoice at the extinction of one intensely hating me, or I felt excited because evil had found him . . . , I did not allow my palate to sin by asking for an oath against his soul.”—Job 31:29, 30.

¹⁵ Upright Job never rejoiced if calamity befell someone hating him. A later proverb warns: “When your enemy falls, do not rejoice; and when he is caused to stumble, may your heart not be joyful, that Jehovah may not see and it be bad in his eyes and he certainly turn back his anger from against him.” (Prov. 24:17, 18) Since Jehovah can read the heart, he knows if we are secretly rejoicing over another person’s calamity and surely does not approve of such an attitude. (Prov. 17:5) God may deal with us accordingly, for he says: “Vengeance is mine, and retribution.”—Deut. 32:35.

¹⁶ Job was hospitable. (Job 31:31, 32) Although we may not be rich, we can “follow the course of hospitality.” (Rom. 12:13) We can share something simple with others, remembering that “better is a dish of vegetables where there is love than a manger-fed bull and hatred along with it.” (Prov. 15:17) Eating with a fellow integrity keeper in a loving atmosphere will make even a simple meal enjoyable and will surely benefit us spiritually.

14. Why can we say that Job was not malicious?

15. Why is it wrong to rejoice when calamity befalls someone hating us?

16. Even if we are not rich, how can we be hospitable?

¹⁷ It must have been spiritually upbuilding to enjoy Job’s hospitality, for he was not a hypocrite. He was not like the ungodly men who slipped into the first-century congregation and were “admiring personalities for the sake of their own benefit.” (Jude 3, 4, 16) Nor did Job cover over his transgression or ‘hide his error in his shirt pocket,’ fearing contempt if others learned of it. He was willing to be examined by God, to whom he would make any needed confession. (Job 31:33-37) If we were to sin gravely, let us not try to hide such wrongdoing to save face. How can we show that we are trying to maintain integrity? By acknowledging our error, repenting, seeking spiritual help, and doing all we can to make amends.—Prov. 28:13; Jas. 5:13-15.

An Integrity Keeper on Trial

¹⁸ Job was honest and fair. Therefore, he could say: “If against me my own ground would cry for aid, and together its furrows themselves would weep; if its fruitage I have eaten without money, and the soul of its owners I have caused to pant, instead of wheat let the thorny weed go forth, and instead of barley stinking weeds.” (Job

17. Why should we not try to hide grave sin?

18, 19. (a) Why can it be said that Job never exploited anyone? (b) What was Job willing to do if he was in the wrong?

How Would You Respond?

- How should we view Jehovah’s moral standards?
- What qualities of Job especially appeal to you?
- As shown at Job 31:29-37, how did Job conduct himself?
- Why is it possible for us to maintain our integrity to God?

31:38-40) Job never grabbed the land of others, and he did not exploit workers. Like him, we need to maintain integrity to Jehovah in matters large and small.

¹⁹ Before his three companions as well as the young man Elihu, Job had spoken about the way he had lived. Against his lifelong record bearing his “signature,” Job had invited an opponent-at-law to file charges. If it was proved that Job was in the wrong, he would be willing to suffer punishment. So he submitted his case and awaited the judgment of the divine court. Thus, ‘the words of Job came to an end.’—Job 31:35, 40.

You Can Maintain Integrity

²⁰ Job was able to maintain his integrity because he loved God, and Jehovah loved and helped him. Said Job: “Life and loving-kindness [“loyal love,” ftn.] you [Jehovah] have worked with me; and your own care has guarded my spirit.” (Job 10:12) Moreover, Job showed love for others, realizing that anyone withholding loyal love from fellow humans will abandon the reverential fear of the Almighty. (Job 6:14) Integrity keepsers love God and neighbor.—Matt. 22:37-40.

²¹ We can cultivate love for God by reading his Word daily and meditating on what it reveals about him. In heartfelt prayer, we can praise Jehovah and thank him for his goodness to us. (Phil. 4:6, 7) We can sing to Jehovah and benefit from regular

20, 21. (a) Why was Job able to maintain integrity? (b) How can we cultivate love for God?



*We can maintain
our integrity!*

association with his people. (Heb. 10:23-25) Then, too, our love for God will grow as we engage in the ministry and declare “the good news of salvation by him.” (Ps. 96: 1-3) In such ways, we can maintain integrity, as did the psalmist who sang: “The drawing near to God is good for me. In the Sovereign Lord Jehovah I have placed my refuge.”—Ps. 73:28.

²² Over the centuries, Jehovah has given integrity keepers many different assignments. Noah built an ark and was “a preacher of righteousness.” (2 Pet. 2:5) Joshua led the Israelites into

the Promised Land, but he succeeded only because he read the “book of the law . . . day and night” and acted in harmony with it. (Josh. 1:7, 8) First-century Christians made disciples and met regularly to study the Scriptures.—Matt. 28:19, 20.

²³ We uphold Jehovah’s sovereignty and maintain our integrity by preaching righteousness, making disciples, applying Scriptural counsel, and assembling with fellow believers at meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Such activities help us to be courageous, spiritually strong, and successful in doing God’s will. This is not too difficult for us because we have the support of our heavenly Father and his Son. (Deut. 30:11-14; 1 Ki. 8:57) Moreover, we have the backing of “the whole association of brothers,” who also walk in integrity and revere Jehovah as their Sovereign Lord.—1 Pet. 2:17.

22, 23. As upholders of Jehovah’s sovereignty, how do our activities compare with those of earlier integrity keepers?