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SONG 34

Walking in Integrity

PREVIEW

We love Jehovah very much, and we want to please him. Jehovah is holy, and he expects his worshippers to be holy. Is that really possible for imperfect humans? Yes, it is. A careful consideration of the apostle Peter's counsel to fellow believers and of Jehovah's instructions to ancient Israel will help us learn how we can become holy in all our conduct.

“You Must Be Holy”

“Become holy yourselves in all your conduct.”—1 PET. 1:15.

WHETHER our hope is heavenly or earthly, we can benefit from considering the counsel that the apostle Peter gave anointed Christians in the first century. Peter wrote: “Like the Holy One who called you, become holy yourselves in all your conduct, for it is written: ‘You must be holy, because I am holy.’” (1 Pet. 1:15, 16) From these words, we learn that we can imitate Jehovah, who is the supreme example of holiness. We can and must be holy in our conduct. That may seem impossible because we are imperfect. Peter himself made a number of mistakes; yet, his example shows that we can “become holy.”

² In this article, we will consider the following questions: What is holiness? What does the Bible teach us about Jehovah's holiness? How can we become holy in our conduct? And what connection is there between holiness and our relationship with Jehovah?

WHAT IS HOLINESS?

³ When people think of someone who is holy, many imagine a joyless person who wears religious garments and always has a pious look on his face. But that cannot be accurate. Jehovah, who is holy, is described as “the happy God.” (1 Tim. 1:11) Those who worship him are called “happy.” (Ps. 144:15) Jesus condemned those who wore distinctive garments and practiced their

1. What counsel did the apostle Peter give fellow believers, and why might his advice seem impossible to apply?

2. What questions will we consider in this article?

3. What concept do many people have of holiness, but where can we find accurate information?

righteousness in front of men. (Matt. 6:1; Mark 12:38) As Christians, we shape our view of holiness by what we have learned from the Bible. We are convinced that our holy and loving God would never give us a command that we could not possibly obey. So when Jehovah tells us: “**You** must be holy,” we have no doubt that this is possible. Of course, before we can become holy in our conduct, we need to understand what holiness is.

⁴ What is holiness? In the Bible, the words “holy” and “holiness” basically refer to moral and religious cleanness or sacredness. The terms can also convey the idea of being set aside to serve God. In other words, we will be considered holy if we are morally clean, if we worship Jehovah acceptably, and if we have a close personal relationship with him. The very thought that we can have a personal relationship with our holy God is enough to take our breath away, especially when we consider what the Bible teaches us about Jehovah’s holiness.

“HOLY, HOLY, HOLY IS JEHOVAH”

⁵ Jehovah is pure and clean in every way. We learn this from a description of him that was given by seraphs—angelic creatures who are close to his throne. Some of them testified: “Holy, holy, holy is Jehovah of armies.” (Isa. 6:3) Of course, in order to have a close relationship with their holy God, the angels themselves must be holy—and they are. In fact, the mere presence of an angel of

Jehovah could render a place on earth holy. That is what happened when Moses was at the burning thornbush.—Ex. 3:2-5; Josh. 5:15.

⁶ After Moses led the Israelites through the Red Sea, he emphasized to them that their God, Jehovah, is holy. **(Read Exodus 15:1, 11.)** The conduct of the worshippers of the gods of Egypt was far from holy. The same was true of those who worshipped the gods of Canaan. Their worship included child sacrifices and depraved sexual practices. (Lev. 18:3, 4, 21-24; Deut. 18:9, 10) In contrast, Jehovah would never require his worshippers to do anything that would degrade them. He is the essence of holiness. This was made clear by the inscription found on a gold plate on the turban of the high priest. Engraved on this plate was the statement: “Holiness belongs to Jehovah.”—Ex. 28:36-38.

⁷ The message on that plate would assure anyone seeing it that Jehovah is truly holy. What, though, of an Israelite who was not able to see the plate because he could not approach the high priest? Would he miss this vital message? No! Every Israelite heard that message as the Law was read before men, women, and children. (Deut. 31:9-12) If you had been present, you would have heard these statements: “I am Jehovah your God, and you must . . . be holy, because I am holy.” “You must be holy to me, because I, Jehovah, am holy.”—Lev. 11:44, 45; 20:7, 26.

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4. What do the words “holy” and “holiness” mean?
5. What can we learn about Jehovah from faithful angels?

6-7. (a) According to Exodus 15:1, 11, how did Moses emphasize God’s holiness? (b) How was God’s holiness called to the attention of all Israelites? (See cover picture.)



The comment about parents found at Leviticus 19:3 should move Christians to consider what? (See paragraphs 10-12)

⁸ Let us focus on one statement recorded at Leviticus 19:2 that was read to all. Jehovah told Moses: “Speak to the entire assembly of the Israelites and tell them, ‘You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.’” Peter may have been quoting from that statement when he urged Christians to “become holy.” (**Read 1 Peter 1:14-16.**) Of course, we are not under the Mosaic Law. Still, what Peter wrote confirms what we learn from Leviticus 19:2, that is, Jehovah is holy and those who love him should strive to be holy. This is true whether we hope to live in heaven or on a paradise earth.—1 Pet. 1:4; 2 Pet. 3:13.

“BECOME HOLY . . . IN ALL YOUR CONDUCT”

⁹ Because we want to please our holy God, we are eager to learn how we can become holy. Jehovah provides some

8. Why should we be interested in considering Leviticus 19:2 and 1 Peter 1:14-16?

9. How will we benefit from considering Leviticus chapter 19?

practical advice on how we can do so. An excellent source of this advice is Leviticus chapter 19. Hebrew scholar Marcus Kalisch wrote: “This remarkable chapter is perhaps the most comprehensive, the most varied, and in some respects the most important section of Leviticus, if not of the Pentateuch.” Let us note some verses from this chapter that contain valuable lessons about aspects of our daily life. As we do so, remember that these lessons follow the opening statement: “You should be holy.”

¹⁰ After stating that the Israelites should be holy, Jehovah added: “Each of you should *respect his mother and his father* . . . I am Jehovah your God.” —Lev. 19:2, 3.

¹¹ Clearly, we ought to take to heart God’s direction to honor our parents. Recall the occasion when a man asked Jesus: “What good must I do to gain

10-11. What aspect of holy conduct is highlighted in the opening words of Leviticus chapter 19, and how should we view this direction?

everlasting life?” Part of Jesus’ answer was that the man needed to honor his father and his mother. (Matt. 19:16-19) Jesus even denounced the Pharisees and scribes for scheming to avoid giving that honor. Thus, they “made the word of God invalid.” (Matt. 15:3-6) “The word of God” included the fifth of the Ten Commandments as well as what we read at Leviticus 19:3. (Ex. 20:12) Once again, bear in mind that the direction found at Leviticus 19:3—to respect one’s mother and father—comes right after the statement: “You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.”

¹² In harmony with Jehovah’s counsel to honor our parents, we might ask ourselves, ‘How am I doing in this regard?’ If you feel that you should have done more in the past, you could decide now to make improvements. You cannot change the past, but you can be resolved from this point on to do more with and for your parents. Perhaps you could arrange to spend more time with them. Or what about offering them more support materially, spiritually, or emotionally? Doing so is in line with what Leviticus 19:3 says.

¹³ Leviticus 19:3 teaches us something else about becoming holy. It mentions keeping the Sabbath. Christians are not under the Law, so we need not observe a weekly Sabbath. Still, we can learn much from how the Israelites kept the Sabbath and how they benefited from doing so.

12. In harmony with the counsel found at Leviticus 19:3, what question might we ask ourselves?

13. (a) What further counsel do we find at Leviticus 19:3? (b) How can we today imitate Jesus’ example, as recorded at Luke 4:16-18?

The Sabbath was a time to rest from normal labors and give attention to spiritual matters.* Fittingly, on that day Jesus would go to the synagogue in his hometown and read from God’s Word. (Ex. 31:12-15; **read Luke 4:16-18.**) God’s exhortation recorded at Leviticus 19:3 to “keep [his] sabbaths” should move us to buy out some time from our day-to-day activities so that we can give more attention to spiritual matters. Do you feel that you should make some adjustments in that respect? If you regularly set aside time to focus on spiritual matters, you will develop a warm, personal relationship with Jehovah, which is essential to become holy.

STRENGTHEN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH JEHOVAH

¹⁴ Leviticus chapter 19 repeatedly mentions a fundamental truth that can help us to remain holy. Verse 4 concludes with the words: “I am Jehovah your God.” That phrase or similar wording is found 16 times in this chapter. This calls to mind the first commandment: “I am Jehovah your God . . . You must not have any other gods besides me.” (Ex. 20:2, 3) Every Christian who wants to become holy must ensure that nothing or no one comes between him and his relationship with his God. And because we bear the name Jehovah’s Witnesses, we are determined to avoid any actions

* For a discussion of the Sabbath and the lessons we can draw from it, see the article “‘There Is an Appointed Time’ for Work and for Rest” in the December 2019 issue of *The Watchtower*.

14. What fundamental truth is emphasized throughout Leviticus chapter 19?

What point should God's people have learned from Leviticus 19:23-25, and what lesson do you learn from those verses?

(See paragraphs 17-18)



that would disgrace or profane his holy name.—Lev. 19:12; Isa. 57:15.

¹⁵ For the Israelites, recognizing Jehovah as their God involved keeping many laws. Leviticus 18:4 says: “You should carry out my judicial decisions, and you should keep my statutes and walk in them. I am Jehovah your God.” Chapter 19 includes some of those “statutes” for Israel. For example, verses 5-8, 21, 22 deal with animal sacrifices. Those were to be made in a way that would not ‘profane a holy thing of Jehovah.’ Reading those verses should move us to want to please Jehovah and to offer him acceptable sacrifices of praise, as Hebrews 13:15 urges us to do.

¹⁶ To become holy, we must be willing to stand out as different. That can be a challenge. Sometimes schoolmates, business associates, unbelieving relatives, and others may pressure us to get involved in activities that would interfere with our worship. When they do, we have an important decision to make.

15. The verses found in Leviticus chapter 19 dealing with sacrifices should move us to do what?

16. What may remind us of the distinction between those serving God and those not serving him?

What can help us make the right choice? Consider an interesting principle found at Leviticus 19:19, which says in part: “You must not wear a garment made with two sorts of thread mixed together.” That law helped to distinguish Israel from the surrounding nations. Today, we do not object to garments of mixed materials, such as cotton and polyester or wool and rayon. But we do object to being like people whose beliefs and practices conflict with Bible teachings, even if these individuals are schoolmates, business associates, or relatives. Of course, we have natural affection for our relatives, and we show love for our neighbors. Yet, when it comes to important aspects of life, we are willing to be separate as Jehovah’s people. Recall that being set aside for God is part of being holy. That is vital if we are striving to become holy.—2 Cor. 6:14-16; 1 Pet. 4:3, 4.

¹⁷ The phrase “I am Jehovah your God” should have helped the Israelites to give priority to their relationship with Jehovah. How? **Leviticus 19:23-25** reveals one way. **(Read.)** Consider what these

17-18. We can draw what valuable lesson from Leviticus 19:23-25?

words would mean for the Israelites once they entered the Promised Land. If a man planted trees for food, he was not to eat the fruit from these trees for three years. In the fourth year, the fruit was set aside for use at God's sanctuary. It was only in the fifth year that the owner could eat the fruit. This law should have helped the Israelites to understand that their interests were not to come first. They were to trust in Jehovah as their Provider and give priority to supporting his worship. He would make sure that they had enough to eat. And God encouraged them to make generous gifts at the sanctuary, the center of his worship.

¹⁸ The law recorded at Leviticus 19:23-25 reminds us of Jesus' words in the Sermon on the Mount. He said: "Stop being anxious about . . . what you will eat or what you will drink." Jesus continued: "Your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things." God will provide for us, as he does even for the birds. (Matt. 6:25, 26, 32) We trust in Jehovah as our Provider. And we discreetly make "gifts of mercy" to help those in need. We are also quick to contribute toward

congregation expenses. Jehovah takes notice of such generosity and will repay us. (Matt. 6:2-4) We are thus showing that we understand the lessons from Leviticus 19:23-25.

¹⁹ We have examined just a few portions of Leviticus chapter 19, noting ways in which we can be like our holy God. By imitating him, we strive to 'become holy in all our conduct.' (1 Pet. 1:15) Many who do not serve Jehovah have been eyewitnesses of that fine conduct. In fact, it has moved some to glorify Jehovah. (1 Pet. 2:12) But there is much more that we can learn from Leviticus chapter 19. The following article will address additional verses in that chapter and will help us to discern other areas of our life in which we can "become holy," as Peter urged.

19. How have you benefited from considering this portion of Leviticus?

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 4:** An adult son spends time with his parents, brings his wife and child to visit them, and makes it a point to keep in contact with them. **Page 6:** An Israelite farmer examines some fruit on the trees that he planted.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- What is holiness?
- How can lessons from Leviticus chapter 19 help us to become holy in our conduct?
- What steps should we take to strengthen our relationship with Jehovah?

SONG 109

Love Intensely
From the Heart

PREVIEW

Christians are not under the Mosaic Law, but that Law mentions many things that we should do or should avoid doing. Learning about them can help us show love to others and please God. This article discusses how we can benefit from some lessons found in Leviticus chapter 19.

What Leviticus Teaches Us About How to Treat Others

“You must love your fellow man as yourself.”—LEV. 19:18.

IN THE preceding article, we considered practical counsel set out in Leviticus chapter 19. For example, as noted in verse 3, Jehovah admonished the Israelites to respect their parents. We discussed how we today can apply that advice by caring for our parents’ physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. In the same verse, God’s people were reminded of the importance of observing the Sabbath. We learned that while we are not bound by the Sabbath law today, we can apply the principle by regularly setting aside time in our schedule to care for matters related to our worship. In doing so, we will show that we are striving to be holy, as Leviticus 19:2 and 1 Peter 1:15 direct.

² In this article, we will continue to consider Leviticus chapter 19. What can this chapter teach us about showing consideration to those who have physical limitations, about being honest in our business dealings, and about showing love to our fellow man? We want to be holy as God is holy, so let us see what we can learn.

SHOWING CONSIDERATION FOR THOSE WITH PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

³ **Read Leviticus 19:14.** Jehovah expected his people to show consideration for those who had physical limitations. For example, the Israelites were not to curse a deaf man. Such cursing involved threatening someone or call-

1-2. What did we consider in the preceding article, and what will we consider in this article?

3-4. According to Leviticus 19:14, how were the deaf and the blind to be treated?

ing down evil on him. What a terrible thing to do to a deaf man! He could not hear what was being said about him, so he would not be in a position to defend himself.

⁴ Furthermore, in verse 14 we learn that God's servants were not to "put an obstacle before a blind man." One reference work comments regarding people with physical challenges: "In the ancient Near East [they] tended to be exploited and abused." Perhaps some inconsiderate person would place an obstacle before a blind man out of spite or out of some perverted sense of humor. How unkind! By means of this command, Jehovah helped his people to see that they should show compassion to those who were disadvantaged.

⁵ Jesus showed compassion to those who had physical limitations. Recall the report he sent to John the Baptist: "The blind are now seeing, the lame are walk-

5. How can we show compassion to those with physical limitations?

ing, the lepers are being cleansed, the deaf are hearing, [and] the dead are being raised up." In response to Jesus' miracles, "all the people gave praise to God." (Luke 7:20-22; 18:43) Christians are happy to imitate Jesus' compassionate attitude toward those who have physical limitations. So we are kind, considerate, and patient with such ones. Granted, Jehovah has not given us the power to perform miracles. We are privileged, though, to tell those who are physically or spiritually blind the good news about a paradise where mankind will be restored to full physical and spiritual health. (Luke 4:18) This good news is already leading many to give praise to God.

BEING HONEST IN OUR BUSINESS DEALINGS

⁶ Some verses in Leviticus chapter 19 expand on what was stated in the Ten Commandments. For example, the eighth

6. How does the information found in Leviticus chapter 19 expand on what was stated in the Ten Commandments?



Leviticus 19:14
encourages what
attitude and actions
toward someone
who is deaf or blind?
(See paragraphs 3-5)

commandment simply said: “You must not steal.” (Ex. 20:15) Someone might conclude that as long as he was careful not to take anything that did not belong to him, he would be obeying that command. Yet, he might be stealing in other ways.

⁷ A merchant might take pride in the fact that he had never taken anything that did not belong to him. But what about his business practices? As recorded at Leviticus 19:35, 36, Jehovah said: “You must not use dishonest standards in measuring length, weight, or volume. You should use accurate scales, accurate weights, an accurate dry measure, and an accurate liquid measure.” A merchant who used inaccurate scales or measurements in order to deceive his customers would in a sense be stealing from them. A further consideration of Leviticus chapter 19 makes that clear.

⁸ **Read Leviticus 19:11-13.** The opening words of Leviticus 19:11 read: “You must not steal.” Verse 13 connects stealing with dishonest business practices, saying: “You must not defraud your fellow man.” So fraudulent business practices are linked with stealing and robbery. While the eighth commandment set out the law on stealing, the details found in Leviticus would help the Jews to understand how they could apply the spirit of that law. We can benefit from reflecting on Jehovah’s view of dishonesty and stealing. We might ask ourselves: ‘In the

light of Leviticus 19:11-13, is there something in my life that merits attention? Do I need to make adjustments in my business dealings or work habits?’

⁹ There is another aspect of honesty that a Christian who has a business should consider. Leviticus 19:13 concludes: “You should not withhold the wages of a hired worker all night until morning.” In the agricultural society of Israel, hired laborers were to be paid at the end of each workday. To hold back the wages of such a worker would deprive him of the money he needed to feed his family that day. Jehovah explained: “He is in need and his life depends on his wages.”—Deut. 24:14, 15; Matt. 20:8.

¹⁰ Today many employees are paid once or twice a month, not every day. However, the principle set out at Leviticus 19:13 is still valid. Some employers take advantage of their employees by paying them an amount that is far below what is fair. They know that these workers may have little choice but to continue working for starvation wages. In a sense, such employers are ‘withholding the wages of a hired worker.’ A Christian who has a business would want to take this point to heart. Now let us see what else we can learn from Leviticus chapter 19.

LOVING YOUR FELLOW MAN AS YOURSELF

¹¹ God’s interest in how we treat people includes more than merely telling us to

7. How might a merchant break the eighth commandment about stealing?

8. How did the details found at Leviticus 19:11-13 help the Jews to apply the spirit of the eighth commandment, and how can we benefit?

9. What protection did the law found at Leviticus 19:13 provide?

10. We can draw what lesson from Leviticus 19:13?

11-12. What did Jesus emphasize by quoting from Leviticus 19:17, 18?

refrain from doing harm to our fellow man. We can see this at **Leviticus 19:17, 18. (Read.)** Note the clear command: “You must love your fellow man as yourself.” Acting that way is fundamental for a Christian who wants to please God.

¹² Consider how Jesus emphasized the importance of the command recorded at Leviticus 19:18. A Pharisee once asked Jesus: “Which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied that “the greatest and first commandment” is to love Jehovah with our whole heart, our whole soul, and our whole mind. Then Jesus quoted Leviticus 19:18, saying: “The second, like it, is this: ‘You must love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matt. 22:35-40) There are countless ways to show love for neighbor, but once again we can gain insight from Leviticus chapter 19.

¹³ One way to show love for our neighbor is by applying the counsel found at Leviticus 19:18. It says: “You must not

take vengeance nor hold a grudge.” Most of us know of cases in which a person has held a grudge against a coworker, a schoolmate, a relative, or a family member—even for years! Recall that Joseph’s ten half brothers harbored a grudge against him, which finally led them to commit a hateful act. (Gen. 37:2-8, 25-28) How differently Joseph acted toward them! When he was in a position of authority and could get even with his half brothers, he showed them mercy. Joseph did not hold a grudge. Rather, he acted in harmony with the counsel recorded later at Leviticus 19:18.—Gen. 50:19-21.

¹⁴ Joseph’s course of forgiving instead of nursing a grudge or taking vengeance sets a pattern for Christians who want to please God. It is also in harmony with the model prayer, for Jesus urged us to forgive those who sin against us. (Matt. 6:9, 12) Likewise, the apostle Paul advised fellow Christians: “Do not

13. How does the Bible account of Joseph illustrate the point later made at Leviticus 19:18?

14. What shows that the principles found at Leviticus 19:18 still hold true?



In view of Leviticus 19:11-13, a Christian might make what self-examination about business practices? (See paragraphs 8-10)



Just as it is best not to keep picking at a literal wound, it is best not to keep thinking about offenses. We should try to put them behind us
(See paragraph 15)



avenge yourselves, beloved.” (Rom. 12: 19) He also encouraged them: “Continue putting up with one another and forgiving one another freely even if anyone has a cause for complaint against another.” (Col. 3:13) Jehovah’s principles do not change. The principles behind the law stated at Leviticus 19:18 still hold true today.

¹⁵ Consider an illustration. Hurt feelings can be likened to physical wounds. Some are minor; others are serious. For example, when we open an envelope, we might get a slight paper cut on our finger. That can really hurt, but it will likely not do us any lasting harm. After a day or two, perhaps we do not even recall where the cut was. Similarly, some offenses are minor. For example, a friend may say or do something thoughtless that hurts us, but we are able to forgive him easily. But if we have a deeper wound, a doctor may have to stitch the wound and bind it in bandages. If we were to keep poking or picking at the wound, we would only

15. How might we illustrate the need to put offenses behind us?

harm ourselves. Sadly, a person might be doing something similar when he is deeply offended. He may constantly think about the emotional injury he suffered and the hurt the other person caused him. But those who hold a grudge hurt only themselves. How much better it is to obey the counsel found at Leviticus 19:18!

¹⁶ When Jehovah commanded the Israelites to love their fellow man, he did not mean that they should show love only to those of the same race or nationality. They were also told to love the foreigners in their midst. That is the clear message found at **Leviticus 19:33, 34. (Read.)** The foreigner was to be treated “like a native,” and the Israelites were to “love him” as themselves. For example, the Israelites were to permit both the foreign residents and the poor to benefit from the gleaning arrangement. (Lev. 19:9, 10) The principle about loving foreigners applies to Christians today. (Luke 10:30-

16. According to Leviticus 19:33, 34, how were foreign residents in Israel to be cared for, and what can we learn from that?

37) How so? There are millions of immigrants, and likely some live near you. It is important for us to treat these men, women, and children with dignity and respect.

LOOKING BEYOND LEVITICUS CHAPTER 19

¹⁷ Both Leviticus 19:2 and 1 Peter 1:15 urge God's people to be holy. Many other verses in Leviticus chapter 19 can help us see what we can do to gain Jehovah's approval. We have discussed verses that identify just some of the positive things to do and some of the negative things to avoid.* The Christian Greek Scriptures show the need for similar conduct. But the apostle Peter adds something.

¹⁸ While we may engage in various spiritual activities and do many good works,

* Verses not addressed in these articles deal with showing partiality, slandering others, consuming blood, as well as practicing spiritism, fortune-telling, and sexual immorality.—Lev. 19:15, 16, 26-29, 31.—See “Questions From Readers” in this issue.

17-18. (a) How should Leviticus 19:2 and 1 Peter 1:15 affect us? (b) What important work did the apostle Peter encourage us to do?

Peter highlighted one in particular. Leading up to his encouragement to become holy in all our conduct, Peter urges us: “Brace up your minds for activity.” (1 Pet. 1:13, 15) What would that activity involve? Peter said that Christ's anointed brothers would “‘declare abroad the excellencies’ of the One who called” them. (1 Pet. 2:9) In fact, all Christians today have the honor of doing this most important work, one that does the greatest amount of good. What a special privilege we have as a holy people to share regularly and zealously in the preaching and teaching work! (Mark 13:10) When we diligently apply the principles found in Leviticus chapter 19, we prove that we love our God and our neighbor. And we show that we want to “become holy” in all our conduct.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 9:** A Witness helps a deaf brother communicate with a doctor.

Page 11: A brother who has a painting business gives an employee his wages. **Page 12:** A sister can easily forget about a minor cut. Will she choose to do the same with a more serious injury?

WHAT DO WE LEARN FROM LEVITICUS CHAPTER 19 . . .

- about showing consideration for those with physical limitations?
- about being honest in all things?
- about showing love for others?

What is the point of the command found at Leviticus 19:16 not to “*stand up against the life of*” another person, and what lesson can we learn from it?

■ Jehovah urged the Israelites to be a holy people. In support of this, he told them: “You must not go around spreading slander among your people. You must not *stand up against* the life of your fellow man. I am Jehovah.”—Lev. 19:2, 16.

The phrase “*stand up against*” expresses very well the original Hebrew text, but what does it mean? A Jewish reference work on the book of Leviticus notes: “This part of the verse is . . . difficult to interpret because of the problems in ascertaining the sense of the Hebrew idiom [found here], literally ‘do not stand over, by, near.’”

Some scholars link that phrase to the preceding verse, which says: “You must not be unjust in your judgment. You must not show partiality to the poor or show preference to the rich. With justice you should judge your fellow man.” (Lev. 19:15) In that case, the command found in verse 16 not to “stand up against” someone could mean that God’s people were not to harm a fellow worker in court proceedings, business matters, or family affairs and not to twist things for personal benefit. Granted, we should not do those things, but there is a more logical way to understand this phrase in verse 16.

Consider the opening part of that verse. God commands his people not to go around spreading slander. Keep in mind that slander is more than idle gossip, though such gossip can also create problems. (Prov. 10:19; Eccl. 10:12-14; 1 Tim. 5:11-15; Jas. 3:6) Slander is often expressed in words and is intended to



damage someone’s reputation. The slanderer might bear false witness against the other person, even if doing so endangers that person’s life. Recall that slanderous men bore false witness against Naboth, which led to his being unjustly stoned. (1 Ki. 21:8-13) Yes, a slanderer could stand up against another man’s life, as mentioned in the second part of Leviticus 19:16.

Furthermore, malicious slander can reflect a degree of hatred. At 1 John 3:15, we read: “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has everlasting life remaining in him.” It is worth noting that God followed up the words found in verse 16 with the statement: “You must not hate your brother in your heart.”—Lev. 19:17.

Thus, the curious phrase recorded at Leviticus 19:16 provides strong admonition for Christians. We must resist giving in to bad thoughts and slandering another person. Simply put, if we “stand up against” someone by allowing dislike or envy to move us to slander him or her, it could be evidence of or result in hatred. Christians must absolutely avoid that.—Matt. 12:36, 37.

Have you carefully read this year's issues of *The Watchtower*? Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

James 5:11 provides what assurance in saying that Jehovah is “very tender in affection” and “merciful”?

We know that Jehovah, in his mercy, is inclined to forgive our errors. James 5:11 assures us that he also affectionately offers to help us. We do well to imitate him.—w21.01, p. 21.

Why did Jehovah establish the headship arrangement?

He did so out of love. This arrangement allows his loyal family to function in a peaceful, orderly way. Each family member who works in harmony with this arrangement knows who is responsible for making final decisions and for taking the lead in carrying them out.—w21.02, p. 3.

Why should Christians be careful about using electronic messaging applications?

If a person chooses to use such applications, he needs to be selective in his choice of associates. That is harder to do with large messaging groups. (1 Tim. 5:13) There are also dangers involving the spread of unconfirmed reports and the use of theocratic contacts for commercial purposes.—w21.03, p. 31.

What are some reasons why God allowed Jesus to suffer and die?

One reason is that by Jesus' being hung on a stake, it was possible for the Jews to be freed from a curse. (Gal. 3:10, 13) A second is that Jehovah was training Jesus for his role as High Priest. And a third is that Jesus' loyalty to death proved that humans can be faithful despite severe tests. (Job 1:9-11)—w21.04, pp. 16-17.

What can you do if people are hard to find in the ministry?

You can try to reach them at a time when they are more likely to be at home. You can also try preaching in a different location. And you can try a different approach, such as letter writing.—w21.05, pp. 15-16.

What did the apostle Paul mean when he said: “Through law I died toward law”? (Gal. 2:19)

The Mosaic Law made human imperfection manifest and guided Israel to the Christ. (Gal. 3:19, 24) This led Paul to accept Christ. In doing so, Paul “died toward law”; he was no longer bound to it.—w21.06, p. 31.

How has Jehovah set the example for us in showing endurance?

Jehovah has endured the reproach brought on his name, the opposition to his sovereignty, the rebellion of some of his children, the constant lies of Satan, the suffering of his servants, the separation from friends who have died, the oppression of the human family, and the ruining of his creative works.—w21.07, pp. 9-12.

Joseph set what fine example of patience?

He endured unjust treatment from his brothers. That led to his being falsely accused and imprisoned in Egypt for years.—w21.08, p. 12.

Haggai 2:6-9, 20-22 foretells what figurative shaking?

The nations react negatively to the Kingdom preaching, but many people have been drawn to the truth. Soon the nations will finally be shaken when they are destroyed.—w21.09, pp. 15-19.

Why should we not give up in carrying out our ministry?

Jehovah sees our efforts, and he is pleased. If we do not tire out or give up, we will gain everlasting life.—w21.10, pp. 25-26.

How can Leviticus chapter 19 help us to apply the counsel: “Become holy yourselves in all your conduct”? (1 Pet. 1:15)

That verse is likely a quotation from Leviticus 19:2. Chapter 19 provides many examples of how we can apply 1 Peter 1:15 in our daily life.—w21.12, pp. 3-4.

SONG 3

Our Strength, Our Hope,
Our Confidence

PREVIEW

When Jesus said that his sheep would listen to his voice, he meant that his disciples would listen to his teachings and apply them in their life. In this article, we will consider two outstanding teachings of Jesus, namely, to stop being anxious about material things and to stop judging others. We will discuss how we can apply his counsel.

Listen to the Voice of the Fine Shepherd

“They will listen to my voice.”—JOHN 10:16.

JESUS compared his relationship with his followers to the close bond between a shepherd and his sheep. (John 10:14) That comparison is appropriate. The sheep know their shepherd and respond to his voice. A traveler experienced this firsthand. He reported: “We wanted to film some sheep and tried to make them come near. But they did not follow us because they did not know our voices. Then a small shepherd boy came along; hardly had he called them when they followed along.”

² The experience of that traveler reminds us of Jesus’ words regarding his sheep—his disciples. He said: “They will listen to my voice.” (John 10:16) But Jesus is in heaven. How can we say that we are listening to him? A key way we show that we are listening to our Master’s voice is by applying his teachings in our life.—Matt. 7: 24, 25.

³ In this article and in the next, we will consider some of Jesus’ teachings. As we will see, Jesus taught us that we ***should stop doing*** certain things and that we ***should do*** other things. We will first consider two things in particular that the fine shepherd instructs us to stop doing.

1. What is one reason why Jesus may have likened his followers to sheep?

2-3. (a) How do Jesus’ followers show that they are listening to his voice? (b) What will we consider in this article and in the next?

**“STOP BEING IN
ANXIOUS SUSPENSE”**

4 Read Luke 12:29. Jesus urged his followers to “stop being in anxious suspense” about their material needs. We know that Jesus’ counsel is always wise and right. We want to apply it, but at times we might find it quite challenging to do so. Why?

5 Some may be anxious about their material needs—food, clothing, and shelter. They may live in a country with poor economic conditions. It may be difficult for them to earn enough money to care for their family. Or the breadwinner in the family may have died, leav-

4. According to Luke 12:29, what can cause “anxious suspense”?

5. Why may some become anxious about their material needs?

ing the rest of the family without financial support. The COVID-19 pandemic may have resulted in the loss of jobs and income. (Eccl. 9:11) If we have experienced any of these or other challenges, how can we follow Jesus’ direction to **stop** being anxious?

6 On one occasion, the apostle Peter and the other apostles were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee during a windstorm when they saw Jesus walking on the surface of the water. Peter said: “Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you over the waters.” After Jesus invited him to “come,” Peter got out of the boat and “walked over the waters and went toward Jesus.” Notice what happened next. “Looking at the windstorm,

6. Describe what happened to the apostle Peter on one occasion.

**Rather than figuratively
sink into anxiety over
material things, build
confidence in Jehovah**
(See paragraphs 6-8)



he became afraid. And when he started to sink, he cried out: ‘Lord, save me!’” Jesus stretched out his hand and saved him. Significantly, Peter was able to walk on turbulent waters as long as he kept his focus on Jesus. But when Peter looked at the storm, he became overwhelmed with fear and doubt and began to sink. —Matt. 14:24-31.

⁷ We can learn from Peter’s example. When Peter stepped out of the boat and onto the sea, he did not expect to get distracted and start sinking. He wanted to stay on top of the waters until he reached his Master. But he failed to remain focused on that goal. Granted, we cannot walk on water, but we do face tests of faith. If we lose sight of Jehovah and his promises, we will begin to sink spiritually. No matter what figurative storms come up in our life, we must keep our mind focused on Jehovah and his ability to help us. How can we do that?

⁸ We will benefit from replacing anxiety with confidence. Remember that our loving Father, Jehovah, guarantees that he will care for our material needs if we put spiritual things first. (Matt. 6:32, 33) He has a perfect record of fulfilling that promise. (Deut. 8:4, 15, 16; Ps. 37:25) If Jehovah provides for the birds and the flowers, surely we do not have to be anxious about what we will eat or wear! (Matt. 6:26-30; Phil. 4:6, 7) Just as love impels caring parents to provide materially for their children, love moti-

vates our heavenly Father to care for the material needs of his people. Yes, we can be certain that Jehovah will look after us!

⁹ Consider an experience that illustrates how Jehovah can care for our material needs. A couple in full-time service drove over an hour in their old car to pick up some sisters living at a refugee center and take them to a Christian meeting. The brother explained: “After the meeting, we invited the sisters for a meal, but then we realized that we had nothing to offer them.” What would the couple do? The brother continued: “When we arrived home, there sat two big shopping bags of food in front of our door. We did not know who had left them there. Jehovah took care of us.” Sometime later, the couple’s car broke down. They needed it for their ministry; however, they had no money to repair it. While the car was being looked over at a nearby garage, a man came in and asked: “Whose car is that?” The brother said that it was his and that it needed repair. The man replied: “That does not matter. My wife wants this type of car and exactly in that color. How much do you want for it?” The brother ended up with enough money to buy another car. He concluded: “I do not need to explain how we felt at the end of the day. We knew that this was no coincidence. It was Jehovah’s hand.”

¹⁰ When we listen to the fine shepherd

7. What can we learn from Peter’s example?

8. What can help us to avoid becoming overly distracted by our material needs?

9. What can you learn from the experience of one couple?

10. How does Psalm 37:5 encourage us not to be anxious about our material needs?

and stop being unduly anxious about material needs, we can be sure that Jehovah will provide for us. (**Read Psalm 37:5**; 1 Pet. 5:7) Consider the situations mentioned in paragraph 5. Until now, Jehovah may have used a family head or an employer to help us care for our daily needs. If the family head is no longer able to do so or if we lose our job, Jehovah will take care of us in some other way. He will provide. Let us now consider something else that the fine shepherd urges us to **stop** doing.

“STOP JUDGING”

¹¹ **Read Matthew 7:1, 2.** Jesus knew that his imperfect listeners tended to be critical of others. Note that he said: “**Stop** judging.” We may try hard not to judge fellow believers. Yet, we are all imperfect. If we find that at times we are being critical, what should we do? Listen to Jesus, and work hard to **stop** judging.

¹² We can benefit from meditating on Jehovah’s example. He focuses on the good in people. We see this in his dealings with King David, a man who made serious mistakes. For example, he committed adultery with Bath-sheba, and he even had her husband killed. (2 Sam. 11: 2-4, 14, 15, 24) As a result, David hurt not only himself but also his family, including his other wives. (2 Sam. 12:10, 11) On another occasion, David failed to manifest full reliance on Jehovah when he ordered an illegal registration of Isra-

el’s army. He may have been motivated by pride and trust in the size of his army. What was the outcome? Some 70,000 Israelites died from pestilence!—2 Sam. 24:1-4, 10-15.

¹³ If you had lived in Israel at that time, how would you have viewed David? Would you have judged him to be unworthy of Jehovah’s mercy? Jehovah did not. He focused on David’s overall record of faithfulness and his sincere repentance. As a result, Jehovah forgave David for these serious sins. Jehovah knew that David loved him very much and wanted to do what was right. Are you not grateful that our God looks for the good in us?—1 Ki. 9:4; 1 Chron. 29: 10, 17.

¹⁴ If Jehovah makes allowances for imperfect humans, surely we can make allowances for one another and look for the good in others. It is usually quite easy to pick out the imperfections of others and to be critical. However, a spiritual person may see those imperfections and still work along well with others. A rough diamond may be unsightly, but a perceptive person will look beyond its rough exterior and see the value it will have once it is cut and polished. Like Jehovah and Jesus, we need to look beyond appearances and see people’s good qualities.

¹⁵ In addition to focusing on others’ good qualities, what can help us not to judge them harshly? Try to imagine what

11. According to Matthew 7:1, 2, what did Jesus tell us to stop doing, and why can this be a challenge?

12-13. How can meditating on Jehovah’s view of King David help us to stop judging others?

14. What outlook has helped Christians to stop judging others?

15. How can considering people’s circumstances help us not to judge them harshly?



Looking beyond appearances
can help us to stop judging
(See paragraphs 11, 14-16)



their life is like. Consider this example. One day at the temple, Jesus saw a needy widow drop two coins of little value into a treasury chest. He did not ask: “Why did she not put in more?” Instead of focusing on the amount the widow gave, Jesus considered her motives and circumstances and praised her for doing all she could.—Luke 21:1-4.

¹⁶ We can illustrate the value of considering the circumstances of others by examining the experience of a sister named Veronica. In the congregation where she served were a single moth-

er and her son. Veronica admitted: “It seemed to me that they were not very involved in congregation activities. Because of this, I viewed them negatively. But then I shared in the ministry with the mother. She explained the difficulties she was facing with her autistic son. She was doing her best to care for their physical and spiritual needs. At times, because of her son’s health, she found it necessary to attend a meeting of another congregation.” Veronica concluded: “I never realized that it was such a challenge for her. I now appreciate and respect this sister so much for all that she does to serve Jehovah.”

16. What can you learn from Veronica’s experience?

¹⁷ What should we do if we detect that we have judged a fellow believer? We must remember that we are to love our brothers. **(Read James 2:8.)** We should also earnestly pray to Jehovah, begging him to help us to stop judging. We can work in harmony with our prayers by taking the initiative to speak with the person we have been critical of. That may allow us to get to know him. We might ask him to work with us in the field ministry or to join us for a meal. As we get to know our brother better, we can try to follow the example of Jehovah and Jesus by looking for the good in him. In this way, we show that we are listening to the fine shepherd's command to **stop** judging.

¹⁸ Just as literal sheep listen to the

17. What does James 2:8 instruct us to do, and how can we do so?

18. How can we show that we are listening to the voice of the fine shepherd?

voice of their shepherd, Jesus' followers listen to his voice. If we strive to stop being anxious about our material needs and to stop judging others, Jehovah and Jesus will bless our efforts. Whether we are part of the "little flock" or the "other sheep," may we continue to listen to and obey the voice of the fine shepherd. (Luke 12:32; John 10:11, 14, 16) In the next article, we will consider two things that Jesus told his followers they should do.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 17:** A brother has lost his employment, is short of money for the family, and needs to find housing. He could easily become so anxious that he loses sight of his worship of God. **Page 20:** A brother arrives late for the meeting. But he shows fine qualities as he witnesses informally, offers practical help to an older person, and works to keep the Kingdom Hall presentable.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ■ How can we stop being anxious about our material needs? | ■ What can help us to stop judging others? | ■ How have you benefited from considering this article? |
|---|--|---|

SONG 54

“This Is the Way”

PREVIEW

Jesus urges us to go through the narrow gate leading to the road to life. He also instructs us to make peace with fellow believers. What challenges may we face when we try to apply his counsel, and how can we overcome them?

Continue to “Listen to Him”

“This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him.”—MATT. 17:5.

AFTER the Passover of 32 C.E., the apostles Peter, James, and John witnessed an amazing vision. On a lofty mountain, possibly a spur of Mount Hermon, Jesus was transfigured before them. “His face shone as the sun, and his outer garments became brilliant as the light.” (Matt. 17:1-4) Near the end of the vision, the apostles heard God say: “This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved. Listen to him.” (Matt. 17:5) The three apostles proved by their life course that they did listen to Jesus. We want to imitate their example.

² In the preceding article, we learned that listening to Jesus’ voice means that we **stop doing** certain things. In this article, we will consider two things Jesus said that we **should do**.

“GO IN THROUGH THE NARROW GATE”

³ **Read Matthew 7:13, 14.** Notice that Jesus mentioned two different gates leading to two different roads, a “spacious” road and a “cramped” road. There is no third road. We must choose for ourselves on which road we will travel. This is the most important decision we will ever make—our everlasting life depends on it.

1-2. (a) What were three of Jesus’ apostles commanded to do, and how did they respond? (b) What will we consider in this article?

3. According to Matthew 7:13, 14, what should we do?

⁴ We need to keep in mind the differences between the two roads. The “spacious” road is popular because it is easy to travel. Sadly, many choose to remain on that road and to follow the crowd traveling on it. They fail to recognize that the one promoting this road is Satan the Devil and that his road leads to a dead end.—1 Cor. 6:9, 10; 1 John 5:19.

⁵ In contrast with the “spacious” road, the other road is “cramped,” and Jesus said that few are able to find it. Why? Interestingly, in the next verse, Jesus warns his followers against false prophets. (Matt. 7:15) By some counts, there are thousands of religions, and most of them claim to teach the truth. Millions of people are so discouraged or blinded by this religious confusion that they do not even try to look for the road leading to life. But that road can be found. Jesus said: “If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” (John 8:31, 32) Commendably, you did not follow the crowd; rather, you searched for the truth. You began an intensive study of God’s Word to learn what he requires of us, and you listened to Jesus’ teachings. Among other things, you learned that Jehovah expects us to reject the teachings of false religion and to stop celebrating holidays that have pagan origins or practices. You also learned that doing what Jehovah requires and breaking free from practices that do not meet

with his approval may be challenging. (Matt. 10:34-36) It may not have been easy for you to make the needed adjustments. However, you persevered because you love your heavenly Father and want his favor. How pleased he must be with you!—Prov. 27:11.

HOW TO STAY ON THE CRAMPED ROAD

⁶ Once we have begun traveling on the cramped road, what can help us remain on it? Consider this illustration. A guardrail near the edge of a narrow mountain road serves as a protection for a driver and his vehicle. The guardrail is designed to keep drivers safe—to help them avoid getting too close to or going over the edge of the road. Not many drivers would complain that such a guardrail is too restrictive! Jehovah’s standards found in the Bible are like that guardrail. His standards serve to keep us on the cramped road.—**Read Psalm 119:9, 10, 45, 133.**


⁷ Young ones, do you sometimes feel that Jehovah’s standards are too restrictive? This is what Satan wants you to think. He would like you to focus on what those who are traveling on the spacious road are doing, on the good time they seem to be having. He may use what your peers at school are doing or what you see on the Internet to make you feel that you are missing out on all the fun. Satan wants you to think that Jehovah’s standards are keeping you from

4. How would you describe the “spacious” road?

5. What efforts have some made to identify the “cramped” road and to begin traveling on it?

6. According to Psalm 119:9, 10, 45, 133, what can help us stay on the cramped road?

7. How should young ones view the cramped road?



God's counsel and standards help us stay on the "cramped" road (See paragraphs 6-8)

enjoying life to the full.* But remember this: Satan does not want those who are traveling on his road to see what awaits them at the end of the journey. Jehovah, on the other hand, has given you a clear picture of what he has in store for those who stay on the road to life.—Ps. 37:29; Isa. 35:5, 6; 65:21-23.

* See question 6 of the brochure *Answers to 10 Questions Young People Ask*, "How Can I Resist Peer Pressure?" and the whiteboard animation *Stand Up to Peer Pressure!* at www.jw.org. (Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > TEENAGERS.)

⁸ Consider what you can learn from the experience of a young brother named Olaf.* His classmates pressured him to engage in immoral conduct. When he explained that Jehovah's Witnesses live by the Bible's high moral standards, some girls in his class took this as a challenge and tried to persuade him to have sex with them. But

* Some names have been changed.

8. What can young ones learn from Olaf's example?

Olaf stood firm for what is right. And this was not the only pressure he faced. Olaf says: “My teachers tried to convince me that I should pursue higher education because it is prestigious. They told me that without it, I would not succeed in life.” What helped Olaf to resist such pressure? He mentions: “I developed close relationships with those in my congregation. They became like a family to me. I also started to study the Bible more seriously. The more deeply I studied, the more I became convinced that this was the truth. As a result, I was determined to serve Jehovah.”

⁹ Satan would like to cause you to exit the road that leads to life. He wants you to join the majority of mankind on the spacious road “leading off into destruction.” (Matt. 7:13) However, we will remain on the cramped road if we continue to listen to Jesus and to view that road as a protection. Now let us consider something else that Jesus said we should do.

MAKE PEACE WITH YOUR BROTHER

¹⁰ **Read Matthew 5:23, 24.** Jesus described a moment that was very important to the Jewish worshippers who were listening to him. Imagine someone at the temple ready to hand over an animal sacrifice to a priest. If at that moment the person remembered that his brother had something against him, he was to leave the sacrifice and “go away.” Why?

9. What is required of those who want to remain on the cramped road?

10. According to Matthew 5:23, 24, what did Jesus say we should do?

What could be more important than offering a sacrifice to Jehovah? Jesus plainly stated: “First make your peace with your brother.”

¹¹ We can learn valuable lessons about making peace by examining an event in the life of the patriarch Jacob. After Jacob had been away from the land of his birth for about 20 years, God commanded him through an angel to return there. (Gen. 31:11, 13, 38) But there was a problem. His older brother, Esau, had wanted to kill him. (Gen. 27:41) Jacob was “very frightened and anxious” that his brother might still be nursing a grudge against him. (Gen. 32:7) What did Jacob do to make peace with his brother? First, he fervently prayed to Jehovah about the matter. Then, he sent a generous gift to Esau. (Gen. 32:9-15) Finally, when the estranged brothers met face-to-face, Jacob took the initiative to show honor to Esau. He bowed to Esau—not once, not twice, but seven times! With humble and respectful action, Jacob made peace with his brother.—Gen. 33:3, 4.

¹² We learn a lesson from how Jacob prepared to meet his brother and how he approached Esau. Jacob humbly asked Jehovah for help. Then he followed through on his prayer by taking steps to make his reunion with his brother as pleasant as possible. When the brothers met, Jacob did not argue with Esau about who was right and who was wrong. Jacob’s goal was to make peace with

11. Describe Jacob’s efforts to make peace with Esau.

12. What do we learn from Jacob’s example?

Will you take to heart the example of Jacob, who humbly made peace with his brother? (See paragraphs 11-12)



his brother. How can we imitate Jacob's example?

HOW TO MAKE PEACE WITH OTHERS

¹³ We who are traveling on the road leading to life want to promote peaceful relations with our brothers. (Rom. 12:18) How should we proceed when we realize that we have offended a fellow believer? Like Jacob, we should turn to Jehovah in earnest prayer. We can ask him to bless our efforts to gain our brother.

¹⁴ We should also take time to analyze ourselves. We can ask ourselves such questions as these: 'Am I willing to sacrifice my pride, humbly apologize, and make peace? How will Jehovah and Jesus feel if I take the initiative to make peace with my brother or my sister?' Our answers can motivate us to listen to Jesus and humbly approach our fellow believer in order to make peace. In this regard, we can follow Jacob's example.

13-14. If we offend a fellow believer, what should we do?

¹⁵ Imagine if Jacob had manifested pride when he confronted his brother! The outcome might have been quite different. When we go to our brother to settle a difference with him, we need to do so with a humble spirit. (**Read Ephesians 4:2, 3.**) Proverbs 18:19 states: "A brother offended is more unyielding than a fortified city, and there are disputes like the bars of a fortress." A humble apology can help us to gain entry to that "fortress."

¹⁶ We also need to give careful thought to what we will say to our brother and how we will say it. When we are ready, we should approach the offended one with the goal of removing any hurt from his heart. He may initially say things that are not pleasant to hear. It would be easy to get angry or to try to justify ourselves, but would following that course lead to a peaceful resolution? Certainly not. Remember that restoring

15. How can applying the principle found at Ephesians 4:2, 3 help us to make peace with our brother?

16. What should we give thought to, and why?

peace with your brother is more important than establishing who was right and who was wrong.—1 Cor. 6:7.

¹⁷ A brother named Gilbert worked hard to be a peacemaker. He relates: “I had a very difficult time with a close family member. For over two years, I made efforts to speak honestly and calmly in order to reestablish a good relationship.” What else did Gilbert do? “Before speaking with this family member, I would pray and prepare myself mentally for any unkind comments that might be made. I needed to be ready to forgive. I learned not to fight for my rights, and I understood that my duty was to promote peace.” What were the results? Gilbert says: “Today, I have peace of mind because of the good relationships I have with all my family members.”

¹⁸ What, then, should be your determination when you realize that you have offended a fellow Christian? Follow Je-

17. What can you learn from Gilbert’s example?

18-19. If we have offended someone, what should we be determined to do, and why?

sus’ direction to make peace. Talk to Jehovah about the matter, and rely on his holy spirit to help you to be a peacemaker. If you do, you will be happy, and you will give further evidence that you are listening to Jesus.—Matt. 5:9.

¹⁹ We are grateful that Jehovah provides us with loving direction through the “head of the congregation,” Jesus Christ. (Eph. 5:23) May we be determined to “listen to him,” as were the apostles Peter, James, and John. (Matt. 17:5) We have examined how we can do that by making peace with a fellow Christian whom we have offended. By doing so and remaining on the cramped road leading to life, we will receive many blessings now and unending happiness in the future.

PICTURE DESCRIPTIONS **Page 24:** By staying on the “cramped” road protected by guardrails that God provides, we avoid such dangers as pornography, immoral association, and pressure to put advanced education first in life. **Page 26:** In pursuit of peace, Jacob bowed repeatedly before his brother, Esau.

WHAT HAVE YOU LEARNED?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| ■ Why should we listen to Jesus and stay on the “cramped” road? | ■ Why is it important to make peace with someone we have offended? | ■ How do we benefit from listening to Jesus? |
|---|--|--|

Are You a Good Fellow Worker?

“I WAS beside him as a master worker. . . . I rejoiced before him all the time.” (Prov. 8:30) That is how the Bible describes God’s Son during the untold ages he spent working with his Father before coming to the earth. Note that this verse also tells us how Jesus felt as a fellow worker of God; he “rejoiced” before Him.

Jesus learned the qualities that later made him an excellent example of a fellow worker for those on earth who associated with him. How can we benefit from Jesus’ example? By taking a close look at his example, we can identify three principles that can help us become good fellow workers. These principles will better enable us to foster a spirit of unity and cooperation.

PRINCIPLE 1: ‘SHOW HONOR TO ONE ANOTHER’

A good fellow worker humbly values his coworkers and does not try to show off. That humble approach is something that Jesus learned from his Father. Although Jehovah alone is worthy of being called Creator, he drew attention to the role played by his Son and fellow worker. We see that reflected in God’s statement: “Let *us* make man in *our* image.” (Gen. 1:26) Jesus likely appreciated Jehovah’s humility in this connection.—Ps. 18:35.

While on earth, Jesus manifested similar humility. When praised for his accomplishments, he gave credit to the One who deserved it. (Mark 10:17, 18; John 7:15, 16) Jesus worked to maintain a peaceful atmosphere with his disciples and considered them friends rather than slaves. (John 15:15) He even washed their feet to teach them a lesson in humility. (John 13:5, 12-14) We too do well to value our fellow work-



Keeping in mind the examples of Jehovah and Jesus, be ready to share your experience and knowledge with fellow workers

ers rather than put our personal interests ahead of theirs. When we ‘show honor to one another’ and we do not worry about who may get the credit, much more can be accomplished.—Rom. 12:10.

A humble person also recognizes that “there is accomplishment through many advisers.” (Prov. 15:22) Regardless of our experience or abilities, we must remember that no human knows everything. Even Jesus acknowledged that there were things he did not know. (Matt. 24:36) Also, he was interested in what his imperfect disciples knew or thought. (Matt. 16:13-16) It is no wonder that his fellow workers felt comfortable around him! Similarly, when we humbly bear in mind our limitations and allow others to contribute, we promote peaceful relations with them, and together “there is accomplishment.”

It is especially important for elders to imitate Jesus in this respect as they work together. They need to remember that holy spirit can influence any elder on the body. If in their meetings, elders try to maintain an atmosphere in which everyone feels free to contribute, together they will make

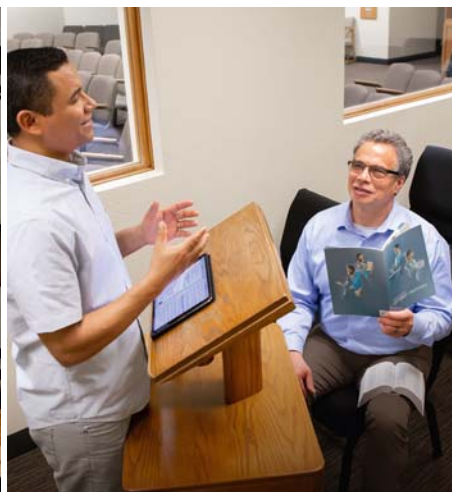
decisions that will benefit the whole congregation.

PRINCIPLE 2: “LET YOUR REASONABLENESS BECOME KNOWN”

A good fellow worker is reasonable in dealing with his coworkers. He is flexible and yielding. Jesus certainly had fine opportunities to observe his Father’s reasonableness. For example, Jehovah sent him to redeem mankind from the death sentence that humans deserved.—John 3:16.

Jesus yielded when necessary or appropriate. Recall how he helped a Phoenician woman, even though he had been sent to the house of Israel. (Matt. 15:22-28) He was also reasonable in what he expected from his disciples. After his close companion Peter denied him in public, Jesus was ready to forgive him. Later, he entrusted Peter with weighty responsibilities. (Luke 22:32; John 21:17; Acts 2:14; 8:14-17; 10:44, 45) Jesus’ example clearly shows us that we ought to “let [our] reasonableness become known to all men” by being yielding.—Phil. 4:5.

Being reasonable will also move us to be adaptable in order to work harmoniously



with all sorts of people. Jesus dealt so well with those around him that his jealous enemies accused him of being “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” who responded to his message. (Matt. 11:19) Can we, like Jesus, succeed in collaborating with others? Louis, a brother who has spent time in the traveling work and at Bethel working with individuals of various backgrounds, says: “I have tried to compare each group I work with to a wall built with irregular stones. By making adjustments to the placement of some of the stones, you can end up with a straight wall. I have also tried to make personal adjustments in order to contribute to the wall’s being straight.” What a fine spirit!

A good fellow worker does not withhold information just to maintain control

When can we manifest a cooperative spirit in our local congregation? We have the opportunity to do so when we are with our field service group. We may work with publishers who have different family responsibilities than we do or who are of a different age. Can we strive to be reasonable by adjusting our pace or style to help them enjoy a more fruitful ministry?

PRINCIPLE 3: BE “READY TO SHARE”

A good fellow worker is “ready to share.” (1 Tim. 6:18) While working beside his Father, Jesus must have noted that Jehovah was not secretive. When Jehovah “prepared the heavens,” Jesus “was there” and could learn from him. (Prov. 8:27) Later, Jesus himself gladly shared with his disciples “the things [he had] heard” from his Father. (John 15:15) With that model in mind, we too should be ready to share our knowledge and experience with fellow workers. Cer-

tainly, a good fellow worker would not withhold needed or helpful information just to maintain control. He would rejoice in sharing with others the good things he has learned.

We can also share words of encouragement with fellow workers. When someone notices our efforts and expresses heartfelt gratitude, does it not warm our heart? Jesus took the time to tell his fellow workers the good he saw in them. (Compare Matthew 25:19-23; Luke 10:17-20.) He even told them that they would “do works greater than” his. (John 14:12) On the night before his death, he commended his faithful apostles, saying: “You are the ones who have stuck with me in my trials.” (Luke 22:28) Imagine how his words must have touched their heart and moved them to action! If we too take time to commend our fellow workers, they will certainly be happier and likely more productive.

YOU CAN BE A GOOD FELLOW WORKER

“A good fellow worker does not need to be perfect,” observes a brother named Kayode, “but he spreads joy around him and makes work less burdensome for those he works with.” Are you that kind of fellow worker? Why not carefully draw out some of your Christian coworkers to learn what they think of you in this respect? If they enjoy working with you, even as Jesus’ disciples enjoyed working with him, you can say as did the apostle Paul: “We are fellow workers for your joy.”—2 Cor. 1:24.

FOR THE WATCHTOWER AND AWAKE! 2021

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COVER PICTURE:

The statement “Holiness belongs to Jehovah” appeared on a gold plate on the turban of the high priest (See study article 48, paragraphs 6-7)

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