

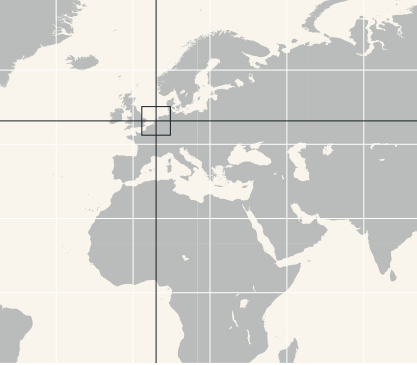
AUGUST 2017

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
SEPTEMBER 25–OCTOBER 22, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
NETHERLANDS

Two pioneers in Amsterdam
share the Kingdom message with a passerby

PUBLISHERS
29,839

BIBLE STUDIES
12,802

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2016)
51,404

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Are You Willing to Wait Patiently?

“You too exercise patience.”—JAS. 5:8.

“HOW long?” That was the question raised by the faithful prophets Isaiah and Habakkuk. (Isa. 6:11; Hab. 1:2) When composing Psalm 13, King David four times likewise asked: “How long?” (Ps. 13:1, 2) Even our Lord Jesus Christ asked this question when confronted with the faithless attitude of those around him. (Matt. 17:17) So we should not be surprised if we find ourselves at times asking the very same question.

² What can cause us to ask: “How long”? Perhaps we have had to deal with some form of injustice. Or maybe we are enduring old age and sickness or the pressures of living in these “critical times” that are so “hard to deal with.” (2 Tim. 3:1) Or maybe the wrong attitudes of those around us are wearing us out. Whatever the cause, how encouraging it is to know that Jehovah’s faithful servants in the past felt free to express the same question that may loom in our minds, and they were not condemned for asking it!

1, 2. (a) What may cause us to ask: “How long”? (b) Why can we be encouraged by the examples of faithful servants in the past?

SONGS: 114, 79

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What is involved in being patient?

What helped men and women of old to be willing to wait on Jehovah?

How have both Jehovah and Jesus shown a willingness to wait?

³ But what can help us when we come face-to-face with such difficult circumstances? The disciple James, Jesus' half brother, was inspired to tell us: "Be patient then, brothers, until the presence of the Lord." (Jas. 5:7) Yes, we all need patience. But what is involved in having this godly quality?

WHAT IS PATIENCE?

⁴ According to the Bible, patience is a product of holy spirit; without God's help, imperfect humans cannot be patient to the degree needed. Patience is a gift from God, and being patient is a key way to show our love for him. Patience is also an expression of our love for others. Persistent impatience weakens the bonds of love; patience strengthens them. (1 Cor. 13:4; Gal. 5:22) Patience involves a number of other vital Christian qualities. For example, it is closely connected with endurance, which enables us to put up with difficult circumstances while maintaining a positive attitude. (Col. 1:11; Jas. 1:3, 4) Patience can also involve suffering without retaliating and remaining firm and steadfast no matter what may come our way. Additionally, the Bible urges us to *accept willingly the need to wait*. This aspect of patience is highlighted at **James 5: 7, 8. (Read.)**

⁵ Why must we be willing to accept the need to wait for Jehovah to act? James compares our situation to that of a farmer. Even though a farmer works hard to plant his crop, he has no control over the weather or the growth of the plants. He

cannot speed up the time. He accepts that he needs to wait patiently for "the precious fruit of the earth." In a similar manner, there are many factors that are beyond our control as we wait for the fulfillment of Jehovah's promises. (Mark 13: 32, 33; Acts 1:7) Like the farmer, we need to wait patiently.

⁶ The conditions we face today are similar to those in the days of the prophet Micah. He lived during the reign of wicked King Ahaz, a time when all sorts of corruption prevailed. In fact, the people had become "expert at doing what is bad." (**Read Micah 7:1-3.**) Micah realized that he could not personally change these conditions. So, what could he do? He tells us: "As for me, I will keep on the lookout for Jehovah. I will show a waiting attitude ["I will wait patiently," *ftn.*] for the God of my salvation. My God will hear me." (Mic. 7:7) Like Micah, we too need to have "a waiting attitude."

⁷ If we have faith like that of Micah, we will be *willing* to wait for Jehovah. Our situation is not like that of a prisoner who is waiting in his cell for his execution. He is forced to wait, and he is not looking forward to the outcome. How different things are for us! We are willing to wait for Jehovah because we know that he will fulfill his promise to give us everlasting life at exactly the right time, the best time! So we "endure fully with patience *and joy*." (Col. 1:11, 12) To do otherwise—to wait while complaining and grumbling that Jehovah is not acting fast enough—would be displeasing to our God.—Col. 3:12.

3. What can help us when we face difficult circumstances?

4, 5. (a) What is involved in being patient? (b) How does the disciple James illustrate one aspect of patience? (See opening picture.)

6. What can we learn from the example of the prophet Micah?

7. Why is more required of us than just waiting for Jehovah to fulfill his promises?



Abraham had to wait many years before his grandsons Esau and Jacob were born
(See paragraphs 9, 10)

FAITHFUL EXAMPLES OF PATIENCE

⁸ We will be more willing to wait if we remember faithful men and women of old who waited patiently for Jehovah to fulfill his promises. (Rom. 15:4) As we meditate on their examples, it is good for us to remember how long they had to wait, why they were willing to wait, and what blessings resulted from their patience.

⁹ Consider the example of Abraham and Sarah. They are among “those who through faith and *patience* inherit the promises.” The Scriptures tell us that “after Abraham had shown patience,” he obtained the promise that Jehovah

would bless him and multiply his offspring. (Heb. 6:12, 15) Why did Abraham need to show patience? Simply stated, the fulfillment of the promise would take time. The covenant Jehovah made with Abraham started to take effect on Nisan 14, 1943 B.C.E. That was when he and Sarah along with their household crossed the Euphrates River and entered the Promised Land. Abraham then had to wait 25 years before his son Isaac was born in 1918 B.C.E., and he had to wait another 60 years before his grandsons Esau and Jacob were born in 1858 B.C.E. —Heb. 11:9.

¹⁰ How much land did Abraham inherit? We are told: “Yet, he [Jehovah] did not give him [Abraham] any inheritance in it, no, not even enough to put his foot on; but he promised to give it to him as a possession and after him to his offspring,

8. What do we need to remember as we meditate on the examples of faithful men and women of old?

9, 10. How long did Abraham and Sarah have to wait on Jehovah?

though as yet he had no child.” (Acts 7:5) It was not until 430 years after Abraham had crossed the Euphrates that his descendants were organized into a nation that would take possession of the land.—Ex. 12:40-42; Gal. 3:17.

¹¹ Abraham was willing to wait, because his patience was based on his faith in Jehovah. **(Read Hebrews 11:8-12.)** Abraham was happy to wait, even though he did not see the complete fulfillment of the promise in his day. But just imagine Abraham’s joy when he is resurrected back to a paradise earth. He will be surprised to see how much of the Bible was used to record his personal story and that of his descendants.* Just imagine how thrilled he will be to understand for the first time his vital role in the outworking of Jehovah’s purpose with regard to the promised offspring! No doubt, he will feel that the long wait was worth it.

¹² Abraham’s great-grandson Joseph also showed a willingness to be patient. He was the victim of some outrageous injustices. First, his brothers sold him into slavery when he was about 17 years old. Then, he was falsely accused of trying to rape his master’s wife and ended up in irons in prison. (Gen. 39:11-20; Ps. 105:17, 18) For his righteous actions, he seemed to be punished rather than blessed. But after 13 years, everything changed very quickly. He was re-

* Some 15 chapters of the book of Genesis are devoted to the account about Abraham. Additionally, the writers of the Christian Greek Scriptures refer to Abraham more than 70 times.

11. Why was Abraham willing to wait on Jehovah, and what blessings will he see as a result of his patience?

12, 13. Why did Joseph need patience, and what fine attitude did he have?

leased from prison and promoted to the second-highest position in Egypt.—Gen. 41:14, 37-43; Acts 7:9, 10.

¹³ Did the injustices make Joseph bitter? Did he lose confidence in his God, Jehovah? No. What helped Joseph to wait patiently? It was his faith in Jehovah. He saw Jehovah’s hand in matters. Notice how this is reflected in what he told his brothers: “Do not be afraid. Am I in the place of God? Although you meant to harm me, God intended it to turn out well and to preserve many people alive, as he is doing today.” (Gen. 50:19, 20) Ultimately, Joseph realized that the wait was worth it.

¹⁴ King David was also the victim of many injustices. Although anointed by Jehovah at an early age to be the future king of Israel, David had to wait some 15 years before he was made king over his own tribe. (2 Sam. 2:3, 4) During part of this time, unfaithful King Saul pursued David, seeking to kill him.* As a result, David had to live as a fugitive, at times in a foreign country and at other times in caves in the wilderness. Even when Saul was eventually killed in battle, David still had to wait about seven more years before he was given the kingship over the whole nation of Israel.—2 Sam. 5:4, 5.

¹⁵ Why was David willing to wait patiently? He gives us the answer in the very psalm in which he four times asked: “How long?” This is what he says: “As for me, I trust in your loyal love; my heart

* Although Saul was rejected by Jehovah after ruling a little over two years, he was allowed to continue ruling for 38 more years, until his death.—1 Sam. 13:1; Acts 13:21.

14, 15. (a) What is outstanding about David’s patience? (b) What helped David to wait patiently?

will rejoice in your acts of salvation. I will sing to Jehovah, for he has richly rewarded me.” (Ps. 13:5, 6) David trusted in Jehovah’s loyal love. He joyfully looked forward to deliverance, and he reflected on how Jehovah had dealt rewardingly with him. Yes, David felt that the wait would be worth it.

¹⁶ With regard to exercising patience, Jehovah does not expect us to do something that he is not willing to do himself. He has set the supreme example of being willing to wait. **(Read 2 Peter 3:9.)** Jehovah has been waiting patiently for thousands of years so that the moral issues raised in the garden of Eden could eventually be settled beyond a doubt. He is “waiting patiently” and “keeping in expectation” of the time when his name will be fully sanctified. This will result in unimaginable blessings for those who are “eagerly waiting for him.”—Isa. 30:18; fn.

¹⁷ Jesus likewise has been willing to wait. Although he passed the test of integrity here on earth and presented the value of his ransom sacrifice in 33 C.E., he had to wait until 1914 before commencing his rule. (Acts 2:33-35; Heb. 10:12, 13) It will not be until the end of his Thousand Year Reign that all his enemies will be completely destroyed. (1 Cor. 15:25) It will have been a long wait, but we can be sure that the wait will be worth it.

WHAT WILL HELP US?

¹⁸ Without a doubt, therefore, each

16, 17. How have both Jehovah God and Jesus Christ set excellent examples with regard to being willing to wait?

18, 19. What will help us to be willing to wait patiently?

one of us needs to be willing to wait, to show a patient attitude. But what will help us to do this? Pray for God’s spirit. Remember, patience is an aspect of the fruitage of the spirit. (Eph. 3:16; 6:18; 1 Thess. 5:17-19) Plead with Jehovah to help you to endure patiently.

¹⁹ Remember, too, what helped Abraham, Joseph, and David to wait patiently for the fulfillment of Jehovah’s promises. It was their faith in Jehovah and their trust in his dealings with them. They did not focus just on themselves and their personal comfort. As we contemplate how well things worked out for

With regard to exercising patience, Jehovah does not expect us to do something that he is not willing to do himself

them, we too will be encouraged to show a waiting attitude.

²⁰ So even though we face tests and trials, we are determined to show “a waiting attitude.” Yes, at times we might cry out: “How long, O Jehovah?” (Isa. 6:11) But with the strengthening power of God’s holy spirit, each of us is determined to echo the words of Jeremiah: “Jehovah is my share . . . That is why I will show a waiting attitude for him.”—Lam. 3:21, 24.

20. What should be our personal determination?



“The Peace of God . . . Surpasses All Understanding”

“The peace of God that surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts.”—PHIL. 4:7.

SONGS: 112, 58

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What lessons do we learn from what happened to the apostle Paul in Philippi?

What Scriptural examples prove that Jehovah can do the unexpected?

How can we with full confidence retain “the peace of God”?

IT IS about midnight. Two missionaries, Paul and Silas, are in prison—the innermost part of the prison—in the city of Philippi. Their feet are fastened securely in stocks, and their backs are still aching from the beatings they had just received. (Acts 16:23, 24) How quickly things had happened! Without any warning, they had been dragged by a mob to the marketplace to stand before a hastily convened court. Their clothes were torn off them, and they were severely beaten with rods. (Acts 16:16-22) The injustice of it all! Paul, a Roman citizen, deserved a proper trial.*

² As Paul sits in the darkness, he contemplates the events of the day. He thinks about the people of Philippi. They do not even have a Jewish synagogue in their city, unlike so many other cities that Paul has visited. In fact, the Jewish worship-

* Apparently, Silas too was a Roman citizen.—Acts 16:37.

1, 2. What events in Philippi led to the imprisonment of Paul and Silas? (See opening picture.)

pers need to gather outside the city gates beside a river. (Acts 16:13, 14) Is this because there are not even ten Jewish males in the city, the number required to form a synagogue? The people of Philippi are obviously very proud of their Roman citizenship, even if it is only a partial or secondary form of citizenship. (Acts 16:21) Could this be why they do not even think it possible that these Jews, Paul and Silas, could be Roman citizens? Whatever the case, here they are, unjustly thrown into prison.

³ Perhaps Paul is also thinking about the events of the past few months. He was on the other side of the Aegean Sea, in Asia Minor. While Paul was there, the holy spirit repeatedly stopped him from preaching in certain areas. It was as if the holy spirit were pushing him to go somewhere else. (Acts 16:6, 7) But where? The answer came in a vision while he was in Troas. Paul was told: “Step over into Macedonia.” With such a clear indication of Jehovah’s will, Paul immediately accepted the invitation. **(Read Acts 16:8-10.)** But what happened next? Soon after he arrived in Macedonia, he ended up in prison! Why did Jehovah allow this to happen to Paul? How long would he be stuck in prison? Even if these questions weighed heavily on Paul’s mind, he did not let them erode his faith and joy. Both he and Silas started “praying and praising God with song.” (Acts 16:25) Their hearts and minds were soothed by the peace of God.

⁴ Perhaps there have been times in

3. Why may Paul have found his imprisonment confusing; yet, what attitude did he display?

4, 5. (a) How could our situation be similar to that of Paul? (b) How did Paul’s situation change unexpectedly?

your life when you felt that you, like Paul, were following the leadings of God’s holy spirit, but then things did not turn out the way you expected. You came face-to-face with challenges, or you found yourself in new circumstances that required massive changes in your life. (Eccl. 9:11) As you look back, maybe you are left wondering why Jehovah allowed certain things to happen. If so, what can help you to continue to endure with full confidence in Jehovah? To find the answer, let us return to the account of Paul and Silas.

⁵ As Paul and Silas sing songs of praise, a series of totally unexpected events occurs. Suddenly, there is a violent earthquake. The doors of the prison are thrown wide open. All the prisoners’ bonds are loosened. Paul stops the jailer from committing suicide. The jailer and his entire family get baptized. As the new day starts, the city magistrates send constables to release Paul and Silas. The officials ask them to leave the city peacefully. Then, on realizing that Paul and Silas are Roman citizens, the magistrates see that they have made a huge blunder, so they themselves come to escort the two men out. But Paul and Silas insist on first saying good-bye to their newly baptized sister Lydia. Additionally, they use the opportunity to strengthen the brothers. (Acts 16:26-40) How quickly everything changed!

IT “SURPASSES ALL UNDERSTANDING”

⁶ What do we learn from these events? Jehovah can do the unexpected, so we need not be anxious in the face of

6. What will we now discuss and review together?

trials. That lesson no doubt made a deep impression on Paul, as evidenced by what he later wrote to the brothers in Philippi about anxiety and the peace of God. Let us first discuss Paul's words recorded at **Philippians 4:6, 7. (Read.)** Then, we will review some additional Scriptural examples of how Jehovah did the unexpected. Finally, we will consider how "the peace of God" can help us to endure with full confidence in Jehovah.

⁷ No doubt when the brothers in Philippi read Paul's letter to them, they remembered what had happened to him and how none of them had expected Jehovah to take action in the way that he did. What lesson was Paul teaching them? Basically: Do not worry. Pray, and then you will receive the peace of God. But notice that "the peace of God . . . surpasses all understanding." What does that mean? Some translators render this expression "surpasses all our dreams" or "excels all human planning." Paul was, in effect, saying that "the peace of God" is more wonderful than can be imagined. So although from a human viewpoint we may not see a way out of our problems, Jehovah does, and he can do the unexpected.—**Read 2 Peter 2:9.**

⁸ As the brothers in Philippi thought over what had happened in the ten years since those events, they would have been strengthened. What Paul wrote was true. Although Jehovah had allowed an injustice to occur, this ultimately

7. What lesson did Paul highlight when he later wrote to the brothers in Philippi, and what lesson can we learn from his words?

8, 9. (a) Even though Paul had suffered an injustice in Philippi, what good resulted because of those events? (b) Why could the brothers in Philippi take Paul's words seriously?

resulted in "the defending and legally establishing of the good news." (Phil. 1:7) Those city magistrates would think twice before doing anything against the newly formed Christian congregation in their city. Perhaps because of Paul's actions, his traveling companion Luke, the physician, was able to remain in Philippi after Paul and Silas left. Luke could thus give extra help to the new Christians in that city.

⁹ Indeed, when those brothers in Philippi read Paul's letter, they knew that these were not the words of an academic who was sitting somewhere in an office. Paul had experienced extreme difficulties; yet, he demonstrated that he had "the peace of God." In fact, when Paul wrote to those brothers, he was under house arrest in Rome. But he was still showing that "the peace of God" was with him.—Phil. 1:12-14; 4:7, 11, 22.

"DO NOT BE ANXIOUS OVER ANYTHING"

¹⁰ What can help us not to be anxious over anything and to experience "the peace of God"? Paul's words to the Philippians show us that the antidote to worry is prayer. So when we are anxious, we need to turn our worries into prayers. **(Read 1 Peter 5:6, 7.)** Pray to Jehovah in full faith, knowing that he cares for you. Pray to him "with thanksgiving," remembering your blessings. Our confidence in him will be strengthened when we keep in mind that he can "do more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive."—Eph. 3:20.

10, 11. What do we need to do when we are overly worried about a problem, and what can we reasonably expect?

¹¹ As in the case of Paul and Silas in Philippi, we may be surprised by what Jehovah does for us personally. It may not be spectacular, but it will always be what we need. (1 Cor. 10:13) Of course, this does not mean that we sit back and do nothing, simply waiting for Jehovah to correct the situation or solve the problem. We need to act in harmony with our prayers. (Rom. 12:11) Our actions thereby prove our sincerity and give Jehovah something to bless. But at the same time, we need to realize that Jehovah is not limited by our requests, plans, and expectations. Sometimes he surprises us by doing the unexpected. Let us consider some Bible accounts that reinforce our confidence in Jehovah's ability to do the unexpected in our behalf.

EXAMPLES OF JEHOVAH DOING THE UNEXPECTED

¹² As we search the Scriptures, time and again we find examples of Jehovah doing the unexpected. King Hezekiah lived at a time when King Sennacherib of Assyria invaded Judah and captured all the fortified cities, with the exception of Jerusalem. (2 Ki. 18:1-3, 13) Then, Sennacherib turned his attention to Jerusalem. What did King Hezekiah do when faced with this imminent threat? He approached Jehovah in prayer and turned to Jehovah's prophet Isaiah for advice. (2 Ki. 19:5, 15-20) Hezekiah also tried to show his reasonableness by paying the fine that Sennacherib imposed on him. (2 Ki. 18:14, 15) In time, Hezekiah made preparations for a long siege.

12. (a) What did King Hezekiah do when threatened by Assyrian King Sennacherib? (b) What do we learn from how Jehovah resolved the problem?



What lesson do we learn from what happened to Joseph?—Gen. 41:42
(See paragraph 13)

(2 Chron. 32:2-4) But how was the situation resolved? Jehovah sent an angel to destroy 185,000 of Sennacherib's soldiers in one night. Truly, not even Hezekiah expected that to happen!—2 Ki. 19:35.

¹³ Consider the young man Joseph, a son of Jacob. While in a prison hole in Egypt, did Joseph have any idea that he would be appointed to the second-highest position in the land or that he would be used by Jehovah to save his family from starvation? (Gen. 40:15, ftn.; 41:39-43; 50:20) No doubt Jehovah's actions exceeded all of Joseph's expectations. Think, too, about Joseph's great-grandmother Sarah. Did aged Sarah expect that Jehovah would allow her to give birth to her own son, not just receive as son the child produced by her servant girl? The birth of

13. (a) What lesson do we learn from what happened to Joseph? (b) How did something unexpected occur in the case of Abraham's wife, Sarah?

Isaac certainly exceeded all that Sarah could ever have imagined.—Gen. 21:1-3, 6, 7.

¹⁴ Granted, we do not expect that Jehovah will miraculously take away all our problems before the promised new world; nor do we demand that spectacular things occur in our lives. But we do know that the God who helped his servants in amazing ways is our God, Jehovah. **(Read Isaiah 43:10-13.)** This confidence helps us to have faith in him. We know that he can do whatever is needed to empower us to accomplish his will fully. (2 Cor. 4:7-9) What lessons do we

learn from these Bible accounts? As the examples of Hezekiah, Joseph, and Sarah show, Jehovah can help us to conquer the seemingly unconquerable if we remain faithful to Him.

Jehovah can help us to conquer the seemingly unconquerable if we remain faithful to him

learn from these Bible accounts? As the examples of Hezekiah, Joseph, and Sarah show, Jehovah can help us to conquer the seemingly unconquerable if we remain faithful to Him.

¹⁵ How can we face challenges and still retain “the peace of God”? It is by maintaining a good relationship with our God, Jehovah. Such a relationship is possible only “by means of Christ Jesus,” who offered his life as a ransom sacrifice. The provision of that ransom is yet another one of the amazing works of our Father. Jehovah uses the ransom to cover our sins, enabling us to have a

IT WILL GUARD OUR HEARTS AND MENTAL POWERS

¹⁶ What results when we receive this “peace of God that surpasses all understanding”? The Scriptures answer by saying that it ‘will guard our hearts and our mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.’ (Phil. 4:7) The original-language word for “guard” was a military expression. It referred to a garrison of troops that was assigned to guard a fortified city in ancient times. Philippi was such a city. The inhabitants of Philippi slept soundly at night, knowing that soldiers were guarding the gates of their city. In a similar manner, when we have “the peace of God,” our hearts and minds remain at rest. We know that Jehovah cares for us and wants us to succeed. (1 Pet. 5:10) That knowledge guards us from becoming overwhelmed by anxiety or discouragement.

¹⁷ Soon mankind will face the greatest tribulation that will ever occur here on earth. (Matt. 24:21, 22) We do not know all the details of what that will mean for us individually. However, there is no need for us to be consumed by anxiety. Even though we do not know everything Jehovah will *do*, we do know *our God*. We have seen from his past dealings that no matter what happens, Jehovah will always accomplish his purpose, and sometimes he does it in an unexpected manner. Each time Jehovah does so for us, we may experience in a new way “the peace of God that surpasses all understanding.”

14. What confidence can we have in Jehovah?

15. What will help us to retain “the peace of God,” and how is this possible?

16. What will result when we attain “the peace of God”? Illustrate.

17. What will help us to face the future with full confidence?



Endurance Under Trial Results in Blessings

AS TOLD BY PAVEL SIVULSKY

“YOU are such a cruel father,” scolded the KGB officer.* “You’ve abandoned your pregnant wife and baby daughter. Who will feed them and care for them? Renounce your activities and go home!” I replied: “No, I didn’t abandon my family. You arrested me! And for what?” The officer retorted: “Any crime other than being a Witness is better.”

That exchange took place in 1959 in a prison in the city of Irkutsk in Russia. Allow me to relate why my wife, Maria, and I were prepared to “suffer for the sake of righteousness” and how we were blessed for remaining faithful.—1 Pet. 3: 13, 14.

I was born in Ukraine in 1933 in the village of Zolotniki. In 1937 my aunt and her husband, who were Witnesses, visited us from France and left us the books *Government* and *Deliverance*, published by the Watch Tower Society. When my father read those books, his faith in God was awakened. Sadly, in 1939 he became very ill, but before he died he told my mother: “This is the truth. Teach it to the children.”

* KGB is the Russian abbreviation for Soviet State Security Committee.

SIBERIA—A NEW FIELD FOR PREACHING

In April 1951, the authorities began sending Witnesses from the western USSR to Siberia into exile. Together with my mother and my younger brother, Grigory, I was banished from West Ukraine. After traveling over 3,700 miles (6,000 km) by train, we arrived in the city of Tulun in Siberia. Two weeks later my older brother, Bogdan, arrived in a camp in the nearby city of Angarsk. He had been sentenced to 25 years of hard labor.

My mother, Grigory, and I preached in the settlements around Tulun, but we had to be resourceful. For example, we would ask, “Is there anyone here who wants to sell a cow?” When we found someone with a cow to sell, we would mention to that person how amazingly designed cows are. Before long, we would be talking about the Creator. At that time, a newspaper wrote about the Witnesses that they ask about cows but they are looking for sheep! And we found sheeplike ones! It was a pleasure to study the Scriptures with the humble and hospitable people in that unassigned territory. Today, there is a congregation with over 100 publishers in Tulun.



While living in a labor camp, 1962



Maria and our daughters, Olga and Irina, in 1965

HOW MARIA'S FAITH WAS TESTED

My wife, Maria, learned the truth in Ukraine in the middle of World War II. When she was 18 years old, a KGB officer began to harass her and tried to force her to commit immorality with him, but she firmly rejected his advances. One day, she returned home and found the man lying on her bed. Maria fled. Furious, the officer threatened to have her locked up for being a Witness, and indeed, in 1952, Maria was sentenced to ten years in prison. She felt like Joseph, who was imprisoned for keeping his integrity. (Gen. 39:12, 20) The driver who took Maria from the courtroom to the prison told her: "Don't be afraid. Many people go to prison but return with their dignity intact." Those words strengthened her.

From 1952 to 1956, Maria was put to work in a labor camp near the city of Gorkiy (now Nizhny Novgorod) in Russia. She was ordered to uproot trees, even in freezing weather. Her health suffered, but in 1956 she was set free and headed for Tulun.

FAR AWAY FROM MY WIFE AND MY CHILDREN

When a brother in Tulun told me that a sister was coming, I went on my bicycle to the bus stop to meet the sister and to offer to help with her luggage. When I met Maria, I liked her right from the start. It took effort to win her heart—but I succeeded. We got married in 1957. A year later, our daughter Irina was born, but the joy of being with her was cut short. In 1959, I was arrested for printing Bible literature. I spent half a year in solitary confinement. To maintain peace of heart during that time, I constantly prayed, sang Kingdom songs, and imagined how I would preach if I were free again.

While in prison, during an interrogation the investigator yelled, "Soon we will stamp you people out like mice against the floor!" I replied, "Jesus said that the good news of the Kingdom WILL be preached in all the nations, and no one can stop it." Then, the investigator switched tactics and tried to persuade me to renounce my faith, as I mentioned in the introduction. When neither threats nor enticements worked, I was sentenced to seven years of hard labor in a camp near the city of Saransk. On my way to the camp, I learned that our second daughter, Olga, had been born. Although my wife and daughters were far away, I drew comfort from knowing that Maria and I had remained loyal to Jehovah.

Once a year Maria traveled to Saransk to visit me, although the journey from Tulun and back took 12 days by train. Each year she would bring me a new pair of boots. Hidden in the heels of the boots were recent copies of *The Watchtower*. One year Maria's visit was very special because she brought our two young daughters with her. Imagine how touched I was to see them and to be with them!

NEW LOCATIONS AND NEW CHALLENGES

In 1966, I was freed from the labor camp and the four of us moved to the city of Armavir, near the Black Sea. There, our sons Yaroslav and Pavel were born.

It did not take long before KGB officers began to raid our home, looking for Bible literature. They searched everywhere, even in the cows' feed. On one such occasion, the officers were perspiring from the heat, and their suits were covered in dust. Maria felt sorry for them, as they were only obeying orders. She poured them some juice and brought them a clothes brush, a bowl of water, and towels. Later, when the KGB chief arrived, the officers told him about the kind treatment they had received. When they left, the chief smiled and waved to us. We were happy to see the good that can result when we try to "keep conquering the evil with the good."—Rom. 12:21.

Despite the raids, we continued to preach in Armavir. We also helped to strengthen a small group of publishers in the nearby town of Kurganinsk. It gives me much joy to know that today there are six congregations in Armavir and four in Kurganinsk.

Through the years, there were times when our spirituality weakened. But we are grateful to Jehovah that he used faithful brothers to correct us and to strengthen us spiritually. (Ps. 130:3) It was also a serious test for us to serve alongside KGB agents who infiltrated the congregations without our realizing it. They appeared to be zealous and were active in the ministry. Some even received positions of responsibility in the organization. In time, though, we found out who they really were.

In 1978, when Maria was 45, she again became pregnant. Because she suffered from a chronic heart condition, the doctors feared for her life and tried to convince her to have an abortion. Maria refused. In response, some doctors followed her everywhere in the hospital with a syringe, trying to inject her and induce a premature birth. To protect the unborn child, Maria ran away from the hospital.

The KGB ordered us to leave the city. We moved to a village near the city of Tallinn in Estonia, which was then part of the USSR. In Tal-

linn, contrary to the doctors' prediction, Maria gave birth to a healthy son, Vitaly.

Later, we moved from Estonia to the settlement of Nezlobnaya in the south of Russia. We preached cautiously in the neighboring resort towns, which were visited by people from all over the country. They came there for health reasons, but some left with the hope of everlasting life!

RAISING OUR CHILDREN TO LOVE JEHOVAH

We tried to inculcate in our sons and daughters a love for Jehovah and a desire to serve him. We often invited to our home brothers who were a good influence on our children. One regular visitor was my brother Grigory, who served as a traveling overseer from 1970 to 1995. The whole family enjoyed his visits because he was joyful and had a good sense of humor. When we had guests, we often played Bible games, and our children grew to love the Bible's historical accounts.

My sons and their wives.
From left to right, back row: Yaroslav, Pavel, Jr., Vitaly
Front row: Alyona, Raya, Svetlana



In 1987, our son Yaroslav moved to the city of Riga in Latvia, where he was able to preach more openly. But when he refused to perform military service, he was sentenced to one and a half years behind bars and was held in nine different prisons. What I had told him about my experiences in prison helped him to endure. Later, he began serving as a pioneer. In 1990, our son Pavel, then 19 years old, wanted to pioneer on Sakhalin, an island north of Japan. At first, we did not want him to go. There were only 20 publishers on the whole island, and we lived over 5,500 miles (9,000 km) away from the island. But eventually we agreed, and it was a good decision. The people there responded to the Kingdom message. Within a few years, there were eight congregations. Pavel served on Sakhalin until 1995. By then, only our youngest son, Vitaly, remained at home. From childhood, he loved reading the Bible. At age 14, he began pioneering, and I pioneered with him for two years. It was a wonderful time. When he was 19, Vitaly left to serve as a special pioneer.

With my wife in 2011



Back in 1952, a KGB officer had told Maria: “Renounce your faith or face ten years of imprisonment. When you come out, you will be old and alone.” But things worked out very differently. We felt the love of our loyal God, Jehovah, of our children, and of the many whom we have been privileged to help find the truth. Maria and I had the joy of visiting the places where our children served. We saw the gratitude of those who had been helped by our children to learn about Jehovah.

GRATEFUL FOR JEHOVAH’S GOODNESS

In 1991, the activity of Jehovah’s Witnesses was given legal recognition. That decision gave renewed vigor to the preaching work. Our congregation even bought a bus so that we could travel to neighboring towns and villages each weekend.

I am happy that Yaroslav and his wife, Alyona, and Pavel and his wife, Raya, serve at Bethel while Vitaly and his wife, Svetlana, serve in the circuit work. Our eldest daughter, Irina, and her family live in Germany. Her husband, Vladimir, and their three sons all serve as elders. Our daughter Olga lives in Estonia and regularly calls me. Sadly, my dear wife, Maria, died in 2014. I cannot wait to see her again in the resurrection! Now I live in the city of Belgorod, and the brothers here are a huge support to me.

My years of service to Jehovah have taught me that keeping integrity comes at a cost but the inner peace that Jehovah gives in return is a treasure of surpassing value. The blessings Maria and I received for remaining steadfast have been greater than I could ever have imagined. Before the fall of the USSR in 1991, there were just over 40,000 publishers. Today, there are over 400,000 publishers in the countries that were once part of the Soviet Union! I am now 83 years old and continue to serve as an elder. Jehovah’s support has always given me the strength to endure. Yes, Jehovah has richly rewarded me.—Ps. 13:5, 6.



How We Strip Off and Keep Off the Old Personality

“Strip off the old personality with its practices.”—COL. 3:9.

OBSERVERS have commented on the outstanding qualities seen among Jehovah’s people. For example, regarding our brothers and sisters in Nazi Germany, author Anton Gill wrote: “Jehovah’s Witnesses attracted the especial enmity of the Nazis. . . . By 1939 there were 6,000 of them in the [concentration camps].” Even so, despite the bitter persecution they endured, adds the author, the Witnesses showed “dependability and equanimity [calmness under stress]” as well as “integrity and solidarity.”

² More recently, observers in South Africa noticed similar attractive qualities among God’s people. At one time, Witnesses of different skin color in that country could not freely associate with one another. However, on Sunday, December 18, 2011, it was a wonderful sight to see over 78,000 of our brothers of different races from South Africa and neighboring countries packed into the largest stadium in the city of Johannesburg to enjoy a spiritual program. In commenting on those gathered, one of the managers of the stadium said: “This is the best-behaved crowd I have ever seen in this

SONGS: 121, 142

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What makes our worldwide brotherhood unique?

What are some practices that must be put away and kept away?

How can we strip off and keep off the old personality?

1, 2. What has been noted about Jehovah’s Witnesses?

stadium. All are neatly dressed. And you people have cleaned the stadium so nicely. But most of all, you are truly multi-racial.”

³ Such comments by non-Witnesses show that our international brotherhood is truly unique. (1 Pet. 5:9, fn.) What, though, makes us so different from any other organization? With the help of God’s Word and his holy spirit, we work hard to “strip off the old personality.” In its place, we “clothe [ourselves] with the new personality.”—Col. 3:9, 10.

⁴ It is one thing to strip off the old personality, yet quite another to keep it off. In this article, we will consider how we can strip off the old personality, why doing so is urgent, and why change is possible no matter how deeply involved one may be in wrong practices. We will also examine what those who have been in the truth for many years can do to keep off the old personality. Why are such reminders needed? Sadly, some who once served Jehovah have lowered their guard and have slipped back into their old ways. Thus, we all need to take to heart the warning: “Let the one who thinks he is standing beware that he does not fall.”—1 Cor. 10:12.

“DEADEN” ANY DESIRES “AS RESPECTS SEXUAL IMMORALITY”

⁵ What would you do if your clothing became dirty, perhaps even having a foul odor? You would strip off the soiled garment as soon as possible. Similarly, we

need to act with urgency in obeying the command to strip off habits that are contrary to God’s personality. We want to heed Paul’s clear instruction to Christians in his day: “You must put them all away from you.” Let us consider two of the sinful practices listed by Paul—sexual immorality and uncleanness.—**Read Colossians 3:5-9.**

⁶ *Sexual immorality.* The meaning of the original Bible word translated “sexual immorality” includes sexual relations between individuals who are not legally married to each other and homosexuality. Paul told fellow Christians to “dead- en” their “body members”—that is, to eliminate any desires—“as respects sexual immorality.” Paul’s descriptive language clearly shows that strong measures are needed to wipe out such wrong desires. Yet, the fight against sinful desires can be won.

⁷ Consider what happened to Sakura* from Japan. Growing up, she struggled with loneliness and a feeling of emptiness. From the age of 15, she began to have sexual relations with different partners in order to relieve her loneliness. “As a result,” she confesses with shame, “I had three abortions.” She explains: “At first, I got a sense of security when having immoral relations, thinking that I was needed and loved. But the more I had sexual relations, the more insecure I felt.” This way of life continued until Sakura was 23 years old. Then she began to study the Bible with the Witnesses.

* Some of the names in this article have been changed.

3. What makes our brotherhood unique?

4. What will be considered in this article, and why?

5. (a) Illustrate why it is urgent to strip off the old personality. (See opening picture.) (b) According to Colossians 3:5-9, what practices belong to the old personality?

6, 7. (a) How do Paul’s words show that strong measures are needed to strip off the old personality? (b) What kind of life did Sakura live, and what gave her the strength to leave it behind?

Sakura loved what she learned, and with Jehovah's help she was able to overcome deep feelings of guilt and shame and to put away sexual immorality. Sakura now serves as a regular pioneer and no longer feels lonely. Instead, as she puts it, "I am really happy to be basking in Jehovah's love day in and day out."

OVERCOMING UNCLEAN PRACTICES

⁸ *Uncleanness*. The original Bible word translated "uncleanness" is a broad term that includes much more than sexual sins. It can refer to the harmful practice of smoking or the telling of obscene jokes. (2 Cor. 7:1; Eph. 5:3, 4) It also applies to unclean activities practiced by an individual in private, such as reading sexually stimulating books or viewing pornography, which may lead to the unclean habit of masturbation.—Col. 3:5.*

⁹ Those who habitually view pornography nurture "uncontrolled sexual passion," which may result in their becoming addicted to sex. Research indicates that individuals who admitted to having an irresistible urge to watch pornography show the same signs of addiction as do alcoholics and drug addicts. No wonder the practice of viewing pornography has harmful results—such as deep feelings of shame, low productivity in the workplace, unhappy family life, divorce, and suicide. On celebrating a year of being free of his addiction to pornography, one man wrote: "I have restored a sense of personal integrity that was missing."

* See chapter 25 in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1.

8. What are some things that can make us unclean in God's eyes?

9. Nurturing "uncontrolled sexual passion" can have what consequences?

¹⁰ For many, staying free from pornography is an ongoing battle. Yet, as shown by what happened to Ribeiro from Brazil, this battle can be won. Ribeiro left home when he was in his teens and in time began working in a paper-recycling plant, where he was exposed to pornographic materials. He relates: "Slowly, I became addicted. It got so bad that I could not wait for the woman I was living with to leave the house so that I could watch pornographic videos." Then, one day at work, Ribeiro looked at a pile of books that were to be recycled, and he noticed a book with the title *The Secret of Family Happiness*. He picked it up from the pile and read it. What he learned moved him to study the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses, but it took him a long time to break his bad habit. What helped him eventually? He explains: "Through prayer, Bible study, and meditation on what I learned, my appreciation of God's qualities increased until my love for Jehovah became stronger than my desire for pornography." Helped by the power of God's Word and his holy spirit, Ribeiro stripped off his old personality, got baptized, and now serves as a congregation elder.

¹¹ Notice that Ribeiro had to do more than simply study the Bible to succeed in his struggle. He had to take time to allow the Bible's message to touch his heart. By prayer and meditation, his love for God overpowered the craving for pornography. Developing a strong love for Jehovah and a hatred for what is bad is the best way to stay free from pornography.—**Read Psalm 97:10.**

10. How did Ribeiro overcome his addiction to pornography?

11. What is needed for a person to stay free from pornography?

**PUT AWAY ANGER,
ABUSIVE SPEECH, AND LYING**

¹² People who are quick-tempered often express their anger with abusive speech. Obviously, such conduct cannot contribute to a happy family life. Relates Stephen, a father from Australia: “I used to swear a lot and would regularly fly into a rage over trivial things. My wife and I were separated three times and were in the process of getting divorced.” Then, the Witnesses began to study the Bible with the couple. What was the outcome when Stephen began to follow the Bible’s advice? He says: “Our family life improved dramatically. With Jehovah’s help, I now have an overriding sense of peace and calm, whereas before I was a time bomb of bitterness and rage, ready to explode at the slightest annoyance.” Today, Stephen serves as a ministerial servant, and his wife has been a regular pioneer for several years. The elders of the congregation that Stephen attends note: “Stephen is a quiet, hardworking brother, and he has a humble attitude.” They cannot recall ever seeing him angry. Does Stephen accept the credit for this? He states: “None of these beautiful blessings would be part of my life if I hadn’t accepted Jehovah’s help to give my personality a complete makeover.”

¹³ For good reason, the Bible warns against anger, abusive speech, and screaming. (Eph. 4:31) Sadly, such conduct often escalates into violence. The world may view angry behavior as normal, but it dishonors our Creator. Many had to strip off these harmful ways be-

fore being able to clothe themselves with the new personality.—**Read Psalm 37: 8-11.**

¹⁴ Consider the example of Hans, who serves as an elder in a congregation in Austria. “He is one of the meekest brothers you could ever wish to meet,” says the coordinator of the body of elders in the congregation to which Hans belongs. But Hans was not always meek. While in his teens, he began to abuse alcohol and, as a result, turned aggressive. In an alcohol-induced rage, he killed his girlfriend, for which he received a 20-year prison sentence. At first, life in prison did not change Hans’ aggressive personality. In time, his mother arranged for an elder to contact her son in prison, and Hans began to study the Bible. He explains: “It was a struggle for me to strip off my old personality. Bible texts that encouraged me were Isaiah 55:7, which says: ‘Let the wicked man leave his way,’ and 1 Corinthians 6:11, which says about those who had abandoned sinful ways: ‘And yet that is what some of you were.’ For many years, Jehovah patiently helped me by means of his holy spirit to put on the new personality.” After having served 17-and-a-half years of his sentence, Hans was released from prison as a baptized Christian. He states: “I am grateful for Jehovah’s overwhelming mercy and forgiveness.”

¹⁵ Besides abusive speech, the practice of lying is also a trait of the old personality. For example, it is common for people to lie on tax returns or to lie to avoid taking responsibility for their sins. By

12. What helped Stephen to put away anger and abusive speech?

13. What makes anger so dangerous, and what warning does the Bible give?

14. Is it possible for an aggressive person to become meek?

15. What practice is common, but what does the Bible say about it?



How can we succeed in stripping off the old personality?
(See paragraph 16)

contrast, Jehovah is “the God of truth.” (Ps. 31:5) Therefore, he requires that “each one” of his worshippers “speak truth with his neighbor” and “not lie.” (Eph. 4:25; Col. 3:9) Thus, we must tell the truth even if it may be embarrassing or inconvenient.—Prov. 6:16-19.

HOW THEY GAINED THE VICTORY

¹⁶ Stripping off old personality traits cannot be done in one’s own strength. The individuals mentioned in this article—Sakura, Ribeiro, Stephen, and Hans—had to fight hard to put away their bad practices. They gained the victory by opening their mind and heart to the power of God’s Word and his holy spirit. (Luke 11:13; Heb. 4:12) To benefit from that power, we must read the Bible daily,

16. How can one succeed in stripping off the old personality?

meditate on it, and pray constantly for the wisdom and strength to apply Bible counsel. (Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:97; 1 Thess. 5:17) We also benefit from God’s Word and his holy spirit when we prepare for and attend congregation meetings. (Heb. 10:24, 25) In addition, we want to make good use of the various means by which spiritual food is now made available to God’s people worldwide.—Luke 12:42.

¹⁷ We have considered a number of bad practices that Christians must strip off and keep off. But is that all that is required to gain God’s approval? No. We must also clothe ourselves with the new personality. In the following article, we will consider several aspects of the new personality that we need to make a permanent part of our figurative clothing.

17. What will be discussed in the next article?



How We Put On and Keep On the New Personality

“Clothe yourselves with the new personality.”—COL. 3:10.

SONGS: 126, 28

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

What aspect of the new personality greatly contributes to our unity?

In what ways can we display compassion and kindness?

How can we demonstrate humility and mildness?

“THE new personality.” That expression occurs twice in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. (Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10) It refers to a personality that is “created according to God’s will.” Developing such a new personality is within our reach. Why? Because Jehovah created humans in his image and thus made it possible for us to reflect his beautiful qualities.—Gen. 1:26, 27; Eph. 5:1.

² True, because of the imperfection we inherited from our first parents, we are affected by wrong desires. We may also have been deeply influenced by our environment. Yet, with Jehovah’s merciful help, we can succeed in becoming the sort of person he wants us to be. To strengthen our desire to reach that goal, we will consider several aspects of the new personality that the apostle Paul was inspired to write about. **(Read Colossians 3:10-14.)** We will also consider how we can demonstrate these aspects in our ministry.

1, 2. (a) Why is putting on the new personality within our reach? (b) What aspects of the new personality are recorded at Colossians 3:10-14?

“YOU ARE ALL ONE”

³ After exhorting us to put on the new personality, Paul goes on to describe *impartiality* as one striking characteristic of the new personality. He stated: “There is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, foreigner, Scythian, slave, or freeman.”* In the congregation, why should there be no distinction based on race, nationality, or social status? Because true followers of Christ “are all one.”—Col. 3:11; Gal. 3:28.

⁴ Those clothed with the new personality treat fellow believers and outsiders with dignity, regardless of their social or racial background. (Rom. 2:11) This can be a challenge in some parts of the world. For example, in South Africa most Witnesses still live in areas that were set apart for their race—be it affluent suburbs, black townships, or areas where people of mixed race once had to live. Hence, to encourage our brothers to “widen out,” in October 2013 the Governing Body approved a special arrangement to help the brothers to get to know one another better. (2 Cor. 6:13, ftn.) What did it involve?

⁵ Arrangements were made for two congregations of different language or race to be together on some weekends. Brothers and sisters from both congregations shared in the preaching work, at-

* In Bible times, Scythians were looked down on as uncivilized people.

3. What is one characteristic of the new personality?

4. (a) How do servants of Jehovah need to treat others? (b) What situation can pose a challenge to Christian unity?

5, 6. (a) To strengthen the unity among God’s people in one country, what arrangements were made? (See opening picture.) (b) What have been the results?

tended meetings together, and enjoyed hospitality at the homes of one another. Hundreds of congregations took part, and the branch office received many good reports about this arrangement, even from outsiders. For example, one religious minister was moved to say, “I am not a Witness, but I will say that you have an outstandingly organized preaching work, and you have racial unity.” How did the arrangement affect the Witnesses?

⁶ At first, a Xhosa-speaking sister named Noma had reservations about inviting white brothers from an English-language congregation to her modest home. But after sharing in the preaching work with the white Witnesses and enjoying hospitality in their homes, she exclaimed, “They are normal people just like us!” So when it was the turn of her Xhosa-language congregation to extend hospitality to the English-language congregation, she prepared a meal and invited some visitors. Among her guests was a white elder. Noma said, “I was impressed that he was willing to sit close to the floor on a plastic crate.” As a result of this ongoing arrangement, many brothers and sisters made new friends and are determined to continue to widen out in their associations.

“TENDER AFFECTIONS OF COMPASSION, KINDNESS”

⁷ Until Satan’s world comes to an end, we will continue to experience trials. We deal with unemployment, serious illnesses, persecution, natural disasters, loss of possessions because of crime, or other hardships. To support one another

7. Why is there an ongoing need to show compassion?

in our suffering or adversity, we need to have genuine compassion. Feeling *tender compassion* will move us to acts of *kindness*. (Eph. 4:32) These aspects of the new personality will help us to imitate God and be of comfort to others. —2 Cor. 1:3, 4.

⁸ How can we show even greater consideration toward foreigners or disadvantaged ones in our congregation? We need to befriend such individuals and help them to see that they are a valuable part of the congregation. (1 Cor. 12:22, 25) Consider what happened to Dannykarl who moved from the Philippines to Japan. At his workplace, he was not treated as well as the local employees. Then he attended a meeting of Jehovah's Witnesses. "Almost all in attendance were Japanese," says Dannykarl, "yet they gave me a warm welcome, as if they were my old acquaintances." He continued to experience expressions of kindness, which helped him to make spiritual progress. He was baptized, and today he serves as an elder. His fellow elders view Dannykarl and his wife, Jennifer, as a blessing to the congregation. The elders say about them, "They lead a very simple life as pioneers and set a fine example of seeking the Kingdom first."—Luke 12:31.

⁹ When we share the Kingdom message with others, we have a fine opportunity to do "good toward all." (Gal. 6:10) Out of compassion for immigrants, many Witnesses endeavor to learn a new language. (1 Cor. 9:23) This has led

8. Our showing compassion and kindness to all in the congregation may lead to what good results? Give an example.

9, 10. Give examples of the rewards that come from showing compassion in the ministry.



What moves Christian ministers to help immigrants? (See paragraph 10)

to rich blessings. For example, a pioneer sister in Australia named Tiffany learned Swahili in order to be of help to a Swahili-language congregation in the city of Brisbane. Though learning the language was a struggle for Tiffany, her life has been enriched. She says: "If you want an exciting ministry, serving in a foreign-language congregation is for you. It's like traveling without leaving your city. You get to experience our worldwide brotherhood and see its miraculous unity firsthand."

¹⁰ Consider also the example of a family in Japan. Sakiko, the daughter, relates: "In the 1990's, we often met Brazilian immigrants when we were in the field ministry. When we showed them scriptures from their Portuguese Bible,

such as Revelation 21:3, 4 or Psalm 37: 10, 11, 29, they paid attention and sometimes even shed tears.” But the family’s compassion did not stop there. “When we saw their spiritual hunger,” says Sakiko, “we began to study Portuguese as a family.” Later, the family helped to establish a Portuguese-language congregation. Through the years, the family helped many immigrants to become servants of Jehovah. “It took a lot of work to learn Portuguese,” adds Sakiko, “but the blessings far outweigh the efforts. We are so thankful to Jehovah.”—**Read Acts 10:34, 35.**

**“CLOTHE YOURSELVES
WITH . . . HUMILITY”**

¹¹ Our motive for clothing ourselves with the new personality must be to honor Jehovah, not to win praise from men. Remember that even a once perfect spirit creature sinned because he allowed himself to become filled with pride. (Compare Ezekiel 28:17.) How much more difficult it is for sinful humans to avoid improper pride and haughtiness! Still, it is possible to clothe ourselves with *humility*. What will help us to do so?

¹² To remain humble, we need to set aside time to meditate daily on what we read in God’s Word. (Deut. 17:18-20) In particular, we do well to reflect on Jesus’ teachings and his wonderful example of humble service. (Matt. 20:28) Jesus even washed the feet of his apostles. (John 13:12-17) We also need to pray frequently for God’s spirit to help us fight any tendency of feeling superior to others.—Gal. 6:3, 4; Phil. 2:3.

11, 12. (a) Why is having the right motive for putting on the new personality so important?
(b) What will help us to remain humble?

¹³ **Read Proverbs 22:4.** Humility is required of all true worshippers and brings great rewards. Being humble will help us to promote peace and unity in the congregation. Developing and strengthening humility will also make us recipients of God’s undeserved kindness. The apostle Peter stated: “All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones.”—1 Pet. 5:5.

**“CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH . . .
MILDNESS . . . AND PATIENCE”**

¹⁴ In today’s world, people who are mild and patient are often considered weak. How far such reasoning is from the truth! These beautiful qualities originate from the most powerful Person in the universe. Jehovah God is the best example of showing *mildness* and *patience*. (2 Pet. 3:9) Consider how he responded through his angelic representatives when Abraham and Lot questioned him. (Gen. 18:22-33; 19:18-21) Also, for over 1,500 years, Jehovah put up with the wayward nation of Israel.—Ezek. 33:11.

¹⁵ Jesus was “mild-tempered.” (Matt. 11:29) He showed great patience in putting up with the weaknesses of his followers. Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus endured unjust criticism from religious opposers. Yet, he was mild and patient right up to his wrongful execution. While suffering agonizing pain on the torture stake, Jesus prayed that his Father forgive his executioners because,

13. What are the rewards for being humble?

14. Who is the best example in showing mildness and patience?

15. What example did Jesus set in showing mildness and patience?

as he said, “they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34) What an outstanding example of mildness and patience under painful and stressful circumstances!—**Read 1 Peter 2:21-23.**

¹⁶ How can we show mildness and patience? Paul mentioned one way when he wrote to fellow believers: “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another. Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.” (Col. 3:13) Indeed, it takes mildness and patience on our part to obey this command. But by being forgiving, we promote and preserve the unity in the congregation.

¹⁷ Being clothed with mildness and patience is not optional for a Christian. It is an essential requirement for our salvation. (Matt. 5:5; Jas. 1:21) More important, by means of these qualities, we honor Jehovah and help others to heed the Bible’s counsel.—Gal. 6:1; 2 Tim. 2:24, 25.

“CLOTHE YOURSELVES WITH LOVE”

¹⁸ All the qualities considered thus far are closely connected with *love*. For example, the disciple James had to counsel his brothers for favoring the rich over the poor. He showed that such conduct violated the royal law: “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” Then he added: “If you continue showing favoritism, you are committing sin.” (Jas. 2:8, 9) In contrast, love will move us to avoid any discrimination based on edu-

cation, race, or social status. Indeed, impartiality needs to be more than a veneer. It must be a genuine part of our personality.

¹⁹ Love is also “patient and kind” and “does not get puffed up.” (1 Cor. 13:4) It truly takes patience, kindness, and humility to continue sharing the Kingdom message with our neighbors. (Matt. 28:19) These same qualities make it easier for us to get along with *all* the brothers and sisters in the congregation. What is the reward for showing such love? It produces united congregations that reflect well on Jehovah and that attract newly interested ones. Fittingly, the Bible’s description of the new personality concludes with this powerful truth: “Besides all these things, clothe yourselves with love, for it is a perfect bond of union.”—Col. 3:14.

“CONTINUE TO BE MADE NEW”

²⁰ Each of us should ask himself, ‘What more can I do to strip off and keep off the old personality?’ We need to pray fervently for God’s help and work hard to overcome any attitude or practice that will prevent us from inheriting God’s Kingdom. (Gal. 5:19-21) We also need to ask, ‘Do I continue to be made new in my dominant mental attitude?’ (Eph. 4:23, 24) Putting on and keeping on the new personality is an ongoing process for all Christians until we are able to do so to the full. Imagine how wonderful life will be when everyone we know is clothed to perfection with the new personality!

16. In what practical way can we show mildness and patience?

17. Why are mildness and patience important?

18. What connection is there between love and impartiality?

19. Why is it important that we clothe ourselves with love?

20. (a) What questions should we ask ourselves, and why? (b) We look forward to what time?

LOVE

A Precious Quality

LOVE

JOY

PEACE

PATIENCE

KINDNESS

GOODNESS

FAITH

MILDNESS

SELF-CONTROL

THE apostle Paul wrote under inspiration about nine qualities that result from the action of holy spirit. (Gal. 5:22, 23) He described these desirable qualities as forming a whole—"the fruitage of the spirit."* This fruitage characterizes "the new personality." (Col. 3:10) Just as a tree will bear fruit when it is properly tended, so a person will manifest the fruitage of the spirit when holy spirit flows freely in his life.—Ps. 1:1-3.

The first aspect of the spirit's fruitage that Paul listed is the precious quality of love. How precious is it? Paul said that without love, he was "nothing." (1 Cor. 13:2) But just what is love, and how can we develop it and show it every day?

HOW LOVE IS EXPRESSED

Although words cannot easily define the quality of love, the Bible describes the way it is expressed. For example, we read that love is "patient and kind." Also, it "rejoices with the truth," and it "bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things." Love also involves a feeling of deep affection for others and a sincere concern for them, as well as a warm attachment to them. On the other hand, a lack of love is revealed by jealousy, pride, indecent behavior, selfishness, and a resentful, unforgiving at-

titude. Unlike such heartless and vain qualities, the love we desire to develop "does not look for its own interests."—1 Cor. 13:4-8.

EXEMPLARY LOVE SHOWN BY JEHOVAH AND JESUS

"God is love." Indeed, Jehovah is the very essence of love. (1 John 4:8) All his works and actions bear witness to his love. His greatest act of love toward mankind was that of sending Jesus to suffer and die for us. The apostle John stated: "By this the love of God was revealed in our case, that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world so that we might gain life through him. The love is in this respect, not that we have loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as a propitiatory sacrifice for our sins." (1 John 4:9, 10) Because of God's love, we can obtain forgiveness, hope, and life.

Jesus proved his love for mankind by willingly carrying out God's will. Paul wrote: "[Jesus] says: 'Look! I have come to do your will.' . . . By this 'will' we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time." (Heb. 10:9, 10) No human could show greater love. Jesus said: "No one has love greater than this, that someone should surrender his life in behalf of his friends." (John 15:13) Can we imperfect humans imitate the love shown to us by

* This is the first article of a nine-part series that will consider each quality, or aspect, of the fruitage of the spirit.

Jehovah and Jesus? Yes! Let us consider how we can do so.

“GO ON WALKING IN LOVE”

Paul exhorts us: “Become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love, just as the Christ also loved us and gave himself for us.” (Eph. 5:1, 2) We “go on walking in love” when we manifest this quality in every aspect of our life. We show such love by actions rather than by words alone. John wrote: “Little children, we should love, not in word or with the tongue, but in deed and truth.” (1 John 3:18) For example, when we walk in love for God and neighbor, we will be moved to share the “good news of the Kingdom” with them. (Matt. 24:14; Luke 10: 27) We also walk in love when we are patient, kind, and forgiving. Hence, the Bible counsels us: “Just as Jehovah freely forgave you, you must also do the same.”—Col. 3:13.

Such genuine love, however, is not to be confused with sentimentality. For instance, to calm a crying child, a sentimental parent may cater to the child’s every whim. But the parent who truly loves his child will be firm when necessary. Likewise, God is love, but “those whom Jehovah loves he disciplines.” (Heb. 12:6) When we walk in love, we will also give proper discipline when needed. (Prov. 3:11, 12) Of course, in doing so we must remember that we too are sinful and prone to unloving acts. Thus, we all have areas in which we need to improve in showing love. How can we do this? Let us consider three ways.

CULTIVATE LOVE—HOW?

First, ask God for his spirit, which produces love. Jesus stated that Jehovah gives “holy spirit to those asking him.” (Luke 11: 13) If we pray for holy spirit and endeavor to “keep walking by spirit,” our actions will become more and more loving. (Gal. 5:16) For

instance, if you are an elder in the Christian congregation, you can ask for holy spirit to help you to give Scriptural counsel to others in a loving manner. Or if you are a parent, you can request that God’s spirit help you to discipline your children, not in anger, but in love.

Second, reflect on how Jesus showed love even when provoked. (1 Pet. 2:21, 23) The need to think about Christ’s example may especially arise when we have been offended or have experienced an injustice. At such times, a good question to ask ourselves is, ‘What would Jesus do?’ A sister named Leigh found that considering this question helped her to think before acting. She relates: “Once, a coworker sent an e-mail to my colleagues with negative comments about me and the work I was doing. It hurt me deeply. But then I asked myself, ‘How can I imitate Jesus in dealing with this person?’ After reflecting on what Jesus would have done, I decided to let the matter go and not make an issue of it. Later, I learned that my coworker had been coping with a serious health problem and was under a lot of stress. I concluded that she probably did not really mean what she wrote. Reflecting on Jesus’ example of showing love even when provoked helped me to show similar love to my coworker.” Yes, if we imitate Jesus, we will always act with love.

Third, cultivate the spirit of self-sacrificing love, which is the identifying mark of true Christianity. (John 13:34, 35) In this regard, the Scriptures urge us to develop the same “mental attitude” that Jesus had. By leaving heaven, “he emptied himself” in our behalf, even “to the point of death.” (Phil. 2:5-8) As we imitate his self-sacrificing love, our thoughts and feelings will become more Christlike, and we



How do we benefit from showing love?

will be moved to place the interests of others ahead of our own. What further benefits come from cultivating love?

BENEFITS OF SHOWING LOVE

When we show love, the benefits are far-reaching. Consider two examples:

AN INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD: Because of our love for one another, we know that no matter what congregation we may visit throughout the earth, the brothers and sisters will warmly welcome us. What a blessing it is to be loved by ‘the entire association of our brothers in the world’! (1 Pet. 5:9) Where else but among God’s people can such love be found?

PEACE: “Putting up with one another in love” allows us to enjoy “the uniting bond of peace.” (Eph. 4:2, 3) We experience this peace firsthand at our congregation meetings, assemblies, and conventions. Would you not agree that such a peaceful spirit is truly unique in today’s divided world? (Ps. 119:165; Isa. 54:13) By pursuing peace with

others, we demonstrate the depth of our love for them, which is pleasing to our heavenly Father.—Ps. 133:1-3; Matt. 5:9.

“LOVE BUILDS UP”

Paul wrote: “Love builds up.” (1 Cor. 8:1) How does love do this? In the 13th chapter of Paul’s first letter to the Corinthians—in what has been called the “Psalm of Love”—the apostle explains how love builds up. For one thing, it seeks the other person’s advantage. (1 Cor. 10:24; 13:5) Additionally, because love is thoughtful, considerate, patient, and kind, it builds affectionate families and united congregations.—Col. 3:14.

Our shared love for God is the most valuable and upbuilding love of all. Such love unites people of all backgrounds, races, and tongues in happy association to serve Jehovah “shoulder to shoulder.” (Zeph. 3:9) Let us be determined to show this precious aspect of the fruitage of God’s holy spirit every day.

“When Are We Going to Have Another Assembly?”

IT IS late November 1932 in Mexico City. Just a week earlier, the first electric traffic lights had made an appearance in this bustling city of over one million inhabitants. But now the traffic signals were old news. The city’s reporters have moved on to this week’s event. With cameras ready, they are at the train station, awaiting the arrival of a special guest—Joseph F. Rutherford, then president of the Watch Tower Society. Local Witnesses are also on hand with a hearty welcome for Brother Rutherford, who has come to attend their three-day national convention.

“Beyond question,” *The Golden Age* stated, “this convention will go down in history as an event of outstanding importance in the onward march of Truth in the republic of Mexico.” But what made this convention, attended by only about 150 people, so noteworthy?

Before that event, there was little Kingdom fruitage in Mexico. Since 1919, small assemblies were held, but the number of congregations actually decreased in subsequent years. The opening of a branch office in Mexico City in 1929 seemed promising. There were hindrances, however. When instructed to stop mixing commercial business with the preaching work, one resentful colporteur quit and formed his own Bible

study group. Meanwhile, the branch overseer engaged in unscriptural conduct and had to be replaced. Loyal Witnesses in Mexico needed a spiritual boost.

During his visit, Brother Rutherford gave these faithful ones great encouragement, delivering two stirring convention talks and five powerful radio lectures. For the first time, Mexican radio stations carried the good news throughout the country. After the convention, a newly appointed branch overseer organized the work, and zealous Witnesses went ahead with renewed strength and with Jehovah’s blessing.

The following year saw not one but two conventions held in the country, one in the port city of Veracruz and one in Mexico City. Hard work in the field began yielding fine results. In 1931 there were 82 publishers. Ten years later, there were ten times as many! Some 1,000 came to Mexico City for the 1941 Theocratic Assembly.

“INVASION OF THE STREETS”

In 1943 the Witnesses put on sandwich signs to advertise the “Free Nation’s” Theocratic Assembly held in 12 Mexican cities.* Two placards were

* According to the 1944 *Yearbook*, this assembly “put Jehovah’s witnesses on the map in Mexico.”



ASAMBLÉA TEOCRÁTICA de Testigos de Jehová — México, D.F. Septiembre 12

attached at the shoulders and hung, one in front and one behind, an advertising method that had been in use by Witnesses since 1936.

Commenting on the success of the sandwich-sign parade in Mexico City, the magazine *La Nación* stated: “The first [assembly] day, [the Witnesses] were asked to invite more people. The following day, they had outgrown the venue.” The impact of these parades did not please the Catholic Church, which led a campaign against the Witnesses. Despite opposition, fearless brothers and sisters kept taking to the streets. *La Nación* also reported: “The whole city saw them . . . men—and women—transformed into advertising ‘sandwiches.’” The article featured a picture of brothers on the streets of Mexico City. Below the picture was the caption: “Invasion of the streets.”

“BEDS SOFTER AND WARMER THAN THE CEMENT FLOOR”

In those years, most Witnesses had to make great personal sacrifices to attend the few conventions held in Mexico. Many delegates came from isolated rural villages, beyond the reach of trains or even roads. One congregation wrote, “The only line that passes near this place is a telegraph line.” Thus, delegates had to ride mules or walk for days just to reach a train that would take them to the convention city.

Most Witnesses were poor, barely able to pay for a one-way trip to the convention. On arriving, many stayed with local Witnesses, who lovingly opened their homes to their brothers. Oth-



A 1944 magazine clipping showing a sandwich-sign parade in Mexico City

ers slept in Kingdom Halls. On one occasion, about 90 delegates stayed at the branch, where they had “as beds 20 cartons of books apiece, in rows.” The *Yearbook* account commented that the grateful guests found these “beds softer and warmer than the cement floor.”

For those appreciative Witnesses, gathering in joyful Christian assembly was unquestionably worth all the sacrifices. Today, as the number of publishers in Mexico steadily climbs toward the one million mark, that grateful spirit still prevails.* A 1949 branch report from Mexico stated about the brothers: “The difficult times they have do not dampen their Theocratic spirit because each assembly we have is one of their main topics of conversation for a long time afterward and the question the brethren continually ask is, When are we going to have another assembly?” That report is as true today as it was back then. —From our archives in Central America.

* In Mexico, 2,262,646 people attended the Memorial in 2016.



1941 convention, Mexico City

Why do Matthew's and Luke's accounts about Jesus' early life differ?

■ Matthew's account about the events related to Jesus' birth and early life differs somewhat from Luke's account because the Gospel writers told the events from different perspectives.

Matthew's account focuses on events that involved Joseph. It relates Joseph's initial reaction to Mary's pregnancy, his dream in which an angel explained the situation, and the acceptance of that explanation. (Matt. 1:19-25) Matthew goes on to tell about Joseph's dream in which an angel urged him to flee to Egypt, his flight with his family, his dream in which an angel told him to return to the land of Israel, his return, and his decision to settle his family in Nazareth. (Matt. 2:13, 14, 19-23) In the opening chapters of Matthew's Gospel, Joseph's name is mentioned eight times, but Mary's, only four.

On the other hand, Luke's account is much more focused on Mary. It includes Mary's being visited by the angel Gabriel, her visit to her relative Elizabeth, and Mary's expression of praise to Jehovah. (Luke 1:26-56) Luke also mentions Simeon's words to Mary regarding Jesus' future sufferings. Even in the account of her family's visit to the temple when Jesus was 12 years old, Luke quotes the words of Mary, not those of Joseph. Luke adds that Mary was deeply affected by all these events. (Luke 2:19, 34, 35, 48, 51) In the first two chapters of Luke's Gospel, Mary's name is

mentioned 12 times, but Joseph's, only 3. So, then, Matthew describes more of Joseph's concerns and activities while Luke gives more details about Mary's role and experiences.

Likewise, the genealogies supplied by the two Gospel writers differ. Matthew traces Joseph's ancestry and shows that Jesus as Joseph's adopted son was the *legal heir* to David's kingship. Why? Because Joseph was a descendant of King David through the line of David's son Solomon. (Matt. 1:6, 16) However, Luke evidently traces Mary's ancestry and shows that Jesus was the *natural heir*, "according to the flesh," to David's kingship. (Rom. 1:3) Why? Because Mary was a descendant of King David through the line of David's son Nathan. (Luke 3:31) But why does Luke not list Mary in his genealogy as the daughter of Heli, her father? Because official genealogies were generally traced through the men. So when Luke lists Joseph and describes him as the son of Heli, it was understood to mean that Joseph was Heli's son-in-law.—Luke 3:23.

The genealogical lists by Matthew and Luke clearly establish that Jesus was the foretold Messiah. In fact, the truth about Jesus' genealogy was so well-known that even the Pharisees and Sadducees could not deny it. Today, both Matthew's and Luke's genealogical records remain a part of the foundation of our faith and a testimony to the sureness of the promises of God.

