

THE WATCHTOWER

JULY 15, 1998

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



HOW CAN YOU PROTECT YOUR CHILDREN?

THE WATCHTOWER®

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in God's now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. *The Watchtower*, published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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How Can You Protect Your Children?

AFTER attending a neighborhood school for years, Werner* began advanced studies along with about 3,000 other youths in São Paulo, Brazil. For the first time, he observed fellow students selling and using drugs. Being of small stature, he soon became a victim of degrading and risky initiation rites by older students.

Werner's sister Eva also had problems. Wanting to do her best, she studied so intensely that she experienced burnout and mental confusion. Like other adolescents, Werner and Eva needed both physical and emotional protection. What kind of help do your children need? How can you prepare them for adult life? Indeed, what future do you want for your children?

They Need More Than Sustenance

Think for a moment about the challenge that parents face in protecting their children today. Because of a decline in the quality of family life and an increase in poverty, in many lands the number of children who live on the streets is increasing. Child

labor is a result of a failure to protect young ones from exploitation. Drug abuse also destroys many young ones. For example, when a certain Brazilian teenager became a drug addict, peace disappeared from his home. Besides the emotional strain experienced by his parents, there was the struggle to finance his recovery, and pitiless narcotics dealers came to their door demanding payment.

Despite the pressures of life, however, many parents continue the struggle of providing their children not only with food, clothing, and shelter but also with protection from violence, drug abuse, and other problems. This is a noble endeavor, but is it enough? What about protection from emotional and spiritual harm? Many realize that successful parenting includes the tackling of challenges that involve their children's choice of friends and recreation. Yet, how can parents avoid being either overprotective or too permissive? You are invited to consider the answers found in the following article.

* Substitute names are used in this article.

What Future Do You Want for Your Children?

DO YOU consider your children to be an inheritance of great value? (Psalm 127:3) Or do you view the rearing of them as a financial burden with no guarantee of success? Rather than bringing monetary profit, raising children costs money until they can sustain themselves. Just as managing an inherited fortune requires good planning, so does successful parenting.

Caring parents want to give their children a good start in life. Although bad and very sad things may happen in this world, parents can do much to protect their offspring. Consider the case of Werner and Eva, mentioned in the preceding article.*

When Parents Really Care

Werner reports that instead of letting things take their course, his parents showed genuine interest in what was going on in school. "I appreciated very much the practical suggestions they gave me, and I felt that they cared for me and were supporting me. As parents, they were quite firm, but I knew that they were my real friends." And when Eva became so upset over her school-work that she was depressed and had problems sleeping, her parents, Francisco and Inez, also spent considerable time talking with her and helping her to recover mental and spiritual balance.

How did Francisco and Inez seek to protect their children and prepare them for adult life? Well, from the time the children were infants, these loving parents always in-

volved them in their daily activities. Instead of just socializing with their adult friends, Inez and Francisco had the children with them wherever they went. As loving parents, they also gave their son and daughter proper guidance. Says Inez: "We taught them to care for the home, to be economical, and to care for their own clothes. And we helped each one of them to choose a profession and to reconcile their responsibilities with spiritual interests."

How vital it is to get to know your children and provide parental guidance! Let us examine three areas in which you might do this: (1) Help your children to choose an appropriate type of secular work; (2) prepare them to cope with emotional stress in school and in the workplace; (3) show them how to satisfy their spiritual needs.

Help Them Choose Suitable Work

Since a person's secular work not only affects his financial situation but also takes much of his time, good parenting includes considering each child's interests and abilities. Since no conscientious individual wants to be a burden to others, parents should think seriously about how their child can be prepared to sustain himself and a family. Would your son or daughter need to learn a trade in order to make a decent living? As a truly caring parent, make consistent efforts to help your child develop such qualities as a desire to work industriously, willingness to learn, and the ability to get along well with others.

Consider Nicole. She says: "My parents

* Substitute names are used in this article.

had me work with them in their cleaning business. They suggested that I give a percentage of my earnings toward our household expenses and keep what was left for my own spending or savings. This gave me a heightened sense of responsibility that proved very useful later in life."

God's Word, the Bible, does not specify what type of secular work a person should choose. But it does provide sound guidelines. For instance, the apostle Paul said: "If anyone does not want to work, neither let him eat." Writing to Christians in Thessalonica, he also said: "We hear certain ones are walking disorderly among you, not working at all but meddling with what does not concern them. To such persons we give the order and exhortation in the Lord Jesus Christ that by working with quietness they should eat food they themselves earn."—2 Thessalonians 3:10-12.

Yet, getting a job and making money is not all there is to life. Eventually, those who are too ambitious are likely to become discontented and may discover that they are "striving after wind." (Ecclesiastes 1:14) Rather than urging their children to pursue recognition and prosperity, parents do well to help them see the wisdom of the apostle John's divinely inspired words: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world. Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:15-17.

How Can You

Satisfy Their Emotional Needs?

As a parent, why not be like a trainer of athletes? He does not focus only on develop-

ing in the athletes in his care the physical capacity to run faster or to jump farther. Likely, he also endeavors to help them to overcome any negative attitude, thus reinforcing their emotional strength. In your case, how can you encourage, build up, and motivate your children?

Consider Rogério, a 13-year-old youth. Besides internal turmoil as a result of bodily changes, he experienced emotional stress because of parental disunity and lack of attention. What can be done for young people like him? Though it is impossible to shelter your children from all anxieties and bad influences, never give up your role as a parent. Without being overprotective, discipline your offspring with understanding, always remembering that each child is unique. By showing kindness and love, you can do much to make a young person feel secure. This will also prevent him from growing up lacking confidence and self-respect.

Regardless of how successful your own parents were in satisfying your emotional needs, three things can assist you to succeed as a truly helpful parent: (1) Avoid being so absorbed in your own difficulties that you ignore the seemingly small problems of your children; (2) endeavor to have pleasant and meaningful daily communication with them; (3) promote a positive attitude regarding how to solve problems and deal with people.

Looking back on her years as a teenager, Birgit says: "I had to learn that you cannot change people to be what you want them to be. My mother reasoned with me that if I saw something in others that I did not like, what I could do was avoid being like them. She also said that the best time to change my own ways would be while I was still young."

Yet, your children need more than a job and emotional stability. Ask yourself, 'Do I

view parenting as a God-given responsibility? If you do, you will want to attend to the spiritual needs of your children.

Ways to Meet Their Spiritual Needs

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said: "Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need, since the kingdom of the heavens belongs to them." (Matthew 5:3) What is involved in satisfying spiritual needs? Children benefit greatly when parents set a fine example in showing faith in Jehovah God. The apostle Paul wrote: "Without faith it is impossible to please [God] well, for he that approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) For faith to have real meaning, however, prayer is needed. (Romans 12:12) If you acknowledge your own spiritual need, you will seek divine guidance, as did the father of the child who became Israel's noted Judge Samson. (Judges 13:8) You will not only pray but also go to God's inspired Word, the Bible, for help.—2 Timothy 3:16, 17.*

Despite all the hard work involved in providing sound guidance, emotional support, and spiritual help, parenting can be rewarding. A father of two in Brazil comments: "I cannot even imagine not having my children. There is so much good that we can share with them." In explaining why the children are doing well, the mother adds: "We are always together, and we try to make things festive and happy. And, most important, we always pray for the children."

Priscilla recalls the love and patience her parents displayed toward her whenever there was a problem. "They were my real

* See chapters 5 to 7 in the book *The Secret of Family Happiness*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

friends and helped me in everything," she says. "As a child, I truly felt that I was being treated as 'an inheritance from Jehovah.'" (Psalm 127:3) Like many other parents, why not schedule time with your children so that you can read the Bible and Christian publications together? Considering Bible accounts and principles in a positive atmosphere can help your children to be confident and to have a real hope for the future.

When All Children Will Be Secure

Although the future looks gloomy for many children today, God's Word guarantees that the earth will soon be a secure home for mankind. Imagine the time in God's promised new world when parents will not have to worry about the safety of their children! (2 Peter 3:13) Try to envision the grand fulfillment of this prophecy: "The wolf will actually reside for a while with the male lamb, and with the kid the leopard itself will lie down, and the calf and the maned young lion and the well-fed animal all together; and a mere little boy will be leader over them." (Isaiah 11:6) Even today, the spiritual security described in these words has a figurative fulfillment among those who serve Jehovah. In their midst, you will feel God's loving care. If you manifest love for God, you can be assured that he understands your feelings as a parent and will help you to cope with the anxieties and trials that may come your way. Study his Word and place your hope in his Kingdom.

Help your children on the way to eternal life by setting a fine example. If you take refuge in Jehovah God, your future and that of your children can exceed all your expectations. You can have the same confidence as did the psalmist who sang: "Take exquisite delight in Jehovah, and he will give you the requests of your heart."—Psalm 37:4.

T Y C H I C U S

A Trusted Fellow Slave

ON VARIOUS occasions, Tychicus traveled with the apostle Paul and acted as his messenger. He was an emissary who could be entrusted with money and with responsibilities of oversight. Since the Scriptures highlight his trustworthiness—a quality essential for all Christians—perhaps you would like to know more about him.

Paul described Tychicus as his “beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord.” (Colossians 4:7) Why did the apostle view him in that way?

The Jerusalem Relief Mission

A material need developed among Christians in Judea in about 55 C.E. With the help of congregations in Europe and Asia Minor, Paul organized a collection to assist them. Tychicus, who was from the district of Asia, played a role in the relief mission.

After giving instructions on how to handle this contribution, Paul suggested that trustworthy men be sent to Jerusalem or go there with him, carrying the proceeds. (1 Corinthians 16:1-4) When he set out on the long journey from Greece to



Jerusalem, he was accompanied by several men, one of whom apparently was Tychicus. (Acts 20:4) Such a large company may have been needed because they were carrying money entrusted to them by several congregations. The need for security may have been a notable factor, since highwaymen posed a threat to safe passage.

—2 Corinthians 11:26.

Since Aristarchus and Trophimus accompanied Paul to Jerusalem, some think it likely that Tychicus and the others did so too. (Acts 21:29; 24:17; 27:1, 2) Because Tychicus was involved in this relief program,

he is one of several suggested as being the “brother” who worked with Titus in Greece to arrange the collection and who was “appointed by the congregations to be [Paul’s] traveling companion in connection with this kind gift.” (2 Corinthians 8:18, 19; 12:18) If the first commission fulfilled by Tychicus was a responsible one, his second was no less so.

From Rome to Colossae

Five or six years later (60-61 C.E.), Paul was hoping to be released from his first

imprisonment in Rome. Tychicus was with him, hundreds of miles from home. Now Tychicus was going back to Asia. This enabled Paul to dispatch letters to Christian congregations in that area and to send Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus, back to Colossae. Tychicus and Onesimus carried at least three letters now included in the Bible canon—one to the Ephesians, one to the Colossians, and one to Philemon. A letter may also have been delivered to the congregation in Laodicea, a city about 11 miles from Colossae.—Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7-9, 16; Philemon 10-12.

Tychicus was no mere mailman. He was a trusted personal messenger, for Paul wrote: "All my affairs Tychicus, my beloved brother and faithful minister and fellow slave in the Lord, will make known to you. For the very purpose of your knowing the things having to do with us and that he may comfort your hearts, I am sending him to you."—Colossians 4:7, 8.

Scholar E. Randolph Richards points out that a letter bearer "was often a personal link between the author and the recipients in addition to the written link. . . . [One reason] for needing a trustworthy carrier was [that] he often carried additional information. A letter may describe a situation briefly, frequently with the author's assessment, but the carrier is expected to elaborate for the recipient all the details." Though a letter might deal with teachings and urgent matters, other things would be conveyed orally by a trusted messenger.

The letters to the Ephesians, the Colossians, and Philemon say little about how Paul was getting along. Tychicus thus had to relay personal information, explain Paul's circumstances in Rome, and grasp conditions in the congregations well enough to be able to provide encouragement. Mes-

sages and responsibilities of this kind were entrusted only to those who could be relied upon to represent the sender faithfully. Tychicus was such a man.

Oversight in Distant Assignments

After being released from house arrest in Rome, Paul contemplated sending either Tychicus or Artemas to Titus on the island of Crete. (Titus 1:5; 3:12) During Paul's second Roman imprisonment (probably about 65 C.E.), the apostle again sent Tychicus to Ephesus, possibly to take the place of Timothy, who could then journey to be at Paul's side.—2 Timothy 4:9, 12.

Whether Tychicus went both to Crete and to Ephesus during this period is not clear. Nevertheless, references like these suggest that he remained one of Paul's close associates until the last years of the apostle's ministry. If Paul was thinking of sending him on responsible and perhaps difficult missions in place of Timothy and Titus, it is apparent that Tychicus had become a mature Christian overseer. (Compare 1 Timothy 1:3; Titus 1:10-13.) His willingness to travel and to be used in distant assignments made him useful to Paul and to the whole Christian congregation.

Today, self-sacrificing Christians willingly serve God in local congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses or make themselves available to promote Kingdom interests elsewhere. Thousands have gladly accepted assignments as missionaries, traveling overseers, international servants in construction projects, at the world headquarters of the Watch Tower Society, or in one of its branches. Like Tychicus, they are not conspicuous, but they are hard workers, 'faithful ministers' who are dear to God and loved by other Christians as trustworthy 'fellow slaves in the Lord.'

BEWARE OF A LACK OF FAITH

"Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God."—HEBREWS 3:12.

WHAT a frightening thought—that people who once enjoyed a personal relationship with Jehovah could develop a “wicked heart” and “draw away from the living God”! And what a warning this is! These words of the apostle Paul were addressed, not to unbelievers, but to people who had dedicated their lives to Jehovah on the basis of faith in the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

² How could someone in such a blessed spiritual state ever develop “a wicked heart lacking faith”? Indeed, how could anyone who had tasted of God’s love and undeserved kindness deliberately draw away from him? And could this happen to any of us? Sobering thoughts these are, and it behooves us to look into the reason behind this warning.—1 Corinthians 10:11.

Why Such Strong Counsel?

³ It appears that Paul addressed his letter to the Hebrew Christians in Judea in 61 C.E. A historian observed that this was a time when “there was no peace or safety for any sober, honest men, either in the city of Jerusalem or anywhere else throughout the whole province.” It was a time of lawless-

1. What shocking reality do Paul’s words to the Hebrew Christians call to our attention?
2. What questions do we need to consider?
3. Describe the circumstances affecting first-century Christians in and around Jerusalem.

ness and violence, fomented by a mixture of the oppressive Roman military presence, the bravado of the anti-Roman Jewish Zealots, and the criminal activities of thieves who took advantage of the chaotic times. All of this made things very difficult for Christians, who tried hard not to get entangled in such matters. (1 Timothy 2:1, 2) In fact, because of their neutral stand, they were viewed by some as being social misfits, even seditious. Christians were often mistreated, and they suffered personal losses.—Hebrews 10:32-34.

⁴ Hebrew Christians were also under intense pressure of a religious nature. The zeal of Jesus’ faithful disciples and the resultant rapid expansion of the Christian congregation provoked the jealousy and wrath of the Jews—especially their religious leaders. They stopped at nothing to harass and persecute the followers of Jesus Christ.* (Acts 6:8-14; 21:27-30; 23:12, 13; 24:1-9) Even if some Christians were spared outright persecution, they were, nonetheless, scorned and ridiculed by the Jews. Christianity was despised as an upstart

* Josephus reported that shortly after Festus’ death, Ananus (Ananias) of the sect of the Sadducees became high priest. He brought James, Jesus’ half brother, and other disciples before the Sanhedrin and had them condemned to death and stoned.

4. To what pressure of a religious nature were the Hebrew Christians subjected?



religion that lacked the splendor of Judaism, having no temple, no priesthood, no festivals, no formal sacrifices, and so on. Even their leader, Jesus, was put to death as a condemned criminal. To practice their religion, Christians had to have faith, courage, and endurance.

⁵ Above all, the Hebrew Christians in Judea were living at a crucial time in the history of that nation. Many things that their Lord, Jesus Christ, said would mark the

5. Why was it essential for Christians in Judea to remain spiritually alert?

end of the Jewish system had already occurred. The end could not be far off. To survive, Christians had to remain spiritually alert and be ready to ‘flee to the mountains.’ (Matthew 24:6, 15, 16) Would they have the faith and spiritual stamina needed to take immediate action, as Jesus had directed? There appeared to be some doubt.

⁶ During the last decade before the dissolution of the entire Jewish system of things, Hebrew Christians clearly were under severe pressure from inside and outside the congregation. They were in need of encouragement. But they also needed counsel and direction to help them see that the course they had chosen was the right one and that they had not suffered and endured in vain.

Happily, Paul rose to the occasion and came to their aid.

⁷ What Paul wrote to Hebrew Christians should be of immense interest to us. Why? Because we are living in a time paralleling theirs. Daily we feel pressures from the world under Satan’s control. (1 John 5:19) Being fulfilled before our eyes are the prophecies of Jesus and the apostles re-

6. What did the Christians in Judea urgently need?

7. Why should we be interested in what Paul wrote to the Hebrew Christians?

garding the last days and “the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 24:3-14; 2 Timothy 3:1-5; 2 Peter 3:3, 4; Revelation 6:1-8) Above all, we need to stay spiritually alert so that we “may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur.”—Luke 21:36.

One Greater Than Moses

⁸ Mentioning a vital point, Paul wrote: “Consider the apostle and high priest whom we confess—Jesus.” (Hebrews 3:1) To “consider” means “to perceive clearly . . . , to understand fully, consider closely.” (*Vine’s Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*) Thus, Paul was urging his fellow believers to make a serious effort to come to a true appreciation of the role that Jesus played in their faith and salvation. Doing this would strengthen their resolve to stand firm in faith. What, then, was Jesus’ role, and why should we “consider” him?

⁹ Paul applied the terms “apostle” and “high priest” to Jesus. An “apostle” is someone sent forth and here relates to God’s means of communicating with mankind. A “high priest” is one through whom humans can approach God. These two provisions are essential to true worship, and Jesus is the embodiment of both. He is the one sent from heaven to teach mankind the truth about God. (John 1:18; 3:16; 14:6) Jesus is also the one appointed as the antitypical High Priest in Jehovah’s spiritual temple arrangement for the forgiveness of sin. (Hebrews 4:14, 15; 1 John 2:1, 2) If we truly appreciate the blessings that we can realize through Jesus, we will have the courage and determination to remain firm in faith.

8. By saying what is recorded at Hebrews 3:1, what was Paul urging his fellow Christians to do?

9. Why did Paul refer to Jesus as “apostle” and “high priest”?

¹⁰ To stress the value of Christian faith, Paul compared Jesus with Moses, whom the Jews viewed as the greatest prophet among their ancestors. If Hebrew Christians could wholeheartedly grasp the fact that Jesus is greater than Moses, they would have no reason to doubt the superiority of Christianity over Judaism. Paul pointed out that while Moses was counted worthy of being entrusted with God’s “house”—the nation, or congregation, of Israel—he was only a faithful attendant, or servant. (Numbers 12:7) On the other hand, Jesus was the Son, the master over the house. (1 Corinthians 11:3; Hebrews 3:2, 3, 5) To reinforce his point, Paul cited this universal truth: “Of course, every house is constructed by someone, but he that constructed all things is God.” (Hebrews 3:4) No one would dispute that God is greater than anyone, for he is the Builder, or Creator, of all. Logically, then, since Jesus was God’s coworker, he must be greater than all other creation, including Moses.—Proverbs 8:30; Colossians 1:15-17.

¹¹ Truly, the Hebrew Christians were in a highly favored position. Paul reminded them that they were “partakers of the heavenly calling,” a privilege to be treasured above anything that the Jewish system had to offer. (Hebrews 3:1) Paul’s words must have made those anointed Christians feel grateful that they were in line for a new inheritance rather than feel sorry that they had given up things connected with their Jewish heritage. (Philippians 3:8) Urging them to hold on to their privilege and not

10. (a) How did Paul help Hebrew Christians to appreciate the superiority of Christianity over Judaism? (b) What universal truth did Paul cite to reinforce his point?

11, 12. What did Paul urge the Hebrew Christians to hold on to “firm to the end,” and how can we apply his counsel?

to take it for granted, Paul said: "Christ was faithful as a Son over the house of [God]. We are the house of that One, if we make fast our hold on our freeness of speech and our boasting over the hope firm to the end." —Hebrews 3:6.

¹² Yes, if Hebrew Christians were to survive the impending conclusion of the Jewish system of things, they needed to hold on to their God-given hope "firm to the end." We must do the same thing today if we want to survive the end of this system. (Matthew 24:13) We must not allow the anxieties of life, the apathy of people, or our own imperfect tendencies to make us waver in our faith in God's promises. (Luke 21:16-19) To see how we can fortify ourselves, let us pay attention to Paul's further words.

"Do Not Harden Your Hearts"

¹³ After considering the favored position of the Hebrew Christians, Paul gave this warning: "As the holy spirit says: 'Today if you people listen to his own voice, do not harden your hearts as on the occasion of causing bitter anger, as in the day of making the test in the wilderness.'" (Hebrews 3:7, 8) Paul was quoting from the 95th Psalm, and could therefore say "the holy spirit says."* (Psalm 95:7, 8; Exodus 17:1-7) The Scriptures are inspired of God by means of his holy spirit.—2 Timothy 3:16.

¹⁴ After being freed from slavery in

* Paul evidently quoted from the Greek *Septuagint*, which translates the Hebrew for "Meribah" and "Massah" as "quarreling" and "testing" respectively. See pages 350 and 379 in Volume 2 of *Insight on the Scriptures*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.

13. What warning did Paul give, and how did he apply Psalm 95?

14. How did the Israelites respond to what Jehovah had done for them, and why?

Egypt, the Israelites were given the great honor of entering into a covenant relationship with Jehovah. (Exodus 19:4, 5; 24:7, 8) Instead of showing appreciation for what God had done for them, however, they soon acted rebelliously. (Numbers 13:25-14:10) How could that have happened? Paul pointed to the reason: the hardening of their hearts. But how do hearts that are sensitive and responsive to God's Word become hardened? And what must we do to prevent this?

¹⁵ Paul started his warning with the provisional clause "if you people listen to his own voice." God spoke to his people through Moses and other prophets. Then, Jehovah spoke to them through his Son, Jesus Christ. (Hebrews 1:1, 2) Today, we have God's complete inspired Word, the Holy Bible. We also have "the faithful and discreet slave," appointed by Jesus to provide spiritual "food at the proper time." (Matthew 24:45-47) Thus, God is still speaking. But are we listening? For example, how do we respond to counsel about dress and grooming or choice of entertainment and music? Do we "listen," that is, pay attention to and obey what is being heard? If we have the habit of making excuses or taking exception to the counsel, we are opening ourselves to the subtle danger of hardening our hearts.

¹⁶ Our hearts can also become hardened if we beg off from doing what we can and should do. (James 4:17) Despite everything that Jehovah did for the Israelites, they failed to exercise faith, rebelled against Moses, chose to believe a bad report about Canaan, and refused to enter the Prom-

15. (a) How has 'God's own voice' been heard, past and present? (b) What questions do we need to ask ourselves regarding 'God's voice'?

16. What is one way in which our hearts can become hardened?

ised Land. (Numbers 14:1-4) Jehovah therefore decreed that they would spend 40 years in the wilderness—long enough for the faithless members of that generation to die off. Disgusted with them, God said: “They always go astray in their hearts, and they themselves have not come to know my ways.’ So I swore in my anger, ‘They shall not enter into my rest.’” (Hebrews 3:9-11) Do we see a lesson in this for us?

A Lesson for Us

¹⁷ The generation of Israelites that came out of Egypt saw with their own eyes and heard with their own ears the mighty deeds and pronouncements of Jehovah. Still, they had no faith that God could lead them safely into the Promised Land. Why? “They themselves have not come to know my ways,” said Jehovah. They knew what Jehovah had said and done, but they had not developed confidence and trust in his ability to care for them. They were so obsessed with their personal needs and wants that they gave little thought to God’s ways and purpose. Yes, they lacked faith in his promise.

¹⁸ These further words to the Hebrews apply with equal force to us: “Beware, brothers, for fear there should ever develop in any one of you a wicked heart lacking faith by drawing away from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12) Paul got to the core of matters by pointing out that “a wicked heart lacking faith” is the result of “drawing away from the living God.” Earlier in this letter, he spoke of ‘drifting away’ because of inattention. (Hebrews 2:1) However, the Greek term rendered “drawing away”

17. Even though they saw Jehovah’s mighty deeds and heard his pronouncements, why did the Israelites lack faith?

18. According to Paul, what course of action will result in “a wicked heart lacking faith”?

means “to stand off” and is related to the word “apostasy.” It denotes a deliberate and conscious resisting, withdrawing, and defecting, with a note of contempt thrown in.

¹⁹ The lesson, therefore, is that if we fall into the habit of failing to “listen to his own voice,” ignoring counsel from Jehovah through his Word and the faithful slave class, it will not be long before our hearts become callous, hardened. For example, an unmarried couple may get a little too intimate. What if they simply ignore the matter? Would that protect them from repeating what they did, or would that only make it easier for them to do it again? Similarly, when the slave class offers counsel on the need to be selective in our choice of music and entertainment, and so forth, do we gratefully accept it and make adjustments where necessary? Paul urged us ‘not to forsake the gathering of ourselves together.’ (Hebrews 10:24, 25) In spite of this counsel, some take a casual view of Christian meetings. They may feel that missing some of them or even omitting certain meetings entirely is inconsequential.

19. How might failing to listen to counsel lead to serious consequences? Illustrate.

Can You Explain?

- Why did Paul write such strong counsel to Hebrew Christians?
- How did Paul help the Hebrew Christians to appreciate that they had something better than life under Judaism?
- How does one’s heart become hardened?
- What must we do to avoid developing “a wicked heart lacking faith”?

²⁰ If we do not respond positively to Jehovah's "voice," clearly expressed in the Scriptures and Bible-based publications, we will soon find ourselves "drawing away from the living God." Passive ignoring of counsel can easily become an active belittling, criticizing, and resisting of it. If left unchecked, the result is "a wicked heart lacking faith," and recovery from such a course is usually very difficult. (Compare Ephesians 4:19.) Jeremiah aptly wrote: "The heart is more treacherous than anything else and is desperate. Who can know it?" (Jeremiah 17:9) For this reason, Paul urged his fellow Hebrew believers: "Keep on exhorting one another each day, as long as it may be called 'Today,' for fear any one of

20. Why is it essential that we respond to Scriptural counsel in a positive way?

you should become hardened by the deceptive power of sin."—Hebrews 3:13.

²¹ How happy we are that Jehovah is still speaking to us today, through his Word and his organization! We are grateful that "the faithful and discreet slave" continues to help us to "make fast our hold on the confidence we had at the beginning firm to the end." (Hebrews 3:14) Now is the time for us to respond to God's love and direction. As we do so, we can enjoy another of Jehovah's wonderful promises—that of 'entering into' his rest. (Hebrews 4:3, 10) That is the subject Paul next discussed with Hebrew Christians, and it is also the one we will consider in the following article.

21. What are all of us exhorted to do, and what prospects do we have?

HAVE YOU ENTERED INTO GOD'S REST?

"The man that has entered into God's rest has also himself rested from his own works."—HEBREWS 4:10.

REST. What a sweet and lovely word! Living in today's fast-paced and hectic world, most of us would agree that a little rest is most welcome. Young or old, married or single, we may feel hard-pressed and exhausted simply from day-to-day living. For those with physical limitations or infirmities, each day is a challenge. As the Scriptures say, "all creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain to-

1. Why is rest so desirable?

gether until now." (Romans 8:22) A person who is resting is not necessarily lazy. Rest is a human need that must be met.

² Jehovah God himself has been resting. In the book of Genesis, we read: "The heavens and the earth and all their army came to their completion. And by the seventh day God came to the completion of his work that he had made, and he proceeded to rest on the seventh day from all his work that he

2. Since when has Jehovah been resting?

had made." Jehovah attached special significance to "the seventh day," for the inspired record goes on to say: "God proceeded to bless the seventh day and make it sacred."—Genesis 2:1-3.

God Rested From His Work

³ Why did God rest on "the seventh day"? Of course, he did not rest because he was tired. Jehovah enjoys an "abundance of dynamic energy" and "does not tire out or grow weary." (Isaiah 40:26, 28) Nor did God proceed to rest because he needed a break or a change of pace, for Jesus told us: "My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working." (John 5:17) In any case, "God is a Spirit" and is not bound by the bodily cycles and needs of physical creatures.—John 4:24.

⁴ How can we gain some insight into the reason why God rested on "the seventh day"? By noting that, although very pleased with what he had accomplished during the long period of the six preceding creative 'days,' God specifically blessed "the seventh day" and pronounced it "sacred." The *Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines "sacred" as "exclusively dedicated or appropriated (to a god or to some religious purpose)." Thus, Jehovah's blessing "the seventh day" and pronouncing it sacred indicates that it and his "rest" must have some connection with his sacred will and purpose rather than with any needs on his part. What is that connection?

⁵ During the six preceding creative 'days,' God had made and set into motion all the cycles and laws governing the operations of the earth and everything around it.

3. What could not be the reasons why God rested?
4. In what way was "the seventh day" different from the preceding six 'days'?
5. What did God put into motion during the first six creative 'days'?

Scientists are now learning how wonderfully designed these are. Toward the close of the "sixth day," God created the first human pair and placed them in "a garden in Eden, toward the east." Finally, God pronounced his purpose regarding the human family and the earth in these prophetic words: "Be fruitful and become many and fill the earth and subdue it, and have in subjection the fish of the sea and the flying creatures of the heavens and every living creature that is moving upon the earth."—Genesis 1:28, 31; 2:8.

⁶ As the "sixth day" of creation came to a close, the account tells us: "God saw everything he had made and, look! it was very good." (Genesis 1:31) God was satisfied with everything he had made. He thus rested, or desisted, from further creative work with respect to the earth. As perfect and beautiful as the paradise garden then was, however, it covered only a small area, and there were just two human creatures on earth. It would take time for the earth and the human family to reach the state that God purposed. For this reason, he appointed a "seventh day" that would allow all that he had created in the preceding six 'days' to develop in harmony with his sacred will. (Compare Ephesians 1:11.) As "the seventh day" comes to its close, the earth will have become a global paradise inhabited eternally by a family of perfect humans. (Isaiah 45:18) "The seventh day" is set aside for, or dedicated to, the outworking and fulfilling of God's will regarding the earth and humankind. In that sense it is "sacred."

⁷ So God rested from his creative work on

6. (a) At the end of the "sixth day," how did God feel about all that he had created? (b) In what sense is "the seventh day" sacred?
7. (a) In what respect did God rest on "the seventh day"? (b) How will everything turn out by the time that "the seventh day" comes to its end?

The Israelites kept the Sabbath, but they did not enter into God's rest. Do you know why?

"the seventh day." It is as though he stepped back and allowed what he set in motion to run its course. He has full confidence that by the end of "the seventh day," everything will have turned out exactly as he has purposed. Even if there have been obstacles, they will have been overcome. All obedient mankind will benefit when God's will becomes a full reality. Nothing will prevent this because God's blessing is on "the seventh day," and he made it "sacred." What a glorious prospect for obedient mankind!

Israel Failed to Enter Into God's Rest

⁸ The nation of Israel benefited from Jehovah's arrangement for work and rest. Even before giving the Israelites the Law at Mount Sinai, God told them through Moses: "Mark the fact that Jehovah has given you the sabbath. That is why he is giving you on the sixth day the bread of two days. Keep sitting each one in his own place. Let nobody go out from his locality on the seventh day." The result was that "the people proceeded to observe the sabbath on the seventh day."—Exodus 16:22-30.

⁹ This arrangement was new for the Israelites, who had just been delivered from slavery in Egypt. Although the Egyptians and others measured time in periods of five to ten days, it is unlikely that the enslaved

8. When and how did the Israelites come to observe the Sabbath?
9. Why was the Sabbath law no doubt a welcome change for the Israelites?

-gia Israels berbaats davel. "shar had not yet the Sabbath day, and he said unto them, 'This day you shall not do any work, for it is the Sabbath day, the holy day of Jehovah, upon which you shall not do any work.'—Exodus 20:8-10.



Israelites were permitted a rest day. (Compare Exodus 5:1-9.) It is therefore reasonable to conclude that the people of Israel welcomed this change. Instead of viewing the Sabbath requirement as a burden or restriction, they should have been glad to follow it. In fact, God later told them that the Sabbath was to serve as a reminder of their slavery in Egypt and of his deliverance of them.—Deuteronomy 5:15.

¹⁰ If the Israelites who came out of Egypt with Moses had been obedient, they would have had the privilege of entering into the promised "land flowing with milk and honey." (Exodus 3:8) There they would have

- 10, 11. (a) By being obedient, what could the Israelites have looked forward to enjoying? (b) Why did the Israelites fail to enter into God's rest?



enjoyed true rest, not just on the Sabbath but throughout their life. (Deuteronomy 12: 9, 10) However, that did not prove to be the case. Regarding them, the apostle Paul wrote: "Who were they that heard and yet provoked to bitter anger? Did not, in fact, all do so who went out of Egypt under Moses? Moreover, with whom did God become disgusted for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? But to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest except to those who acted disobediently? So we see that they could not enter in because of lack of faith."—Hebrews 3:16-19.

¹¹ What a powerful lesson for us! Because of their lack of faith in Jehovah, that generation did not gain the rest that he had promised them. Instead, they perished

in the wilderness. They failed to perceive that as Abraham's descendants, they were closely associated with God's will in providing blessings for all the nations of the earth. (Genesis 17:7, 8; 22:18) Rather than work in harmony with the divine will, they were completely distracted by their mundane and selfish desires. May we never fall into such a course!

—1 Corinthians 10:6, 10.

A Resting Remains

¹² After pointing out Israel's failure to enter into God's rest because of lack of faith, Paul turned his attention to his fellow believers. As noted at Hebrews 4: 1-5, he reassured them that "a promise is left of entering into [God's] rest." Paul urged them to exercise faith in the "good news," for "we who have exercised faith do enter into the rest." Since the Law had already been taken out of the way by Jesus' ransom sacrifice, Paul was not here referring to the physical rest provided by the Sabbath. (Colossians 2:13, 14) By quoting Genesis 2:2 and Psalm 95:11, Paul was urging the Hebrew Christians to enter into God's rest.

¹³ The possibility of entering into God's rest should have been "good news" to the Hebrew Christians, just as the Sabbath rest should have been "good news" to the Israelites before them. Hence, Paul urged his fellow believers not to make the same mistake that Israel made in the wilderness. Citing what is now Psalm 95:7, 8, he called

12. What prospect still existed for first-century Christians, and how could they attain it?

13. In quoting Psalm 95, why did Paul call attention to the word "today"?

attention to the word “today,” though it had been so long since God had rested from creation. (Hebrews 4:6, 7) What was Paul’s point? It was that “the seventh day,” which God had set aside to allow his purpose regarding the earth and mankind to be fully accomplished, was still running its course. Therefore, it was urgent for his fellow Christians to work along with that purpose rather than be preoccupied with selfish pursuits. He once again sounded the warning: “Do not harden your hearts.”

¹⁴ Additionally, Paul showed that the promised “rest” was not merely a matter of settling in the Promised Land under Joshua’s leadership. (Joshua 21:44) “For if Joshua had led them into a place of rest,” Paul argued, “God would not afterward have spoken of another day.” In view of that, Paul added: “There remains a sabbath resting for the people of God.” (Hebrews 4:8, 9) What is that “sabbath resting”?

Enter Into God’s Rest

¹⁵ The expression “sabbath resting” is translated from a Greek word meaning “sabbathing.” (*Kingdom Interlinear*) Professor William Lane states: “The term received its particular nuance from the Sabbath instruction that developed in Judaism on the basis of Exod 20:8-10, where it was emphasized that rest and praise belong together . . . [It] stresses the special aspect of festivity and joy, expressed in the adoration and praise of God.” So, then, the promised rest is not simply a release from work. It is a change from tiresome, purposeless labor to joyful service that honors God.

¹⁶ This is borne out by Paul’s next words:

14. How did Paul show that God’s “rest” still remained?

15, 16. (a) What is the significance of the term “sabbath resting”? (b) What does it mean ‘to rest from one’s own work’?

“For the man that has entered into God’s rest has also himself rested from his own works, just as God did from his own.” (Hebrews 4:10) God did not rest on the seventh creative day because of being tired. Rather, he desisted from earthly creative work in order to let his handiwork develop and come into full glory, to his praise and honor. As part of God’s creation, we should also fit into that arrangement. We should ‘rest from our own works,’ that is, we should stop trying to justify ourselves before God in an attempt to gain salvation. Instead, we should have faith that our salvation depends on the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ, through which all things will again be brought into harmony with God’s purpose.—Ephesians 1:8-14; Colossians 1:19, 20.

God’s Word Exerts Power

¹⁷ The Israelites failed to enter God’s promised rest because of their disobedience and lack of faith. Consequently, Paul urged the Hebrew Christians: “Let us therefore do our utmost to enter into that rest, for fear anyone should fall in the same pattern of disobedience.” (Hebrews 4:11) Most first-century Jews did not exercise faith in Jesus, and many of them suffered greatly when the Jewish system of things came to its end in 70 C.E. How critical it is that we have faith in God’s word of promise today!

¹⁸ We have sound reasons to exercise faith in Jehovah’s word. Paul wrote: “The word of God is alive and exerts power and is sharper than any two-edged sword and pierces even to the dividing of soul

17. What course pursued by fleshly Israel must we avoid?

18. (a) What reasons did Paul give for exercising faith in God’s word? (b) How is God’s word “sharper than any two-edged sword”?

and spirit, and of joints and their marrow, and is able to discern thoughts and intentions of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12) Yes, God’s word, or message, is “sharper than any two-edged sword.” The Hebrew Christians needed to remember what happened to their forefathers. Ignoring Jehovah’s judgment that they would perish in the wilderness, they tried to enter the Promised Land. But Moses warned them: “The Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you; and you are certain to fall by the sword.” When the Israelites stubbornly pushed ahead, “the Amalekites and the Canaanites who were dwelling in that mountain came on down and began striking them and went scattering them as far as Hormah.” (Numbers 14:39-45) Jehovah’s word is sharper than any two-edged sword, and anyone deliberately ignoring it is certain to reap the consequences.—Galatians 6:7-9.

¹⁹ How powerfully God’s word “pierces even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of joints and their marrow”! It penetrates the thoughts and motives of individuals, figuratively piercing clear to the marrow in the innermost part of the bones! Although the Israelites freed from Egyptian slavery had agreed to keep the Law, Jehovah knew that deep down they did not appreciate his provisions and requirements. (Psalm 95:7-11) Rather than doing his will, they were concerned with satisfying their fleshly desires. Hence, they did not enter into God’s promised rest but perished in the wilderness. We need to take that to heart, for “there is not a creation that is not manifest to [God’s] sight, but all things are naked and openly exposed to the eyes of him with

19. How powerfully does God’s word ‘pierce,’ and why should we acknowledge our accountability to God?

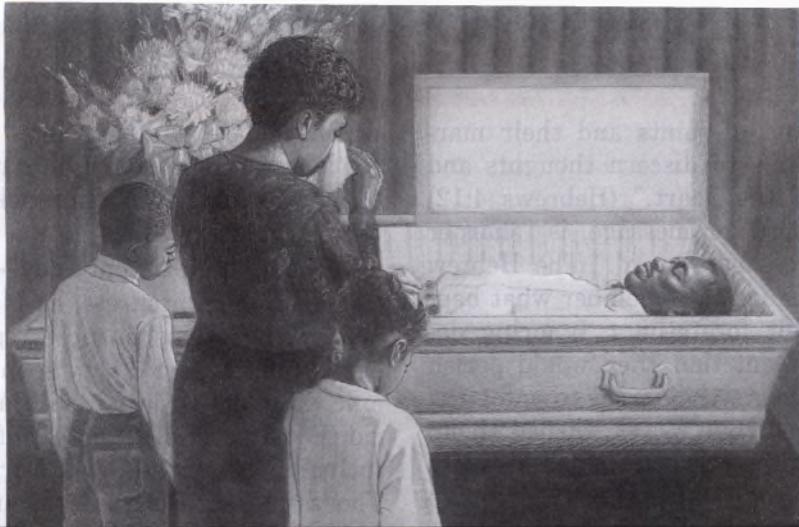
whom we have an accounting.” (Hebrews 4:13) May we therefore fulfill our dedication to Jehovah and not “shrink back to destruction.”—Hebrews 10:39.

²⁰ Though “the seventh day”—God’s rest day—is still in progress, he is alert to the outworking of his purpose regarding the earth and mankind. Very soon, the Messianic King, Jesus Christ, will take action to rid the earth of all opposers of God’s will, including Satan the Devil. During Christ’s Thousand Year Reign, Jesus and his 144,000 fellow rulers will bring earth and mankind to the state that God had purposed. (Revelation 14:1; 20:1-6) Now is the time for us to prove that our lives are centered around the will of Jehovah God. Instead of seeking to justify ourselves before God and advance our own interests, it is now time for us to ‘rest from our own works’ and wholeheartedly serve Kingdom interests. By doing that and by remaining faithful to our heavenly Father, Jehovah, we will have the privilege of enjoying the benefits of God’s rest now and forever.

20. What lies ahead, and what must we now do to enter into God’s rest?

Can You Explain?

- For what purpose did God rest on “the seventh day”?
- What rest could the Israelites have enjoyed, but why did they fail to enter into it?
- What must we do to enter into God’s rest?
- How is God’s word alive, powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword?



A Christian View of Funeral Customs

THE sudden, unexpected death of a loved one is especially tragic. It results in shock, followed by intense emotional pain. Watching a loved one fall asleep in death after a long and painful illness is different, but the grief and feeling of deep loss remain.

Regardless of the circumstances of a loved one's death, the bereaved need support and comfort. A bereaved Christian may also have to face persecution from those who insist on observing unscriptural funeral customs. This is common in many countries of Africa and also in some other parts of the earth.

What will help a bereaved Christian to avoid unscriptural funeral customs? How can fellow believers be supportive in such times of trial? Answers to these questions are of concern to all who seek to please Jehovah, for "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."—James 1:27.

Linked by a Belief

A common factor linking many funeral customs is the belief that the dead live on in an unseen realm of the ancestors. To appease them, many mourners feel obligated to perform certain rituals. Or they fear that they will displease neighbors who believe that harm will come to the community if the rituals are not performed.

A true Christian must not give in to fear of man and participate in customs that displease God. (Proverbs 29:25; Matthew 10:28) The Bible shows that the dead are unconscious, for it says: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all . . . There is no work nor devising nor knowledge nor wisdom in Sheol, the place to which you are going." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) Therefore, Jehovah God warned his people of ancient times not to try to appease

the dead or communicate with them. (Deuteronomy 14:1; 18:10-12; Isaiah 8:19, 20) These Biblical truths clash with many popular funeral customs.

What About "Sexual Cleansing"?

In some countries of central Africa, the bereaved spouse is expected to have sexual relations with a close relative of the deceased. If this is not done, it is believed that the dead one will harm the surviving family. This ritual is termed "sexual cleansing." But the Bible defines any sexual relationship outside marriage as "fornication." Since Christians are to "flee from fornication," they courageously withstand this unscriptural custom.—1 Corinthians 6:18.

Consider a widow named Mercy.* When her husband died in 1989, relatives wanted her to perform sexual cleansing with a male relative. She refused, explaining that the ritual was contrary to God's law. Frustrated, the relatives left after verbally abusing her. A month later they ransacked her home, removing the iron sheets from her roof. "Your religion can care for you," they said.

The congregation comforted Mercy and even built her a new house. Neighbors were so impressed that some decided to participate in the project, with the chief's Catholic wife being the first to bring grass for the roof. Mercy's faithful conduct encouraged her children. Four of them have since made a dedication to Jehovah God, and one recently attended the Ministerial Training School.

Because of the custom of sexual cleansing, some Christians have allowed themselves to be pressured into marriage with an unbeliever. For example, one widower in his 70's hastily married a young girl relat-

ed to his deceased wife. By doing this, he could claim to have performed the sexual cleansing. However, such a course conflicts with the Bible's counsel that Christians should marry "only in the Lord."—1 Corinthians 7:39.

All-Night Wake Ceremonies

In many countries, mourners gather at the home of the deceased and stay awake all night. These wakes often include feasting and loud music. This is believed to appease the dead and to protect the surviving family from witchcraft. Flattering speeches may be given to gain the dead person's favor. After a speech, the mourners may sing a religious song before another individual stands up to speak. This may go on until daybreak.*

A true Christian does not share in such all-night wake ceremonies because the Bible shows that the dead are unable to help or harm the living. (Genesis 3:19; Psalm 146:3, 4; John 11:11-14) The Scriptures condemn the practice of spiritism. (Revelation 9:21; 22:15) Yet, a Christian widow may find it difficult to prevent others from introducing spiritistic practices. They may insist on performing an all-night wake in her home. What can fellow believers do to help bereaved Christians who face this added tribulation?

Congregation elders have often been able to support a bereaved Christian family by reasoning with relatives and neighbors. After such reasoning, these individuals may agree to leave the home peacefully and to gather again for the funeral service on another day. But what if some become belligerent? Continued attempts to reason may

* In some language groups and cultures the term "wake" is applied to a short visit to comfort the bereaved. Nothing unscriptural may be involved. See *Awake!* of May 22, 1979, pages 27-8.

* Substitute names have been used in this article.

result in violence. ‘A slave of the Lord does not need to fight, but must keep himself restrained under evil.’ (2 Timothy 2:24) So if uncooperative relatives aggressively take over, a Christian widow and her children may not be able to prevent this. But they do not participate in any false religious ceremony that takes place in their house, for they obey the Bible’s command: “Do not become unevenly yoked with unbelievers.”—2 Corinthians 6:14.

This principle also applies to the burial. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not share in singing, praying, or rituals directed by a minister of false religion. If Christians who are close family members consider it necessary to attend such a service, they do not participate.—2 Corinthians 6:17; Revelation 18:4.

Dignified Funeral Services

Funeral services conducted by Jehovah’s Witnesses do not include rituals intended to appease the dead. A Bible talk is given either at the Kingdom Hall, at the funeral parlor, at the home of the deceased, or at the graveside. The purpose of the talk is to comfort the bereaved by explaining what the Bible says about death and the hope of a resurrection. (John 11:25; Romans 5:12; 2 Peter 3:13) A song based on the Scriptures may be sung, and the service is concluded with a comforting prayer.

Recently, a funeral service such as this was conducted for one of Jehovah’s Witnesses who happened to be the youngest sister of Nelson Mandela, the president of South Africa. After the service, the president sincerely thanked the speaker. Many dignitaries and high officials were in attendance. “This is the most dignified funeral I have ever attended,” said a cabinet minister.

Are Mourning Garments Acceptable?

Jehovah’s Witnesses mourn over the death of loved ones. Like Jesus, they may shed tears. (John 11:35, 36) But they do not consider it necessary to display their grief publicly by some outward symbol. (Compare Matthew 6:16-18.) In many lands, widows are expected to put on special mourning garments to appease the dead. These garments must be worn for several months or even a year after the funeral, and their removal is the occasion for another feast.

Failure to show signs of mourning is considered an offense against the dead person. For this reason, in parts of Swaziland, tribal chiefs have driven Jehovah’s Witnesses away from their own homes and lands. However, such faithful Christians have always been cared for by their spiritual brothers living elsewhere.

The Swaziland High Court has ruled in favor of Jehovah’s Witnesses, stating that they should be allowed back to their homes and lands. In another case, a Christian widow was permitted to stay on her property after producing a letter and a tape recording in which her late husband had clearly stated that his wife should not wear mourning garments. Thus, she was able to prove that she was indeed being respectful of her husband.

There is great value in having funeral instructions clearly stated prior to one’s death, especially in places where unscriptural practices are common. Consider the example of Victor, a resident of Cameroon. He wrote down the program that was to be followed at his funeral. In his family there were many influential people belonging to a culture having strong traditions with respect to the dead, including the worship of human skulls. Since Victor was a respected member of the family, he knew that his

BLESSED FOR THEIR FIRM STAND

Sibongili is a courageous Christian widow living in Swaziland. After the recent death of her husband, she refused to follow customs thought by many to appease the dead. For example, she did not shave the hair off her head. (Deuteronomy 14:1) Eight family members were angry about this and forcibly shaved her head. They also prevented Jehovah's Witnesses from visiting the home to give Sibongili comfort. However, other individuals interested in the Kingdom message were happy to visit her with letters of encouragement written by the elders. On the day when Sibongili was expected to put on special mourning garments, something surprising happened. An influential member of the family convened a meeting to discuss her refusal to comply with traditional mourning customs.

Sibongili reports: "They asked if my religious convictions allowed me to express sorrow by wearing the black mourning gowns. After I had explained my position, they told me they were not going to force me. To my surprise, they all apologized for having manhandled me and for shaving my head against my will. All of them asked me to forgive them." Later, Sibongili's sister expressed her conviction that Jehovah's Witnesses have the true religion, and she requested a Bible study.

skull was likely to be treated in this way. He therefore gave clear instructions on how Jehovah's Witnesses should handle his funeral. This made the situation easier for his widow and his children, and a good witness was given in the community.

Avoid Imitating Unscriptural Customs

Some who have knowledge of the Bible have been afraid to stand out as different. To avoid persecution, they have tried to please their neighbors by giving the appearance of holding a traditional wake for the dead. While it is commendable to visit the bereaved so as to provide personal com-

Consider another example: A South African man named Benjamin was 29 years old when he heard about the sudden death of his father. At that time, Benjamin was the only Witness in his family. During the burial service, everyone was expected to file past the grave and throw a handful of soil onto the coffin.* After the burial, all immediate family members had their heads shaved. Since Benjamin did not share in these rituals, neighbors and family members predicted that he would be punished by the spirit of his dead father.

"Because I put my trust in Jehovah, nothing happened to me," says Benjamin. Family members took note of how things turned out for him. In time, a number of them began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and got baptized in symbol of their dedication to God. And Benjamin? He entered the full-time evangelizing work. For the last few years, he has had the fine privilege of serving congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses as a traveling overseer.

* Some may see no harm in throwing flowers or a handful of soil into a grave. A Christian, however, would avoid this practice if the community views it as a way of appeasing the dead or if it is part of a ceremony presided over by a minister of false religion.—See *Awake!* of March 22, 1977, page 15.

fort, this does not require that a small funeral service be conducted at the home of the deceased every night prior to the actual funeral. Doing this may stumble observers, since it may give them the impression that the participants do not really believe what the Bible says about the condition of the dead.—1 Corinthians 10:32.

The Bible urges Christians to put the worship of God first in life and to make wise use of their time. (Matthew 6:33; Ephesians 5:15, 16) In some places, though, congregation activity has come to a standstill for a week or more because of a funeral. This

problem is not unique to Africa. Regarding one funeral, a report from South America says: "Three Christian meetings had extremely low attendance. The field service was not supported for about ten days. Even people outside the congregation and Bible students were surprised and disappointed to see some of our brothers and sisters participating."

In some communities, a bereaved family may invite a few close friends to their home for light refreshments after the funeral. But in many parts of Africa, hundreds who attend the funeral descend on the home of the deceased and expect a feast, where animals are often sacrificed. Some associated with the Christian congregation have imitated this custom, giving the impression that they are holding the customary feasts to appease the dead.

Funeral services conducted by Jehovah's Witnesses do not place an expensive burden on the bereaved. So it should not be necessary to have a special arrangement for those present to give money to cover lavish funeral expenses. If poor widows cannot

meet necessary expenses, others in the congregation will no doubt be glad to assist. If such help is inadequate, the elders may arrange to provide material assistance for worthy ones.—1 Timothy 5:3, 4.

Funeral customs do not always conflict with Bible principles. When they do, Christians are determined to act in harmony with the Scriptures.* (Acts 5:29) Although this may bring added tribulation, many servants of God can testify that they have met such tests successfully. They have done so with strength from Jehovah, "the God of all comfort," and with the loving help of fellow believers who have comforted them in their tribulation.—2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

* Where funeral customs are likely to bring severe tests upon a Christian, elders can prepare baptism candidates for what may lie ahead. When meeting with these new ones to discuss questions from the book *Organized to Accomplish Our Ministry*, careful attention should be given to the sections "The Soul, Sin and Death" and "Interfaith." Both of these have optional questions for discussion. Here is where elders can provide information about unscriptural funeral customs so that the baptism candidate knows what God's Word requires of him should he be faced with such situations.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 3, 1998

THE ANNUAL MEETING of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania will be held on October 3, 1998, at the Assembly Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, 2932 Kennedy Boulevard, Jersey City, New Jersey. A preliminary meeting of the members only will convene at 9:15 a.m., followed by the general annual meeting at 10:00 a.m.

The members of the Corporation should inform the Secretary's Office now of any change in their mailing addresses during the past year so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them during July.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting,

are to be returned so as to reach the Office of the Secretary of the Society not later than August 1. Each member should complete and return his proxy promptly, stating whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point, since it will be relied upon in determining who will be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session, including the formal business meeting and reports, will be concluded by 1:00 p.m. or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. Because of limited space, admission will be by ticket only. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone lines to other auditoriums.

THE AGORA

The Heart of Ancient Athens

THE intellectual community of Athens was in an uproar! New ideas were always being publicized in that Grecian city's agora, or marketplace. However, this time it was very different. Having just arrived in the city, a certain Jewish man seemed to be "a publisher of foreign deities." He was making remarkable statements to "those who happened to be on hand." "What is it this chatteringer would like to tell?" asked the proud Epicureans and the serious-faced Stoics. Yes, the Athenian agora was *the* place to hold open debates on practically any subject under the sun. But introducing strange gods—no, this was too much indeed!—Acts 17:17, 18.

That was the suspicious reaction of the Athenians when the apostle Paul began preaching for the first time in the agora of Athens. He was speaking about Jesus Christ and the resurrection. For the seemingly open-minded culture of Athens, though, what was so unusual about introducing such new concepts in the agora?

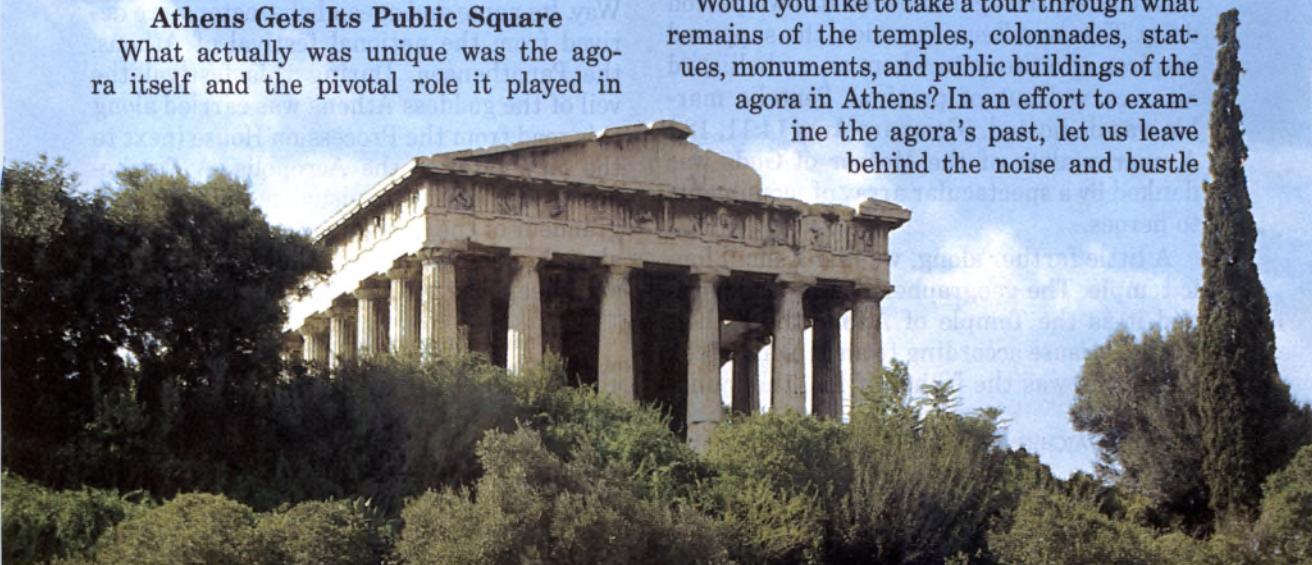
Athens Gets Its Public Square

What actually was unique was the agora itself and the pivotal role it played in

the religious and public life of the Athenians. The agora of Athens is a gently sloping area of about 25 acres situated northwest of the Acropolis. It seems that early in the sixth century B.C.E., during the lifetime of the Athenian statesman and lawmaker Solon, this piece of land was designated as the site of the city's public square. The establishment of democracy in Athens, with its increased emphasis on civic life, led to a burst of building activity during the early years of the next century. This gave the agora new life and a more significant role to play.

The Greek word *a·go·ra'* has its root in a verb that means "gather, assemble." This fits the agora's use as the principal meeting place of the city. The agora came to be the heart of social and public life. It was the seat of civic administration and the judiciary, the chief place for marketing and business, the scene of theatrical presentations featuring Greek drama, a location to hold athletic exhibitions, and a favorite meeting place for intellectual discussion.

Would you like to take a tour through what remains of the temples, colonnades, statues, monuments, and public buildings of the agora in Athens? In an effort to examine the agora's past, let us leave behind the noise and bustle



of the modern-day city and make our way along gravel paths, in among the silent marble ruins, the carved stones, and the crumbling portals overgrown with weeds and wild herbs.

Temples, Shrines, and Patron Deities

Visitors are impressed by the presence of many temples, shrines, and sanctuaries devoted to various deities. All of this served to make the agora a major center of worship, second only to the Acropolis. During the Golden Age of classical Athens, religion had infiltrated every aspect of public life. This necessarily meant that the various divinities designated as the "patron deities" of governmental departments and administrative services were given temple sanctuaries in the agora.

Prominent among these structures was the Temple of Hephaestus. The goddess Athena was associated with Hephaestus. Both of these deities were worshiped here as patron divinities of the arts and crafts. Archaeological discoveries of metal working and pottery making around this temple have identified it with Hephaestus, the Greek god of arts calling for the use of fire. Probably in the seventh century C.E., this well-preserved temple was converted into the Greek Orthodox Church of St. George, although it is not in use as such today.

Of course, the agora needed its own patron deity. This was Zeus Agoraios, the supposed inspirer of oratory to whom an embellished altar carved out of precious Pentelic marble was dedicated. (Compare Acts 14:11, 12.) A nearby altar of the Mother of Gods was flanked by a spectacular array of monuments to heroes.

A little farther along, we find a small Ionic temple. The geographer Pausanias identified it as the Temple of Apollo the Father. Why? Because according to an ancient Greek legend, he was the father of Ion, the found-

er of the Ionian race of which the Athenians were a part.* In this capacity, Apollo was one of the patron deities of the state administrative organization, especially in connection with the various brotherhoods that existed in the city.

Immediately to the north, we see the limestone remains of a smaller temple, built during the middle of the fourth century B.C.E. Worshiped here were Zeus and Athena Phatrios, the principal deities of the ancestral religious brotherhoods. Membership in these was almost a prerequisite of Athenian citizenship. Just across the street, we find the remains of an altar of the Twelve Gods.

In the nearby Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios, the chief Greek deity was again honored, this time as the god of freedom and deliverance. This colonnade, or stoa, was a popular promenade and place of meeting. The famous philosopher Socrates is said to have met with his friends in this stoa, where they could sit and chat or stroll along. Many dedications and offerings made to decorate this stoa, such as the shields of warriors who had died fighting in defense of Athens, had direct connection with the deliverance of the city from its enemies or with the preservation of its freedom.

The Panathenaean Way

Cutting through the agora diagonally is a broad, gravelly road called the Panathenaean Way. Its name and special character were derived from the national festival of Athens, the Panathenaea. During this festival the veil of the goddess Athena was carried along this road from the Procession House (next to the city gate) to the Acropolis. A Parthenon frieze helps us to visualize the pomp and grandeur of the festival procession—the cavalry, the racing chariots, the sacrificial cows and sheep, the young men and girls bearing

* The name Ionian comes from that of Javan, son of Japheth and grandson of Noah.—Genesis 10:1, 2, 4, 5.

the equipment to be used at the sacrifice. The procession was observed by the citizens of Athens and their guests, for whose convenience the architects had made ample provision when designing the agora. For example, the colonnades with their terraced fronts and steps were skillfully positioned in relation to the processional way. The generous number of steps carved into their facades could accommodate many spectators.

"Full of Idols"

With so many temples, statues, and monuments amassed together, it is no wonder that the apostle Paul's "spirit within him came to be irritated at beholding that the city was full of idols." (Acts 17:16) What Paul observed when he entered the agora must have shocked him. Phallic statues of the god Hermes were so numerous that an entire portico, known as the Stoa of Hermes, was needed to house them. Garments on other painted images of Hermes display swastikas—symbols of fertility and life. There was a statue of Venus Genetrix, the goddess of sexual love, as well as one of Dionysus that bears a number of phallic crosses. Marking the "sacredness" of the agora was a boundary stone with a basin containing "holy" water for the ceremonial cleansing of all those who entered.

In view of such a deeply religious climate, we can easily understand why Paul's position was extremely dangerous. He was suspected of being "a publisher of foreign deities," and the law of that time stipulated that 'no person shall have any separate gods, or new ones; nor shall he privately worship any strange gods unless they be publicly allowed.' No wonder, then, that the apostle was taken to the Areopagus to be questioned.—Acts 17:18, 19.

The Center of Administration

A round building called Tholos housed the headquarters of the Athenian government. Many chairmen of the city would sleep in

this building during the night so that responsible officials were always on hand. A set of standard weights and measures was kept in the Tholos. Facilities for various departments of the administration were situated nearby. The Council House occupied a terrace cut back into the hillside northwest of the Tholos. There, members of the Council of 500 held meetings in which they did committee work and prepared legislation for the Assembly.

Another important civic building was the Royal Stoa. There the Royal Archon of Athens—one of the city's three principal magistrates—had his seat. From there he handled many administrative responsibilities pertaining to both religious and legal matters. Most likely, it was here that Socrates was required to appear when he was accused of impiety. The ancestral laws of Athens were engraved upon the walls of a building facing it. On a stone placed in front of the same edifice, the archons, or principal magistrates, stood each year to take their oath of office.

The Stoa of Attalus

The best-preserved building of the agora is the Stoa of Attalus. As a young man, Attalus, the King of Pergamum (second century B.C.E.), had studied in the schools of Athens, as had several other scions of royal families in the Mediterranean world. Upon ascending his throne, he made this magnificent gift—the Stoa of Attalus—to the city of his alma mater.

The chief function of the Stoa of Attalus was to provide a sheltered and elegant promenade for informal association and interchange. Its floors and terrace afforded excellent places from which to view processions, while its popularity as a promenade must also have ensured its success as a shopping center. The shops were probably rented to merchants by the State so that the building served as a source of revenue.

Commerce in Athens

The agora was not only the intellectual and civic heart of Athens but also the city's primary marketplace. Athens came to be a center of commerce, famous for both the value of its hard currency and the scrupulousness of its archons, who were authorized to make sure that all business transactions were honest and fair.

Athens exported wine, olive oil, honey, marble, and such industrial products as ceramics and pro-

cessed metals. In exchange, it imported mainly wheat. Since Attica (the region around Athens) did not produce sufficient goods to feed its inhabitants, the standards of commercial trade were strict. The market at Piraeus (the port of Athens) always had to have enough fresh food to supply both the city and the army. And tradesmen were not permitted to store supplies in order to sell them at higher prices during times of need.

Having been restored to its original condition, the Stoa of Attalus offers an excellent example of geometric design. Its overall proportions, the pleasing differences in scale between the lower and upper orders of columns, the interesting play of light and shade, and the richness and beauty of its materials, all serve to make it unique. Monotony is alleviated in various ways, notably by the use of three different types of column capitals—Doric, Ionic, and Egyptian.

A Place

for Cultural Activities

A building that served as a stage for many cultural events in Athens was the Concert. It was the gift of Vipsanius Agrippa, the son-in-law of Roman Emperor Augustus. Its front section was paved with multicolored marble. The auditorium, with a seating capacity of approximately 1,000, had a span of about 80 feet and was originally covered by a roof having no interior supports. This was one of the boldest experiments in roofing known in the ancient world! Probably, however, much of the entertainment presented there would have been questionable for true Christians, with their high moral standards.
—Ephesians 5:3-5.

Likely, inquisitive individuals of ancient times visited the Library of Pantainos. Its

walls were full of cabinets where handwritten scrolls of papyrus and parchment were stored. The main room of the library faced westward, and through a row of columns, one could see a colonnaded courtyard—a pleasant place to stroll, to read, or to meditate. An inscription bearing two of the library's rules has been found. They were: "No book should be taken away," and "[The library] is open from the first through the sixth hour."

The Agora Today

In recent years, the agora has been almost fully excavated by the American School of Classical Studies. Resting peacefully under the shadow of the towering Acropolis, it has become a favorite place for the tourist who wants to take a brief look at the history of ancient Athens.

The nearby Monastiraki Flea Market—a few leisurely paces away from the agora and the Acropolis—is a step into yet another fascinating world. It provides the visitor with a surprising yet delightful note of Greek folklore and Middle-Eastern Oriental bazaarlike activity and bargain prices. And, of course, the visitor will see Jehovah's Witnesses there joyfully doing exactly what the apostle Paul did more than 1,900 years ago—publicly preaching the good news of the Kingdom 'to those who happen to be on hand.'

Do You Have “an Obedient Heart”?

WHEN Solomon became the king of ancient Israel, he felt inadequate.

He therefore asked God for wisdom and knowledge. (2 Chronicles 1:10) Solomon also prayed: “You must give to your servant an obedient heart to judge your people.” (1 Kings 3:9) If Solomon had “an obedient heart,” he would follow divine laws and principles and would experience Jehovah’s blessing.

An obedient heart is not a burden but a source of joy. The apostle John wrote: “This is what the love of God means, that we observe his commandments; and yet his commandments are not burdensome.” (1 John 5:3) Surely, we should obey God. After all, Jehovah is our Grand Creator. To him belong the earth and all that is in it, even all the silver and the gold. So we cannot really give God anything materially, although he allows us to use our monetary assets to express our love for him. (1 Chronicles 29:14) Jehovah expects us to love him and humbly walk with him, doing his will.—Micah 6:8.

When Jesus Christ was asked which is the greatest commandment in the Law, he said: “You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and first commandment.” (Matthew 22:36-38) One way to express that love is to obey God. It should

therefore be the prayer of each one of us that Jehovah give us an obedient heart.

They Had an Obedient Heart

The Bible abounds with examples of those who had an obedient heart. For instance, Jehovah told Noah to build a huge ark for the preservation of life. This was an enormous task that took some 40 or 50 years. Even with all the modern power tools and other equipment now available, it would be an engineering feat to build such a huge structure that could float. Moreover, Noah had to warn people who no doubt mocked and ridiculed him. But he was obedient to the last detail. The Bible says: “He did just so.” (Genesis 6:9, 22; 2 Peter 2:5) Noah showed his love for Jehovah by faithful obedience over many years. What a fine example for all of us!

Consider, too, the patriarch Abraham. God told him to move from prosperous

Ur of the Chaldeans to an unknown land. Abraham obeyed without question. (Hebrews 11:8) For the rest of his life, he and his family lived in tents. After many years as an alien in the land, Jehovah blessed him and his obedient wife, Sarah, with a son named Isaac. How 100-year-old Abraham must have loved this son of his old age! Some years later, Jehovah asked Abraham to sacrifice Isaac as a burnt offering. (Genesis 22:1, 2) The very thought of doing that must

From the Self-Pronouncing Edition of the Holy Bible, containing the King James and the Revised versions



have pained Abraham. Nevertheless, he proceeded to obey because he loved Jehovah and had faith that the promised seed would come through Isaac, even if God had to raise him from the dead. (Hebrews 11:17-19) When Abraham was about to kill his son, however, Jehovah stopped him and said: "Now I do know that you are God-fearing in that you have not withheld your son, your only one, from me." (Genesis 22:12) Because of his obedience, God-fearing Abraham came to be known as "Jehovah's friend."—James 2:23.

Jesus Christ is our best example of obedience. During his prehuman existence, he found delight in obedient service to his Father in heaven. (Proverbs 8:22-31) As a man, Jesus obeyed Jehovah in everything, always delighting to do his will. (Psalm 40:8; Hebrews 10:9) Thus, Jesus could truthfully say: "I do nothing of my own initiative; but just as the Father taught me I speak these things. And he that sent me is with me; he did not abandon me to myself, because I always do the things pleasing to him." (John 8:28, 29) Finally, to vindicate Jehovah's sovereignty and to redeem obedient mankind, Jesus willingly gave his life, undergoing a most humiliating and painful death. Indeed, "when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake." (Philippians 2:8) What an example in manifesting an obedient heart!

Partial Obedience Not Enough

Not all who have claimed to be obedient to God have actually obeyed him. Consider King Saul of ancient Israel. God instructed him to wipe out the wicked Amalekites. (1 Samuel 15:1-3) Though Saul destroyed them as a nation, he spared their king and preserved some of their sheep and cattle. Samuel asked: "Why is it you did not obey the voice of Jehovah?" In reply, Saul said:

"But I have obeyed the voice of Jehovah . . . The people [of Israel] went taking from the spoil sheep and cattle, the choicest of them . . . , to sacrifice to Jehovah." Stressing the need for complete obedience, Samuel replied: "Does Jehovah have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of Jehovah? Look! To obey is better than a sacrifice, to pay attention than the fat of rams; for rebelliousness is the same as the sin of divination, and pushing ahead presumptuously the same as using uncanny power and teraphim. Since you have rejected the word of Jehovah, he accordingly rejects you from being king." (1 Samuel 15:17-23) How much Saul lost because he did not have an obedient heart!

Even wise King Solomon, who had prayed for an obedient heart, did not continue to obey Jehovah. Contrary to the divine will, he married foreign women who caused him to sin against God. (Nehemiah 13:23, 26) Solomon lost divine favor because he did not continue to have an obedient heart. What a warning this is for us!

This does not mean that Jehovah requires perfection from his human servants. He 'remembers that we are dust.' (Psalm 103:14) All of us are sure to make mistakes at times, but God can see whether we really have a heartfelt desire to please him. (2 Chronicles 16:9) If we err because of human imperfection but are repentant, we can ask for forgiveness on the basis of Christ's ransom sacrifice, confident that Jehovah "will forgive in a large way." (Isaiah 55:7; 1 John 2:1, 2) The help of loving Christian elders may also be needed so that we can recover spiritually and have a healthy faith and an obedient heart.—Titus 2:2; James 5:13-15.

How Complete Is Your Obedience?

As Jehovah's servants, most of us undoubtedly feel that we have an obedient heart. We may reason, Am I not sharing

in the Kingdom-preaching work? Do I not stand firm when such major issues as neutrality arise? And do I not attend Christian meetings regularly, as the apostle Paul urged? (Matthew 24:14; 28:19, 20; John 17:16; Hebrews 10:24, 25) True, Jehovah's people as a whole display heartfelt obedience in such important respects.

But what about our conduct in everyday affairs, perhaps in seemingly small matters? Jesus stated: "The person faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and the person unrighteous in what is least is unrighteous also in much." (Luke 16:10) Each of us would therefore do well to ask himself, Do I have an obedient heart when it comes to minor things or matters that others do not even know about?

The psalmist showed that even inside his house, where others did not see him, he 'walked about in the integrity of his heart.' (Psalm 101:2) While sitting in your house, you may turn on the television and start watching a movie. Right there, your obedience could be tested. The movie may become immoral in content. Will you keep on watching, rationalizing that this is the type of movie being shown these days? Or will your obedient heart move you to comply with the Scriptural injunction, 'do not let fornication and uncleanness even be mentioned among you'? (Ephesians 5:3-5) Will you turn off the TV, even if the story is intriguing? Or will you switch channels if a program becomes violent? "Jehovah himself examines the righteous one as well as the wicked one," sang the psalmist, "and anyone loving violence His soul certainly hates."—Psalm 11:5.

An Obedient Heart Brings Blessings

There are, of course, many areas of life wherein we can profitably examine ourselves to see if we really obey God from the heart. Our love for Jehovah should move us to please him and do what he tells us in his

Word, the Bible. An obedient heart will help us to maintain a good relationship with Jehovah. Indeed, if we are fully obedient, 'the sayings of our mouth and the meditation of our heart will be pleasurable before Jehovah.'—Psalm 19:14.

Because Jehovah loves us, he teaches us obedience for our own good. And we benefit ourselves greatly by wholeheartedly paying attention to divine teaching. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Therefore, let us gladly accept the assistance our heavenly Father provides through his Word, his spirit, and his organization. We are being taught so well that it is as if we hear a voice behind us saying: "This is the way. Walk in it, you people." (Isaiah 30:21) As Jehovah teaches us through the Bible, Christian publications, and congregation meetings, may we pay attention, apply what we learn, and be "obedient in all things."—2 Corinthians 2:9.

An obedient heart will result in much joy and many blessings. It will bring us peace of mind, for we will know that we are well-pleasing to Jehovah God and are making his heart rejoice. (Proverbs 27:11) A heart that is obedient will be a protection for us when we are tempted to do wrong. Surely, then, we should obey our heavenly Father and should pray: "Give to your servant an obedient heart."

In Our Next Issue

At Last—Justice for All

Jehovah—The Source of True Justice
and Righteousness

Highly Esteeming Privileges
of Sacred Service



An “Example of Union and Brotherhood”

That is how one woman described the actions of Jehovah's Witnesses after she suffered the distressing loss of a family member. She explains:

"On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to thank the Witnesses of the Italian congregation in Freiburg, Germany. With the exception of my brother Antonio and his wife, Anna, my family are not Jehovah's Witnesses. We have long criticized their religious choice, though we have always respected it.

"Now, however, we have to change our minds. In fact, we have experienced an example of brotherhood and love that we would never have expected.

"Sadly, Anna died prematurely in a road accident. Since we live in Italy, we were able to stay close to my brother Antonio and his children only

up to a certain point. His Witness brothers have stepped in though. They have helped him with their presence, their words, their faith, their physical, moral, and economic support. Since I cannot thank the congregation personally, I would like to thank them through your magazine for their example of union and brotherhood that we will not forget."

This woman's kind remarks are appreciated. As she observed, Jehovah's Witnesses are an international brotherhood. (1 Peter 2:17) They cultivate strong ties of affection among themselves, knowing that love "is a perfect bond of union." (Colossians 3:14) Even in the most tragic of circumstances, which can befall all of us, Jehovah's Witnesses stick close to God and his people.—Proverbs 18:24; Ecclesiastes 9:11; John 13:34, 35.

and Ridiculousness
Highly Esteeming Privileges
of Sacred Service