



THE WATCHTOWER

MAY 15, 2009

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES FOR THE WEEKS OF:

July 6-12

Press On to Maturity—"The Great Day
of Jehovah Is Near"

PAGE 9 SONGS TO BE USED: 123, 174

July 13-19

Youths—Make Your Advancement
Manifest

PAGE 13 SONGS TO BE USED: 42, 56

July 20-26

The Angels—"Spirits for Public Service"

PAGE 21 SONGS TO BE USED: 6, 5

July 27—August 2

Why Follow "the Christ"?

PAGE 28 SONGS TO BE USED: 121, 134



THE PURPOSE OF THIS MAGAZINE, *The Watchtower*, is to honor Jehovah God, the Supreme Ruler of the universe. Just as watchtowers in ancient times enabled a person to observe developments from afar, so this magazine shows us the significance of world events in the light of Bible prophecies. It comforts people with the good news that God's Kingdom, which is a real government in heaven, will soon bring an end to all wickedness and transform the earth into a paradise. It promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God's Kingdom. This magazine has been published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879 and is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

Study Articles 1, 2 PAGES 9-17

The first study article highlights why Christian maturity is essential and how it can be gained. The second article explains how Christian youths can successfully meet special challenges that they face in attaining maturity.

Study Article 3 PAGES 21-25

By examining the Scriptures, we can find out how the angels fulfill their role as "spirits for public service." This article shows what they are doing to assist Christians today. It also takes note of what we can learn from the righteous angels.

Study Article 4 PAGES 28-32

Jesus Christ invited his listeners to follow him continually. This article discusses five reasons why we should want to follow "the Christ" and keep on doing so more fully.

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

"A Time for Silence"

PAGE 3

Where Should You Be When the End Comes?

PAGE 6

Questions From Readers

PAGE 18

Husbands, Imitate Christ's Love!

PAGE 19

Imitate the Loyalty of Ittai

PAGE 26



"A Time for SILENCE"

SPEECH is silver, silence is golden." So states an old proverb said to be of Oriental origin. According to *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, its Hebrew equivalent is: "If a word be worth one shekel, silence is worth two." And wise King Solomon of ancient Israel wrote: "For everything its season, and for every activity under heaven its time . . . a time for silence and a time for speech."—Eccl. 3:1, 7, *The New English Bible*.

When, though, is it appropriate to keep quiet rather than to speak? The words "silent" and "silence" appear over a hundred times in the pages of the Bible. The context in which these words are used reveals the propriety of remaining silent in at least three areas of life. Let us take a closer look at silence as a mark of respect, as evidence of discretion and discernment, and as an aid to meditation.

A Mark of Respect

Silence is a sign of respect or honor. The prophet Habakkuk said: "Jehovah is in his

holy temple. Keep silence before him, all the earth!" (Hab. 2:20) True worshippers are to "wait, even silently, for the salvation of Jehovah." (Lam. 3:26) The psalmist sang: "Keep silent before Jehovah and wait longingly for him. Do not show yourself heated up at anyone making his way successful." —Ps. 37:7.

Can we praise Jehovah without using words? Well, are we not at times so awestruck when viewing the beauty of creation that we are rendered speechless? Is not thinking about such grandeur a way of praising the Creator in our heart? The psalmist David began one of his melodies, saying: "For you there is praise—silence—, O God, in Zion; and to you the vow will be paid." —Ps. 65:1.

As Jehovah himself merits our respect, so do his utterances. For example, when God's prophet Moses delivered his farewell address to the nation of Israel, he and the priests admonished all present, saying: "Keep silent . . . , and you must listen to the

During our Christian meetings, we should listen and learn



voice of Jehovah your God." Attentive listening was required of even the Israelite children when the sons of Israel came together for the reading of God's Law. "Congregate the people," said Moses, "the men and the women and the little ones . . . in order that they may learn."—Deut. 27:9, 10; 31:11, 12.

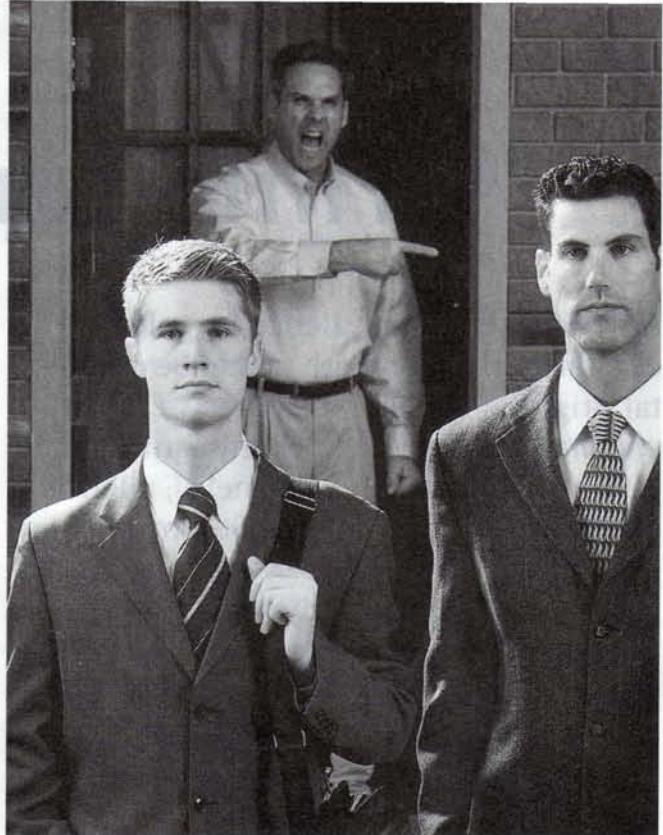
How appropriate that Jehovah's modern-day worshippers respectfully listen to the instructions they receive at Christian gatherings, including large conventions! When vital Bible truths are being conveyed from the platform, would it not show disrespect for God's Word and his organization if we unnecessarily conversed with one another? During the sessions, it is time to keep silent and listen.

Even in private one-on-one conversations, being a good listener is a mark of respect. For example, the patriarch Job said to his accusers: "Instruct me, and I, for my part, shall be silent." Job was willing to listen silently when they spoke. And when it was his turn to speak, he requested: "Keep silent before me, that I myself may speak."—Job 6:24; 13:13.

Evidence of Discretion and Discernment

The Bible states: "The one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." "The man of broad discernment is one that keeps silent." (Prov. 10:19; 11:12) Consider how beautifully Jesus manifested discretion and discernment by keeping silent. Upon discerning that speaking in the hostile environment generated by his enemies would serve no useful purpose, "Jesus kept silent." (Matt. 26:63) Later, when on trial before Pilate, Jesus "made no answer." He discreetly chose to let his public record speak for itself.—Matt. 27:11-14.

We too are wise to keep our lips in check, particularly when we are provoked. "He that



Silence may be the proper response to verbal abuse in our ministry

is slow to anger is abundant in discernment," says a proverb, "but one that is impatient is exalting foolishness." (Prov. 14:29) A hasty oral response in a trying situation can result in rash speech that is later regretted. Under such circumstances, our words may appear foolish, and our peace of mind may suffer as a result.

It is the course of discretion to guard our lips when in the presence of wicked people. When confronted by ridiculers in our ministry, silence may well be the proper response. Moreover, would it not sometimes be wise to remain silent so as not to convey an impression of approval when our schoolmates or coworkers tell off-color jokes or use vulgar language? (Eph. 5:3) "I will set a muzzle as a guard to my own mouth," wrote the psalmist, "as long as anyone wicked is in front of me."—Ps. 39:1.

A person of "broad discernment" does not betray a confidence. (Prov. 11:12) A true Christian will not divulge confidential mat-

ters through unguarded speech. Christian elders must be particularly circumspect in this regard so as to retain the trust of members of the congregation.

Although silence carries no words, it can have a positive effect. Concerning one of his contemporaries, the 19th-century English writer Sydney Smith wrote: "He has occasional flashes of silence, that make his conversation perfectly delightful." Indeed, everyday conversation between two friends should be two-way communication. A good conversationalist must be a good listener.

"In the abundance of words there does not fail to be transgression," warned Solomon, "but the one keeping his lips in check is acting discreetly." (Prov. 10:19) Hence, the fewer the words spoken, the less the chance of committing an indiscretion. In fact, "even anyone foolish, when keeping silent, will be regarded as wise; anyone closing up his own lips, as having understanding." (Prov. 17:28) May we, then, prayerfully ask Jehovah to 'set a watch over the door of our lips.'—Ps. 141:3.

An Aid to Meditation

Concerning the man who follows the way of righteousness, the Scriptures inform us that "in [God's] law he reads in an undertone day and night." (Ps. 1:2) *The Amplified Bible* reads: "On His law . . . he habitually meditates . . . by day and by night." What circumstance best lends itself to such meditation?

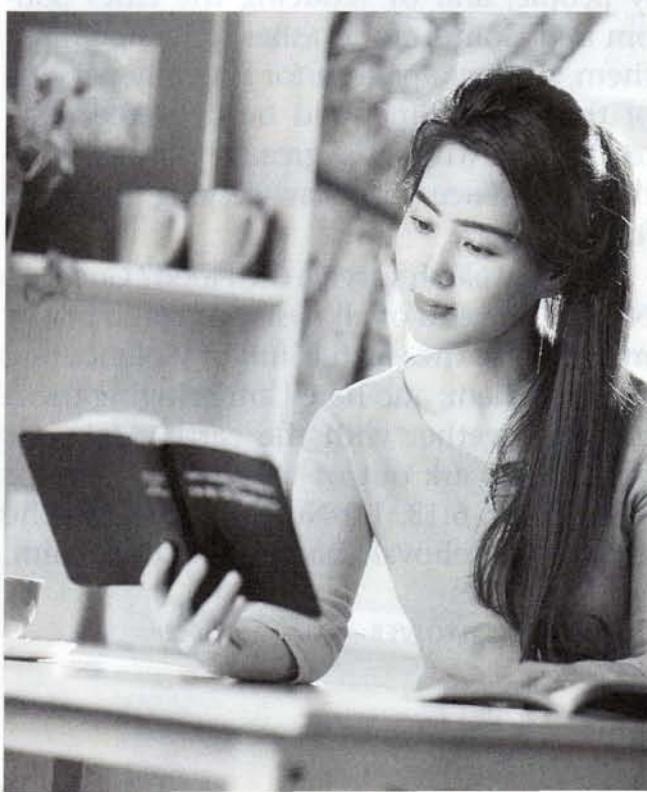
Isaac, the son of the patriarch Abraham, "was out walking in order to meditate in the field at about the falling of evening." (Gen. 24:63) He chose a quiet time and place for meditation. It was during the silence of the night watches that King David meditated. (Ps. 63:6) The perfect man Jesus made a determined effort to satisfy his need for soli-

tude and meditation, away from the clamor of crowds, in the seclusion of mountains, deserts, and other lonely places.—Matt. 14:23; Luke 4:42; 5:16.

The restorative effects of silence cannot be denied. Silence can provide an environment for healthy self-examination—an essential prerequisite for self-improvement. Silence can promote peace of mind. Meditation during quiet periods can engender modesty and humility within us and can enhance our appreciation for the truly important things in life.

While silence can be a virtue, there is also "a time to speak." (Eccl. 3:7) True worshippers today are busy preaching the good news of God's Kingdom "in all the inhabited earth." (Matt. 24:14) The resulting joyful noise is being heard with ever-increasing volume as their ranks grow. (Mic. 2:12) By all means, let us be among those who are zealously declaring the Kingdom good news and speaking about the wonderful works of God. As we share in this important activity, may our lifestyle also reflect an awareness that silence, at times, is golden.

Silence is conducive to meditation



Where Should You Be When the End Comes?

WHEN Jehovah brings an end to the present wicked system of things at Armageddon, how will upright individuals fare? Proverbs 2:21, 22 answers: “The upright are the ones that will reside in the earth, and the blameless are the ones that will be left over in it. As regards the wicked, they will be cut off from the very earth; and as for the treacherous, they will be torn away from it.”

How, though, will the blameless be left over in the earth? Will there be a place of refuge for them? Where should the upright be when the end comes? Four Scriptural accounts of survival shed light on these matters.

When Location Was Important

Concerning the deliverance of the patriarchs Noah and Lot, we read at 2 Peter 2:5-7: “[God] did not hold back from punishing an ancient world, but kept Noah, a preacher of righteousness, safe with seven others when he brought a deluge upon a world of ungodly people; and by reducing the cities Sodom and Gomorrah to ashes he condemned them, setting a pattern for ungodly persons of things to come; and he delivered righteous Lot, who was greatly distressed by the indulgence of the law-defying people in loose conduct.”

How did Noah survive the Flood? God told Noah: “The end of all flesh has come before me, because the earth is full of violence as a result of them; and here I am bringing them to ruin together with the earth. Make for yourself an ark out of wood of a resinous tree.” (Gen. 6:13, 14) Noah constructed the ark just as Jehovah had commanded him.

Seven days before the floodwaters began to fall, Jehovah instructed him to gather the animals into the ark and go into it along with all his household. On the seventh day, the door was shut behind him, “and the downpour upon the earth went on for forty days and forty nights.” (Gen. 7:1-4, 11, 12, 16) Noah and his family “were carried safely through the water.” (1 Pet. 3:20) Their survival depended on their being inside the ark. No other place on earth could offer security. —Gen. 7:19, 20.

In the case of Lot, the instructions were somewhat different. Two angels informed him of where he was *not* to be. “All who are yours in the city [of Sodom],” the two angels told Lot, “bring out of the place! For we are bringing this place to ruin.” They were to “escape to the mountainous region.” —Gen. 19:12, 13, 17.

The experiences of Noah and Lot prove that “Jehovah knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial, but to reserve unrighteous people for the day of judgment.” (2 Pet. 2:9) In both of these cases of deliverance, location was a decisive factor. Noah had to go *into* the ark; Lot had to get *out of* Sodom. But is this always the case? Can Jehovah save the righteous wherever they are, without their having to relocate? To answer that question, note two other accounts of deliverance.

Is Location Always Important?

Before Jehovah devastated Egypt by bringing the tenth plague in Moses’ day, He commanded the Israelites to splash the blood of the Passover animal on the lintels and door-

posts of their houses. Why? So that 'when Jehovah passed through to plague the Egyptians and saw the blood upon the upper part of the doorway and upon the two doorposts, he would pass over the entrance and not allow the ruination to enter into their houses to plague them.' That very night, "Jehovah struck every firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh sitting on his throne to the firstborn of the captive who was in the prison hole, and every firstborn of beast." The firstborn of the Israelites were saved without anyone having to relocate.

—Ex. 12:22, 23, 29.

Consider also the case of Rahab, a prostitute living in the city of Jericho. The Israelites were about to begin their conquest of the Promised Land. When Rahab realized that Jericho was doomed, she told the two Israelite spies that the city was paralyzed with fear of the advancing Israelites. She hid the spies and asked them to swear to her that she and her whole family would be preserved when Jericho was conquered. The spies instructed Rahab to congregate her family inside her house, situated on the city wall. Leaving the house would mean destruction with the rest of the city. (Josh. 2:8-13, 15, 18, 19) However, Jehovah later told Joshua that "the wall of the city must fall down flat." (Josh. 6:5)

What the spies had stipulated as the place of safety now seemed to be in jeopardy. How would Rahab and her household be delivered?

When the time came to capture Jericho, the Israelites shouted and proceeded to blow the horns. "It came about that as soon as the people [of Israel] heard the sound of the horn and the people began to shout a great war cry," states Joshua 6:20, "then the wall began to fall down flat." The collapsing wall was now beyond human control. Miraculously, though, the crumbling of the city wall stopped at Rahab's house. Joshua ordered the two spies: "Go into the house of the woman, the prostitute, and bring out of there the woman and all who belong to her, just as you have sworn to her." (Josh. 6:22) All in Rahab's house were saved.

What Counted Most?

What can we learn from the deliverance of Noah, Lot, the Israelites in Moses' day, and Rahab? How do these accounts help us to determine where we should be when the end of the present wicked system of things comes?

True, Noah found salvation in the ark. But why was he there? Was it not because he exercised faith and was obedient? "Noah

What can we learn from God's past acts of deliverance?



proceeded to do according to all that God had commanded him," says the Bible. "He did just so." (Gen. 6:22; Heb. 11:7) What about us? Are we doing all that God has commanded us? Noah was also "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:5) Like him, are we zealous in the preaching work, even if our territory is unresponsive?

Lot escaped destruction by fleeing Sodom. He was spared because he was righteous in God's eyes and was greatly distressed by the loose conduct of the law-defying people of Sodom and Gomorrah. Does the loose conduct so prevalent today really distress us? Or are we so desensitized that it does not bother us? Are we doing our utmost to be found "spotless and unblemished and in peace"?—2 Pet. 3:14.

For the Israelites in Egypt and for Rahab in Jericho, deliverance depended on remaining in their houses. This required faith and obedience. (Heb. 11:28, 30, 31) Imagine how each Israelite family must have fixed their eyes on their firstborn as "there began arising a great outcry" in one Egyptian household after another. (Ex. 12:30) Imagine how Rahab must have huddled together with her family as she felt the rumbling of Jericho's collapsing walls coming closer and closer. It took real faith on her part to remain obedient and stay in that house.

Soon the end will come for Satan's wicked world. How Jehovah will protect his people in the fear-inspiring 'day of his anger,' we do not yet know. (Zeph. 2:3) Regardless of where we are and what our situation is at that time, however, we can be sure



*What may the
"interior rooms" point to
in modern times?*

that our survival will depend on our faith in Jehovah and our obedience to him. Meanwhile, we should cultivate a proper attitude toward what Isaiah's prophecy refers to as our "interior rooms."

"Enter Into Your Interior Rooms"

"Go, my people, enter into your interior rooms, and shut your doors behind you," states Isaiah 26:20. "Hide yourself for but a moment until the denunciation passes over." This prophecy may have had its first fulfillment in 539 B.C.E. when the Medes and the Persians conquered

Babylon. Upon entering Babylon, Cyrus the Persian apparently commanded everyone to stay indoors because his soldiers were ordered to execute any found out-of-doors.

In our day, the "interior rooms" of this prophecy could be closely associated with the more than 100,000 congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world. Such congregations play an important role in our lives. They will continue to do so through "the great tribulation." (Rev. 7:14) God's people are commanded to go into their "interior rooms" and hide themselves "until the denunciation passes over." It is vital that we develop and maintain a wholesome attitude toward the congregation and be firmly resolved to stay in close association with it. We can take to heart Paul's exhortation: "Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as [we] behold the day drawing near."—Heb. 10:24, 25.

PRESS ON TO MATURITY —“THE GREAT DAY OF JEHOVAH IS NEAR”

“Let us press on to maturity.”—HEB. 6:1.

WHEN Jesus was on earth, his disciples approached him and asked: “What will be the sign of your presence and of the conclusion of the system of things?” The initial fulfillment of the prophecy that Jesus gave them in answer to their question took place in the first century. Jesus spoke of an unusual development that would signal that the end was imminent. Upon observing that development, “those in Judea [were to] begin fleeing to the mountains.” (Matt. 24:1-3, 15-22) Would Jesus’ disciples recognize the sign and act on his instructions?

² Nearly three decades later, in 61 C.E., the apostle Paul penned a strong, sobering message to Hebrew Christians living in Jerusalem and its surroundings. Unknown to both Paul and his fellow believers, the signal marking the opening stage of a “great tribulation” was only about five years away. (Matt. 24:21) In 66 C.E., Cestius Gallus led Roman troops in a nearly successful attack on Jerusalem. But then he suddenly withdrew, leaving open a window of opportunity for endangered ones to escape to safety.

³ Those Christians needed keen discernment and spiritual perception to recognize the turn of events and flee. However, some had become “dull in [their] hearing.” They

1, 2. What opportunity to ‘flee to the mountains’ opened up for first-century Christians in Jerusalem and Judea?
3. What exhortation did Paul give to Hebrew Christians, and why?

were like spiritual babes needing “milk.” (*Read Hebrews 5:11-13.*) Even some of those who had walked in the way of the truth for decades were showing signs of “drawing away from the living God.” (Heb. 3:12) Some had “the custom” of missing Christian meetings at a time when this calamitous “day [was] drawing near.” (Heb. 10:24, 25) Paul gave them timely exhortation, saying: “Now that we have left the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity.” —Heb. 6:1.

⁴ We are living during the time of the final fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy. “The great day of Jehovah”—the day that will bring the end of Satan’s entire system—is near.” (Zeph. 1:14) As never before, we must remain spiritually keen and alert. (1 Pet. 5:8) Are we really doing that? Christian maturity will help us to stay focused on where we are in the stream of time.

What Christian Maturity Is

⁵ Paul not only encouraged the first-century Hebrew Christians to press on to maturity but also told them what spiritual maturity involves. (*Read Hebrews 5:14.*) “Mature people” are not content to partake only of “milk.” They take in “solid food.”

4. Why is it important to remain spiritually alert, and what will help us to do so?
- 5, 6. (a) What does spiritual maturity involve? (b) Pressing on to maturity requires effort in what two areas?

Therefore, they know both "the elementary things" and "the deep things" of the truth. (1 Cor. 2:10) Moreover, their perceptive powers are trained through use—through application of what they know—helping them to distinguish right from wrong. When they are faced with a decision, this training enables them to discern what Scriptural principles are involved and how to apply them.

⁶ "It is necessary for us to pay more than the usual attention to the things heard by us," wrote Paul, "that we may never drift away." (Heb. 2:1) Such drifting away from the faith can happen before we realize it. We can avoid having this experience by paying "more than the usual attention" during our consideration of spiritual truths. Therefore, each of us needs to ask: 'Am I still considering just elementary things? Could I merely be going through the motions and floating along, as it were, without my heart being fully involved with the truth? How can I make genuine spiritual progress?' Pressing on to maturity calls for our putting forth effort in at least two areas. We must get well-acquainted with the Word of God. And we need to learn obedience.

Become Well-Acquainted With the Word

⁷ "Everyone that partakes of milk is *unacquainted* with the word of righteousness," wrote Paul, "for he is a babe." (Heb. 5:13) To attain maturity, we must become well-acquainted with God's word, his message to us. Since this message is contained in his Word, the Bible, we should be good students of the Scriptures and the publications of "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47) Absorbing God's thinking in this way can help us to train our perceptive pow-

7. How can we benefit from becoming better acquainted with the Word of God?



Applying Bible counsel helps us to deal with problems in a mature way

ers. Consider the example of a Christian named Orchid.* She says: "The reminder that has had the biggest effect on my life is the one about regular Bible reading. It took me about two years to finish the whole Bible, but it seemed that I was meeting my Creator for the first time. I learned about his ways, his likes and his dislikes, the degree of his power, and the depth of his wisdom. Reading the Bible daily has sustained me through some of the darkest moments of my life."

⁸ Regularly reading a portion of God's Word allows its message to 'exert power' on us. (*Read Hebrews 4:12.*) Such reading can mold our inner person and make us more pleasing to Jehovah. Do you have a personal need to schedule more time to read the Bible and meditate on what it says?

⁹ Becoming acquainted with the Bible involves more than being familiar with what

* Some names have been changed.

8. What power can the Word of God exert on us?
- 9, 10. What does becoming acquainted with God's Word involve? Illustrate.

it says. Spiritual babes of Paul's day were not necessarily completely unfamiliar with God's inspired Word. However, they did not personally use it and test its value by actual practice. They did not acquaint themselves with the message by allowing it to guide them in making wise decisions in their lives.

¹⁰ To become acquainted with the Word of God means to know what it says and to put that knowledge into practice. The experience of a Christian sister named Kyle shows how this can be done. Kyle had an altercation with one of her workmates. What did she do to heal the breach? She explains: "The scripture that readily came to my mind was Romans 12:18, which says: 'As far as it depends upon you, be peaceable with all men.' So I made an appointment to meet this workmate after work." The meeting was very successful, and the fellow employee was impressed that Kyle had taken that step. "I learned that we can never go wrong if we apply Bible principles," says Kyle.

Learn Obedience

¹¹ Applying what we have learned from the Scriptures can be a challenge, particularly when circumstances are difficult. For example, shortly after Jehovah liberated the sons of Israel from Egyptian bondage, they "fell to quarreling with Moses" and kept "putting Jehovah to the test." Why? Because of a lack of water to drink. (Ex. 17:1-4) Less than two months after entering into a divine covenant and agreeing to do "all the words that Jehovah [had] spoken," they violated his law on idolatry. (Ex. 24:3, 12-18; 32:1, 2, 7-9) Was this because the prolonged absence of Moses while he was being instructed on Mount Horeb made them fearful? Did they perhaps think that the Amalekites would strike again and that the Israelites would

11. What shows that obedience under difficult circumstances can be a challenge?

be helpless without Moses, whose upheld hands had brought them victory earlier? (Ex. 17:8-16) That is possible, but whatever the case, the Israelites "refused to become obedient." (Acts 7:39-41) Paul urged Christians to 'do their utmost' to avoid 'falling into the same pattern of disobedience' that the Israelites showed when they were afraid to enter the Promised Land.—Heb. 4:3, 11.

¹² Pressing on to maturity requires that we do our utmost to obey Jehovah. As exemplified by Jesus Christ, obedience is often learned from the things suffered. (*Read Hebrews 5:8, 9.*) Before coming to earth, Jesus was obedient to his Father. However, doing his Father's will on earth involved physical and mental suffering. Through obedience under extreme adversity, Jesus was "made perfect" for the new position God had in mind for him, that of being King and High Priest.

¹³ What about us? Are we determined to obey Jehovah even when we are faced with distressful problems? (*Read 1 Peter 1:6, 7.*) God's counsel regarding morals, honesty, proper use of the tongue, personal reading and study of the Scriptures, attendance at Christian meetings, and participation in the

12. How did Jesus learn obedience, and with what benefit?

13. What shows whether we have learned obedience?

What Did You Learn?

- What is spiritual maturity, and how do we attain it?
- What part does becoming acquainted with the Word of God play in our pressing on to maturity?
- How do we learn obedience?
- In what ways does maturity benefit us?

preaching work is clear. (Josh. 1:8; Matt. 28:19, 20; Eph. 4:25, 28, 29; 5:3-5; Heb. 10:24, 25) Are we obedient to Jehovah in these matters even under adversity? Our obedience is an indication that we have progressed toward maturity.

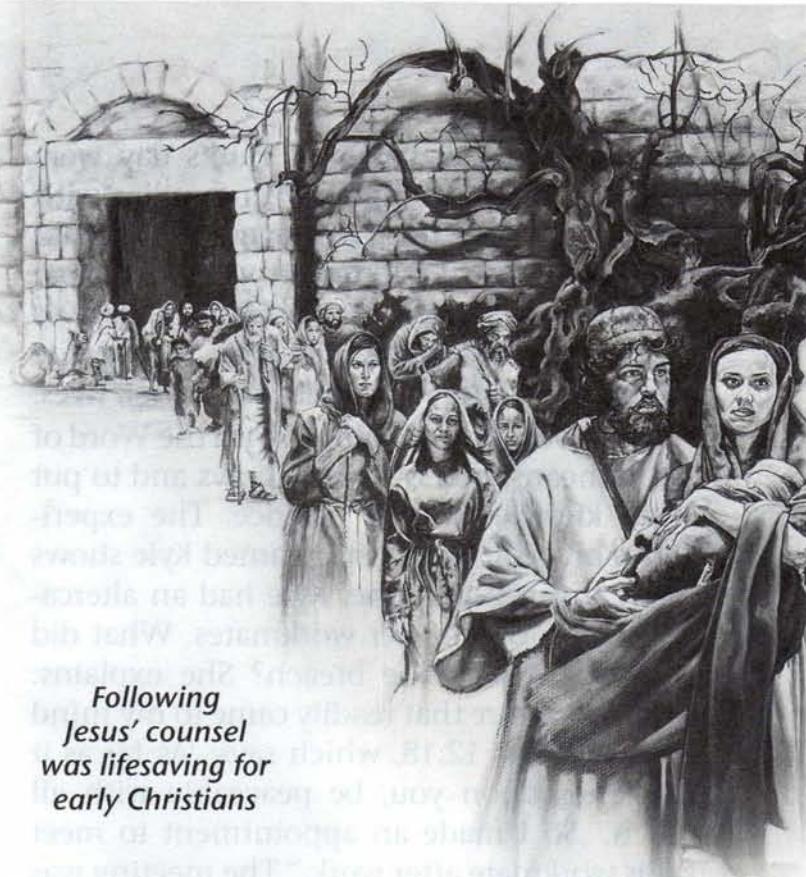
Christian Maturity—Why Beneficial?

¹⁴ It is a real protection for a Christian to have perceptive powers that are properly trained to distinguish right from wrong in a world that is “past all moral sense.” (Eph. 4:19) For example, a brother named James, who regularly read and deeply appreciated Scriptural publications, accepted a job where all his coworkers were women. “While many of these clearly showed a lack of moral sense,” says James, “one employee seemed to be of good character and showed interest in Bible truth. When we were alone in a production room, though, she began making sexual advances. I thought it was a joke but found it very hard to stop her. Right then I recalled an experience related in *The Watchtower* regarding a brother who faced a similar temptation on his job. The article used the example of Joseph and Potiphar’s wife.* I promptly pushed the girl away, and she ran out.” (Gen. 39:7-12) James was thankful that nothing further happened and that he maintained a good conscience.—1 Tim. 1:5.

¹⁵ Maturity is also beneficial in that it strengthens our figurative heart and keeps us from being “carried away with various and strange teachings.” (*Read Hebrews 13:9.*) When we strive to make spiritual progress, our mind stays focused on “the more impor-

* See the article entitled “Fortified to Say No to Wrongdoing,” in the October 1, 1999, issue of *The Watchtower*.

14. Illustrate how pressing on to maturity can be a protection.
15. How can pressing on to maturity strengthen our figurative heart?



*Following
Jesus’ counsel
was lifesaving for
early Christians*

tant things.” (Phil. 1:9, 10) We thus grow in our appreciation for God and for all the provisions he has made for our benefit. (Rom. 3:24) A Christian who is “full-grown in powers of understanding” develops such gratitude and enjoys intimacy with Jehovah.—1 Cor. 14:20.

¹⁶ A sister named Louise admitted that for some time after baptism, her main concern was the impression she gave to others. “I was not doing anything wrong,” she said, “but my heart was not ablaze with the desire to serve Jehovah. I realized that I had to make some changes if I was going to feel that I was giving everything I could to Jehovah. The biggest change was to throw my whole heart into his worship.” By putting forth such effort, Louise developed ‘firmness of heart,’ and it proved to be vital when she faced a distressing health problem. (Jas. 5:8) Louise said, “I struggled greatly, but I really drew close to Jehovah.”

16. What helped one sister to develop ‘firmness of heart’?

'Become Obedient From the Heart'

¹⁷ Paul's counsel to "press on to maturity" proved to be lifesaving to the first-century Christians living in Jerusalem and Judea. Those who heeded it had the keen spiritual discernment needed to recognize the signal Jesus had given for them to "begin fleeing to the mountains." When they saw "the disgusting thing that causes desolation . . . standing in a holy place," that is, the armies of Rome surrounding and penetrating Jerusalem, they knew that it was time to flee. (Matt. 24:15, 16) Heeding Jesus' prophetic warning, Christians fled the city of Jerusalem prior to its destruction and, according to ecclesiastical historian Eusebius, settled in the city of Pella in the mountainous region of Gilead. They thereby avoided the worst disaster for Jerusalem in recorded history.

17. Why was obedience especially vital in the first century?

¹⁸ Obedience that comes from pressing on to maturity will prove to be no less lifesaving when we face the major fulfillment of Jesus' prophecy that "there will be great tribulation" of unequaled magnitude. (Matt. 24:21) Will we prove to be obedient to whatever future urgent direction we may receive from "the faithful steward"? (Luke 12:42) How important it is that we learn to 'become obedient from the heart'!—Rom. 6:17.

¹⁹ Our attaining maturity requires that we train our perceptive powers. We do this by putting forth effort to get better acquainted with God's Word and by learning obedience. Growing to Christian maturity brings special challenges to youths. The following article considers how such challenges can be met successfully.

18, 19. (a) Why is obedience vital in our day? (b) What will be considered in the next article?

YOUTHS—MAKE YOUR ADVANCEMENT MANIFEST

"Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your advancement may be manifest to all persons."—1 TIM. 4:15.

O YOUTH, enjoy yourself while you are young! Let your heart lead you to enjoyment in the days of your youth." (Eccl. 11:9, *Tanakh—The Holy Scriptures*) So wrote wise King Solomon of ancient Israel. The Originator of this message, Jehovah God, certainly wants you youths to be happy. More than that, Jehovah wants your joy to last beyond the time of youth. However, those days

1. What does God desire for young people?

of youth are often marred by painful mistakes that may affect a person's future happiness. Even faithful Job bemoaned having to face "the consequences of the errors of [his] youth." (Job 13:26) During adolescence and the following early years of life, a young Christian often has to make weighty decisions. Bad judgment can leave deep emotional scars and create problems that may affect the rest of his life.—Eccl. 11:10.

² Good judgment needs to be exercised by young people. Consider the advice the apostle Paul gave to the Corinthians. He wrote: "Do not become young children in powers of understanding . . . Become full-grown in powers of understanding." (1 Cor. 14:20) Heeding the counsel to acquire the ability to think and reason like a full-grown person will help young people to avoid making serious mistakes.

³ If you are a young person, bear in mind that becoming mature requires effort. Paul told Timothy: "Let no man ever look down on your youth. On the contrary, become an example to the faithful ones in speaking, in conduct, in love, in faith, in chasteness. . . . Continue applying yourself to public reading, to exhortation, to teaching. . . . Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them, that your *advancement* may be manifest to all persons." (1 Tim. 4:12-15) Christian youths need to make progress and make their advancement manifest to others.

What Is Advancement?

⁴ To advance is "to progress, to change for the better." Paul was urging Timothy to keep applying himself in order to make progress in speech, conduct, love, faith, and chasteness, as well as in the way he fulfilled his ministry. He was to strive to make his manner of life exemplary. Timothy thus needed to continue to make spiritual advancement.

⁵ When Paul penned this counsel sometime between 61 and 64 C.E., Timothy was already an experienced elder. He was not

2. By applying what Bible counsel can youths avoid serious mistakes?
3. What can you do to become mature?
4. What does making spiritual advancement involve?
- 5, 6. (a) When did Timothy's advancement begin to be manifest? (b) With regard to making advancement, how can youths today imitate Timothy?

just beginning to make spiritual advancement. In 49 or 50 C.E. when Timothy was likely in his late teens or early 20's, he was "well reported on by the brothers in Lystra and Iconium," who had observed his spiritual progress. (Acts 16:1-5) At that time, Paul took Timothy with him on his missionary journey. After observing Timothy's further progress for some months, Paul dispatched him to Thessalonica in order to comfort and make firm the Christians in that city. (*Read 1 Thessalonians 3:1-3, 6.*) Clearly, Timothy began to make his advancement manifest to others when he was a young person.

⁶ You young people in the congregation, work to cultivate the needed spiritual qualities now, so that your advancement in Christian living and in your ability to teach Bible truths will be clearly seen. From the age of 12, Jesus "went on progressing in wisdom." (Luke 2:52) Let us, then, examine how you can make your advancement manifest in three areas of your life: (1) when you face adversity, (2) as you prepare for marriage, and (3) as you strive to become "a fine minister."—1 Tim. 4:6.

Meet Adversity With "Soundness of Mind"

⁷ A 17-year-old Christian named Carol said, "At times, I have been emotionally, physically, and mentally drained to the point that I didn't want to wake up in the morning."^{*} Why was she so distressed? When Carol was ten years old, her family was shattered by divorce, and she ended up living with her mother, who rejected the Bible's moral standards. Like Carol, you may be facing some severely stressful situations with little chance of improvement.

* Some names have been changed.

7. How can adversity affect young people?

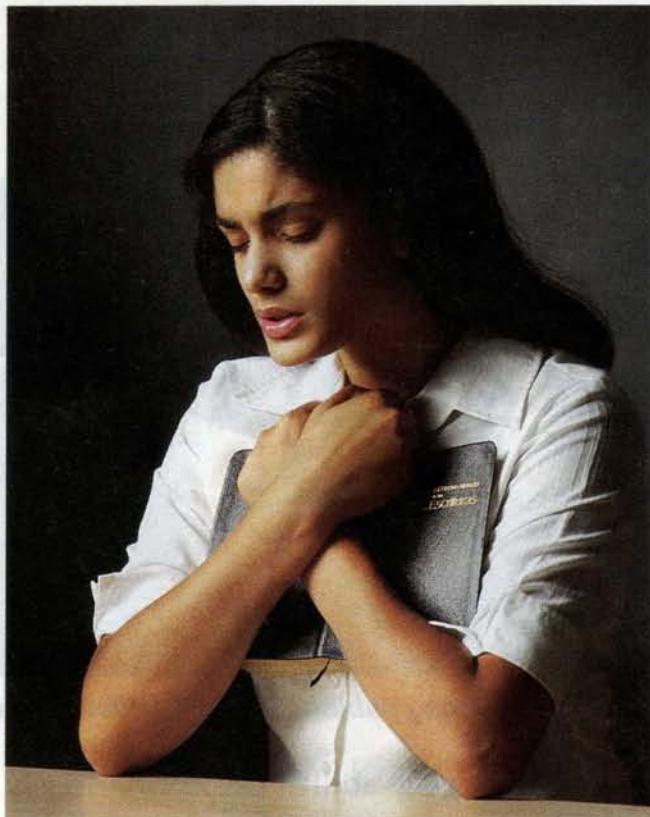
⁸ While making spiritual progress, Timothy too struggled with adverse circumstances. For instance, he experienced “frequent cases of sickness” because of stomach trouble. (1 Tim. 5:23) When Paul sent him to Corinth to handle certain problems caused by individuals who had challenged the apostle’s authority, Paul urged the congregation to cooperate, so that Timothy would be “free of fear” among them. (1 Cor. 4:17; 16:10, 11) Evidently, Timothy was shy, or timid.

⁹ To help Timothy, Paul later reminded him: “God gave us not a spirit of cowardice, but that of power and of love and of *soundness of mind*.” (2 Tim. 1:7) “Soundness of mind” involves being able to think and reason sensibly. It includes the ability to face things as they are—not the way you would like them to be. Some immature youths manifest a spirit of cowardice and mentally try to escape stressful situations by resorting to excessive sleep or TV viewing, drug or alcohol abuse, constant partying, or sexual immorality. Christians are admonished “to repudiate ungodliness and worldly desires and to live with soundness of mind and righteousness and godly devotion amid this present system of things.”—Titus 2:12.

¹⁰ The Bible exhorts “younger men to be sound in mind.” (Titus 2:6) Heeding this counsel means that you will face problems prayerfully and will rely on God-given strength. (*Read 1 Peter 4:7.*) Thus, you will develop heartfelt confidence in “the strength that God supplies.”—1 Pet. 4:11.

¹¹ Soundness of mind and prayer are what helped Carol. “Having to take a stand

8. With what adversities did Timothy struggle?
9. What is soundness of mind, and how does it differ from a spirit of cowardice?
- 10, 11. How does soundness of mind help us to develop spiritual strength?



Prayer can help you to cope with adversity

against my mother’s immoral lifestyle was one of the hardest things I have ever had to do,” she said. “But prayer really helped. I know Jehovah is with me, so I am not afraid anymore.” Remember, adversity can refine and strengthen you. (Ps. 105:17-19; Lam. 3:27) Regardless of what you face, God will never let you down. He will “really help you.”—Isa. 41:10.

Preparing for a Successful Marriage

¹² Some young adults have rushed into marriage, believing that it is the solution to unhappiness, loneliness, boredom, and problems at home. However, the exchanging of marriage vows is a serious matter. Some in Bible times rashly made a sacred, or holy, vow without carefully analyzing what was involved. (*Read Proverbs 20:25.*)

12. Why should a Christian considering marriage apply the principle found at Proverbs 20:25?



How can young publishers develop effective teaching methods?

At times, young adults do not seriously consider the demands of marriage. Later, they find that much more is involved than they had realized.

¹³ So before pursuing a courtship, ask yourself: 'Why do I want to get married? What expectations do I have? Is this the right person for me? What can I bring to a marriage?' To help you make an insightful examination, "the faithful and discreet slave" has published very specific articles.* (Matt. 24:45-47) View such material as advice that Jehovah is giving you. Carefully evaluate what is stated there and apply it. Never allow yourself to become "like a horse or mule without understanding." (Ps. 32: 8, 9) Become full-grown in your under-

* "Is This Person Right for Me?" in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2; "Divine Guidance for Selecting a Marriage Mate," in *The Watchtower* of May 15, 2001; and "How Wise Is a Teenage Marriage?" in *Awake!* of September 22, 1983.

13. What questions should those contemplating courtship consider, and what helpful advice is available to them?

standing of the demands of marriage. If you feel that you are ready to pursue a courtship, always remember to be "an example . . . in chasteness."—1 Tim. 4:12.

¹⁴ Spiritual maturity also brings success *after* marriage. A full-grown Christian strives to attain "the measure of stature that belongs to the fullness of the Christ." (Eph. 4:11-14) He works hard to develop a Christlike personality. As our Exemplar, "the Christ did not please himself." (Rom. 15:3) When

both mates keep seeking, not their own advantage, but that of the other, family life will be a haven of peace and comfort. (1 Cor. 10:24) A husband will show self-sacrificing love, and a wife will be determined to be in submission to her husband as Jesus is to his Head.—1 Cor. 11:3; Eph. 5:25.

"Fully Accomplish Your Ministry"

¹⁵ Drawing attention to Timothy's important assignment, Paul wrote: "I solemnly charge you before God and Christ Jesus, . . . preach the word, be at it urgently." He added: "Do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry." (2 Tim. 4:1, 2, 5) To fulfill this charge, Timothy had to be "nourished with the words of the faith." —*Read 1 Timothy 4:6.*

¹⁶ How can you be "nourished with the words of the faith"? Paul wrote: "Continue applying yourself to public reading, to ex-

14. How can spiritual advancement help you if you marry?
15, 16. How can you make your advancement manifest in the ministry?

hortation, to teaching. Ponder over these things; be absorbed in them." (1 Tim. 4:13, 15) Improvement requires diligent personal study. The expression "be absorbed" conveys the idea of being immersed in an activity. How are your study habits? Are you absorbed in "the deep things of God"? (1 Cor. 2:10) Or do you put forth only minimal effort? Pondering over what you study will move your heart.—*Read Proverbs 2:1-5.*

¹⁷ A young pioneer named Michelle said: "To be truly effective in the ministry, I have a good schedule for personal study, and I am regular at the meetings. As a result of this, I am always growing spiritually." Serving as a pioneer will indeed help you to improve your ability to use the Bible in the ministry and to make spiritual advancement. Strive to be a good reader and to give meaningful comments at Christian meetings. As a spiritually mature youth, you would want to prepare instructive student talks in the Theocratic Ministry School, adhering to the assigned material.

¹⁸ 'Doing the work of an evangelizer' means making your ministry more effective and helping others to gain salvation. This requires developing the "art of teaching." (2 Tim. 4:2) By arranging to share in the ministry with those who are experienced in this work, you will be able to learn from their teaching methods, as Timothy learned from working with Paul. (1 Cor. 4:17) Referring to those he had helped, Paul said that he not only shared the good news with them but also gave of his 'own soul,' or used his very life in helping them, because they became beloved to him. (1 Thess. 2:8) To follow Paul's example in the ministry, you must have the same disposition as Timo-

17, 18. (a) What abilities should you strive to cultivate? (b) How will developing the same disposition as that of Timothy help you in the ministry?

thy, who genuinely cared about others and 'slaved in furtherance of the good news.' (*Read Philippians 2:19-23.*) Do you show this self-sacrificing spirit in your ministry?

Advancement Brings Real Satisfaction

¹⁹ Making spiritual advancement takes effort. But by patiently cultivating your teaching skills, you will, in time, have the privilege of "making many rich" spiritually, and they will become your "joy or crown of exultation." (2 Cor. 6:10; 1 Thess. 2:19) "More than ever before, my time is spent helping others," explained Fred, a full-time minister. "It is so true that there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."

²⁰ Regarding the joy and satisfaction she experienced from growing spiritually, a young pioneer named Daphne said: "I developed a much closer relationship with Jehovah as I began to appreciate him as a Person. When you please Jehovah to the fullest extent of your ability, you feel so good—really satisfied!" Though spiritual advancement may not always be recognized by humans, Jehovah always sees and values it. (Heb. 4:13) Without question, you young Christians can bring glory and praise to our heavenly Father. Continue to make his heart rejoice as you genuinely make your advancement manifest.—Prov. 27:11.

19, 20. Why does making spiritual advancement bring joy?

What Did You Learn?

- What is involved in making spiritual advancement?
- How can you make your advancement manifest . . .

when facing adversity?

in preparing for marriage?

in the ministry?

Questions From Readers

**When was Satan cast out of heaven?
—Rev. 12:1-9.**

Although the Bible book of Revelation does not give the precise time of Satan's ousting, it does mention a series of events that can help us to estimate when he was cast out of heaven. First among the events is the birth of the Messianic Kingdom. Subsequent to that, "war broke out in heaven," which led to Satan's defeat and his finally being cast out of heaven.

The Scriptures clearly mark 1914 as the year when "the appointed times of the nations" ended and the Kingdom was established.* (Luke 21:24) How soon after that did the war in heaven break out, resulting in Satan's ousting?

"The dragon [Satan] kept standing before the woman who was about to give birth," states Revelation 12:4, "that, when she did give birth, it might devour her child." This shows that Satan wanted to dispose of the newborn Kingdom quickly, at the moment of its birth if at all possible. Though Jehovah's intervention prevented Satan from realizing his wicked intention, Satan was determined and relentless in his effort to do harm to the newly established Kingdom. It stands to reason, therefore, that "Michael and his angels" would waste no time in taking action to remove "the dragon and its angels" from the heavenly scene so that no harm could come to the Kingdom. This suggests that the defeat and ousting of Satan took place soon after the Kingdom's birth in 1914.

Another factor to consider is the resurrection of anointed Christians, which—as Scrip-

tural evidence indicates—began soon after the establishment of the Kingdom.* (Rev. 20:6) Since none of Christ's anointed brothers are spoken of as accompanying Jesus in the battle with the dragon and its angels, the war in heaven and the ousting of Satan and his demons would have been completed by the time the resurrection of Christ's brothers got under way.

So, then, the Bible does not reveal the exact time when Satan and his demons were expelled from heaven. Nevertheless, it is evident that this event closely followed the enthronement of Jesus Christ in heaven in 1914.

* See *The Watchtower*, January 1, 2007, pages 27-28, paragraphs 9-13.



* See pages 215-218 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*

HUSBANDS, IMITATE CHRIST'S LOVE!

ON THE final night of his life on earth, Jesus told his faithful apostles: "I am giving you a new commandment, that you love one another; just as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:34, 35) Indeed, true Christians are to love one another.

Singling out husbands from among Christ's followers, the apostle Paul wrote: "Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Eph. 5:25) How can a Christian husband apply this Scriptural admonition in his marriage, particularly when his wife is a dedicated servant of Jehovah?

Christ Cherished the Congregation

"Husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies," states the Bible. "He who loves his wife loves himself, for no man ever hated his own flesh; but he feeds and cherishes it, as the Christ also does the congregation." (Eph. 5:28, 29) Jesus felt affection for his disciples and held them dear. He cherished them. Even though they were imperfect, he was gentle and kind to them. Desiring to "present the congregation to himself in its splendor," he focused on the good qualities of his disciples.—Eph. 5:27.

Just as Christ expressed love for the congregation, a husband must show love for his mate in both word and deed. A wife who is the recipient of regular expressions of her

husband's love feels cherished and happy. On the other hand, a woman having all the comforts of a fine home can be desperately unhappy if she is being neglected or ignored by her marriage partner.

How does a husband show that he cherishes his wife? In public, he introduces her to others in a dignified manner and openly praises her for her support. If his wife has played a key role in success the family has experienced, he does not hesitate to make that known to others. Privately, she senses his affection. A touch of the hand, a smile, a hug, and a compliment may be small things, but they make lasting impressions on the heart of a woman.

"Not Ashamed to Call Them 'Brothers'"

Christ Jesus was "not ashamed to call [his anointed followers] 'brothers.'" (Heb. 2:11, 12, 17) If you are a Christian husband, remember that your wife is also your Christian sister. Her dedication to Jehovah takes precedence over her marriage vow, regardless of whether she was baptized before or after marrying you. When calling on your wife to make a comment, the brother presiding at a congregation meeting appropriately refers to her as "Sister." She is your sister too, not only at the Kingdom Hall but also at home. It is just as important to be kind and polite to her at home as it is to be that way at the Kingdom Hall.

If you have additional privileges of service in the congregation, you may at times find it



Is your wife your closest companion?

difficult to balance congregation and family responsibilities. Good cooperation among the elders and ministerial servants and effective delegating of responsibilities can help you to free up time for the sister who needs you the most—your wife. Remember, a number of brothers could undoubtedly perform the congregation tasks assigned to you, but you are the only brother united to your wife in wedlock.

Moreover, you are the head of your wife. The Bible states: "The head of every man is the Christ; in turn the head of a woman is the man." (1 Cor. 11:3) How should you exercise this headship? In a loving way, not by repeatedly quoting the aforementioned verse and demanding respect. The key to exercising headship properly is to imitate Jesus Christ in the way you treat your wife.—1 Pet. 2:21.

"You Are My Friends"

Jesus called his disciples his friends. He told them: "I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master does. But I have called you friends, because all the things I have heard from my Father I have made known to you." (John 15:14, 15) Jesus and his disciples had good communication. They also did things together. "Jesus

and his disciples" were invited to the marriage feast at Cana. (John 2:2) They had favorite places, such as the garden of Gethsemane. The Bible says that "Jesus had many times met there with his disciples."—John 18:2.

A wife certainly needs to feel that she is her husband's closest companion. How vital it is that you husbands and wives enjoy life together! Serve God together. Take delight in studying the Bible together. Spend time together—walking, talking, eating together. Be more than a married couple; be dear friends.

He "Loved Them to the End"

Jesus 'loved his disciples to the end.' (John 13:1) Some husbands fail to imitate Christ in this respect. They may even abandon 'the wife of their youth,' perhaps for someone younger.—Mal. 2:14, 15.

Others, such as Willi, imitate Christ. Because of declining health, Willi's wife needed constant care for many years. How did Willi feel about this? He said: "I have always considered my wife a gift from God and have appreciated her as such. Besides, 60 years ago I promised to care for her in both good times and bad. I will never forget that promise."

Christian husbands, imitate Christ's love. Cherish your God-fearing wife—your sister and friend.

'Continue loving your wife'



THE ANGELS —“SPIRITS FOR PUBLIC SERVICE”

“Are they not all spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?”—HEB. 1:14.

JESUS CHRIST warned any who might stumble his followers: “See to it that you men do not despise one of these little ones; for I tell you that their angels in heaven always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.” (Matt. 18:10) Referring to the righteous angels, the apostle Paul wrote: “Are they not all spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation?” (Heb. 1:14) Those words are a comforting assurance that God uses these heavenly creatures to help humans. What does the Bible tell us about angels? How do they assist us? What can we learn from their examples?

² There are millions of faithful angels in heaven. All of them are “mighty in power, carrying out his word.” (Ps. 103:20; *read Revelation 5:11.*) These spirit sons of God have personality, divine qualities, and free will. They are superbly organized and have high positions in God’s arrangement, the *archangel* being Michael (Jesus’ heavenly name). (Dan. 10:13; Jude 9) This “firstborn of all creation” is “the Word,” or Spokesman, of God and was used by Jehovah in making all other things.—Col. 1:15-17; John 1:1-3.

³ Under the archangel are the *seraphs*, who declare Jehovah’s holiness and help to keep his people clean spiritually. There are also the *cherubs*, who serve as upholders of his majes-

1. What comfort can we draw from Matthew 18:10 and Hebrews 1:14?
- 2, 3. What are some duties of heavenly spirit creatures?

ty. (Gen. 3:24; Isa. 6:1-3, 6, 7) Other angels, or messengers, have various duties in carrying out God’s will.—Heb. 12:22, 23.

⁴ All the angels rejoiced at the ‘founding of the earth’ and shared with delight in their assigned work as this unique jewel in space developed into mankind’s home. (Job 38:4, 7) Jehovah created man “a little lower than

4. How did the angels react to the founding of the earth, and what could the proper exercise of free will have meant for humans?

Angels rejoice in carrying out God’s will



angels" but in His "image," thus enabling humans to reflect the Creator's lofty qualities. (Heb. 2:7; Gen. 1:26) By exercising the gift of free will properly, Adam and Eve and their descendants could have enjoyed life in a paradise home as part of Jehovah's universal family of intelligent creatures.

⁵ Surely the holy angels must have been appalled when they witnessed the beginning of revolt in God's household. One from their midst was no longer content with praising Jehovah but desired to be worshipped. He made himself Satan (meaning "Resister") by challenging the rightfulness of Jehovah's rulership and by launching an ambitious attempt to set up a rival sovereignty. With the first recorded lie, Satan slyly induced the first human pair to join him in rebelling against their loving Creator.—Gen. 3:4, 5; John 8:44.

⁶ Jehovah quickly rendered judgment against Satan by stating in the first Bible prophecy: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." (Gen. 3:15) Enmity would persist between Satan and God's "woman." Yes, Jehovah viewed the heavenly organization of faithful spirit creatures as a beloved wife bonded with him as Husband. This prophecy provided a sure basis for hope, although the details remained a "sacred secret" to be revealed progressively. God purposed that one from within the heavenly part of his organization would crush all rebels and that through him "the things in the heavens and the things on the earth" would be brought together.—Eph. 1:8-10.

⁷ In Noah's day, a number of angels left their "proper dwelling place" and material-

5, 6. What revolt took place in heaven, and how did God respond?

7. What did some angels do in Noah's day, and with what consequence for them?

ized fleshly bodies in order to pursue selfish pleasure on earth. (Jude 6; Gen. 6:1-4) Jehovah cast those rebels into dense darkness, and they thus joined Satan in becoming "wicked spirit forces" and vicious foes of God's servants.—Eph. 6:11-13; 2 Pet. 2:4.

How Do Angels Assist Us?

⁸ Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Joshua, Isaiah, Daniel, Jesus, Peter, John, and Paul are among those who were ministered to by angels. Righteous angels executed God's judgments and transmitted prophecies and directions, including the Mosaic Law. (2 Ki. 19:35; Dan. 10:5, 11, 14; Acts 7:53; Rev. 1:1) Since we now have the complete Word of God, angels may not need to convey divine messages. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) Behind the scenes, however, the angels are very busy carrying out God's will and supporting his servants.

⁹ The Bible assures us: "The angel of Jehovah is camping all around those fearing him, and he rescues them." (Ps. 34:7; 91:11) Because of the issue of integrity, Jehovah permits Satan to bring all sorts of trials upon us. (Luke 21:16-19) However, God knows the point beyond which a test would prove nothing more as far as our integrity to him is concerned. (*Read 1 Corinthians 10:13.*) Angels are ever alert to intervene according to God's will. They rescued Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel, and Peter but did not prevent the deaths of Stephen and James at enemy hands. (Dan. 3:17, 18, 28; 6:22; Acts 7:59, 60; 12:1-3, 7, 11) The circumstances and issues were different. Similarly, some of our brothers in Nazi concentration camps were executed, whereas Jehovah saw to it that most of them survived.

¹⁰ The Scriptures do not teach that each

8, 9. How has Jehovah used angels to assist humans?

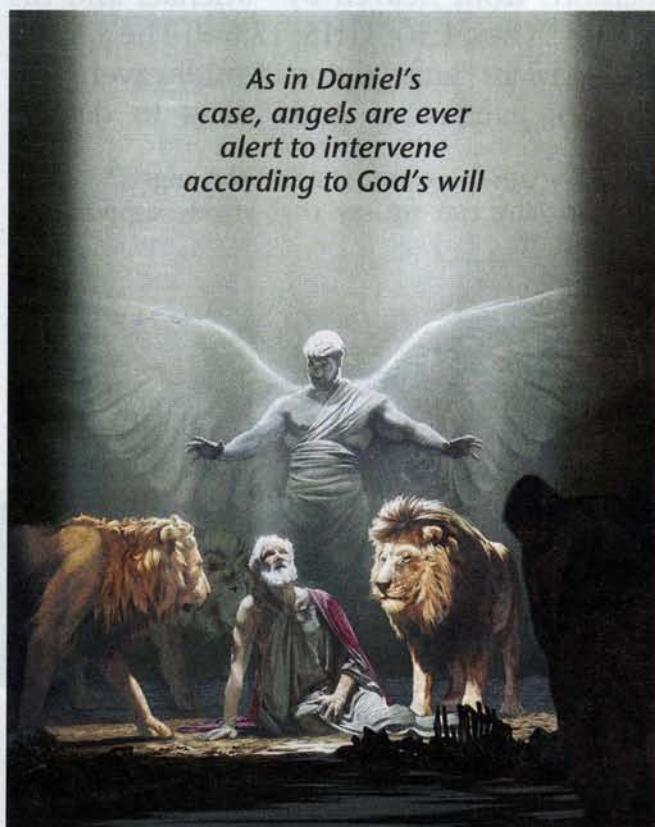
10. In addition to angelic help, what assistance may we receive?

person on earth has a guardian angel. We pray in confidence that “no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, [God] hears us.” (1 John 5:14) Of course, Jehovah could send an angel to assist us, but help may come in a different manner. Fellow Christians may be motivated to provide help and comfort. God may give us the wisdom and inner strength needed to cope with “a thorn in the flesh” that afflicts us as if we were being slapped by “an angel of Satan.”—2 Cor. 12:7-10; 1 Thess. 5:14.

Imitate Jesus

¹¹ Consider how Jehovah used angels in the case of Jesus. They announced his birth and resurrection and ministered to him when he was on earth. The angels could have prevented his arrest and cruel death. Instead, however, an angel was sent to strengthen

11. How were angels used to help Jesus, and what did he accomplish by remaining faithful to God?



As in Daniel's case, angels are ever alert to intervene according to God's will

him. (Matt. 28:5, 6; Luke 2:8-11; 22:43) In accord with Jehovah's purpose, Jesus died a sacrificial death and furnished proof that a perfect man can maintain integrity to God despite being tested to the limit. Jehovah therefore resurrected Jesus to immortal heavenly life, giving him “all authority” and making angels subject to him. (Matt. 28:18; Acts 2:32; 1 Pet. 3:22) Jesus thus proved to be the principal part of the “seed” of God’s “woman.”—Gen. 3:15; Gal. 3:16.

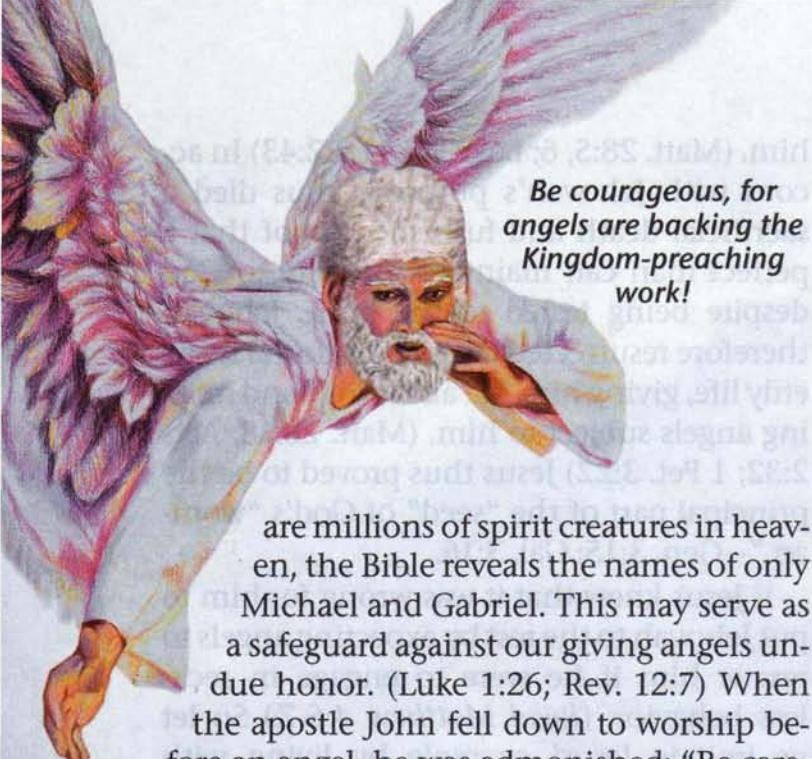
¹² Jesus knew that it was wrong for him to put Jehovah to the test by expecting angels to rescue him if he were to engage in reckless behavior. (*Read Matthew 4:5-7.*) So let us imitate Jesus' example by living with “soundness of mind,” not taking unnecessary risks, yet facing persecution confidently.—Titus 2:12.

What We Can Learn From the Faithful Angels

¹³ In reproving those who “speak abusively” of Jehovah’s anointed servants, the apostle Peter points to the fine example of the righteous angels. Although they have great power, the angels humbly refrain from making judgmental accusations “out of respect for Jehovah.” (*Read 2 Peter 2:9-11.*) Let us also keep free from improper judging, respect those entrusted with oversight in the congregation, and leave matters in the hands of Jehovah, the Supreme Judge.—Rom. 12:18, 19; Heb. 13:17.

¹⁴ Jehovah’s angels provide us with fine examples of humble service. Certain angels refused to disclose their names to humans. (Gen. 32:29; Judg. 13:17, 18) Although there

12. In what way can we imitate Jesus’ balanced example?
13. What can we learn from the example of the righteous angels mentioned at 2 Peter 2:9-11?
14. What examples of humble service do the angels provide?



Be courageous, for angels are backing the Kingdom-preaching work!

are millions of spirit creatures in heaven, the Bible reveals the names of only Michael and Gabriel. This may serve as a safeguard against our giving angels undue honor. (Luke 1:26; Rev. 12:7) When the apostle John fell down to worship before an angel, he was admonished: "Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers." (Rev. 22:8, 9) Our worship, including our prayers, should go only to God.—*Read Matthew 4:8-10.*

¹⁵ The angels also set an example in patience. Though they are intensely interested in knowing God's sacred secrets, they are not privy to all of them. "Into these very things angels are desiring to peer," states the Bible. (1 Pet. 1:12) So, what do they do? They wait patiently until God's due time for his "diver-

15. How do the angels set an example for us in patience?

sified wisdom" to "be made known through the congregation."—Eph. 3:10, 11.

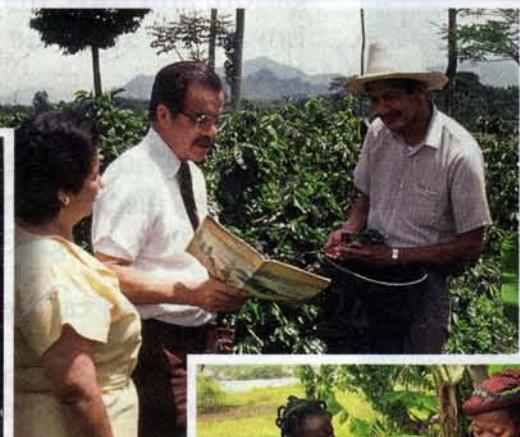
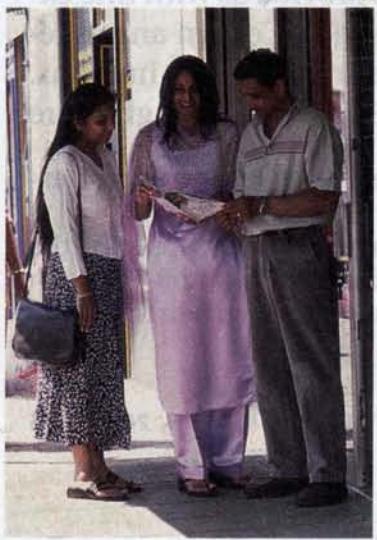
¹⁶ Christians under trial are 'a theatrical spectacle to angels.' (1 Cor. 4:9) With great satisfaction, the angels observe our acts of faithfulness and even rejoice over the repentance of a sinner. (Luke 15:10) The godly conduct of Christian women is noted by the angels. The Bible shows that "the woman ought to have a sign of authority upon her head because of the angels." (1 Cor. 11:3, 10) Yes, angels are pleased to see Christian women and all other earthly servants of God comply with theocratic order and headship. Such obedience is a fitting reminder for these heavenly sons of God.

Angels Actively Support the Preaching Work

¹⁷ Angels are involved in some of the remarkable things that occur in "the Lord's day." These include the birth of the Kingdom in 1914 and the hurling of Satan and his demons from heaven by "Michael and his angels." (Rev. 1:10; 11:15; 12:5-9) The apostle John saw an "angel flying in midheaven, and he had everlasting good news to declare

16. How can our conduct affect the angels?

17, 18. Why can we say that angels support our preaching?



as glad tidings to those who dwell on the earth." The angel declared: "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of the judgment by him has arrived, and so worship the One who made the heaven and the earth and sea and fountains of waters." (Rev. 14:6, 7) Jehovah's servants are thus assured of angelic backing as they preach the good news of the established Kingdom despite the Devil's vicious opposition.—Rev. 12:13, 17.

¹⁸ Today, angels do not lead us to honest-hearted ones by speaking to us as an angel spoke to Philip and directed him to the Ethiopian eunuch. (Acts 8:26-29) However, many modern-day experiences give evidence that angels behind the scenes are supporting our Kingdom-preaching work and guiding us to those "rightly disposed for everlasting life."* (Acts 13:48) How important it is to share in the ministry regularly so that we are available to do our part in finding those desiring to "worship the Father with spirit and truth!"—John 4:23, 24.

¹⁹ Pointing to our day, Jesus said that "in the conclusion of the system of things," the angels would "separate the wicked from among the righteous." (Matt. 13:37-43, 49) Angels play a role in the final gathering and sealing of anointed ones. (*Read Matthew 24:31; Rev. 7:1-3*) Moreover, Jesus is accompanied by angels when he "separates the sheep from the goats."—Matt. 25:31-33, 46.

²⁰ "At the revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven with his powerful angels" all "who do not know God and those who do not obey the good news about our Lord Jesus" will be destroyed. (2 Thess. 1:6-10) When John saw that same event in vision, he described Jesus and the angelic heavenly ar-

* See Jehovah's Witnesses—*Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, pages 549-551.

19, 20. What part do angels have in the events marking "the conclusion of the system of things"?

mies as going forth on white horses in order to carry on war in righteousness.—Rev. 19:11-14.

²¹ John also "saw an angel coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand." This is none other than the archangel Michael, who will bind the Devil and hurl him—and evidently the demons—into the abyss. They will be released briefly at the end of Christ's Millennial Reign when perfect mankind will experience a final test. Thereafter, Satan and all other rebels will suffer destruction. (Rev. 20:1-3, 7-10; 1 John 3:8) All rebellion against God will have been removed.

²² Grand deliverance from Satan's wicked system of things is just ahead. Angels will have a definite role in these significant events that will vindicate Jehovah's sovereignty and bring to complete fulfillment his purpose for the earth and mankind. The righteous angels are indeed "spirits for public service, sent forth to minister for those who are going to inherit salvation." Let us therefore be thankful to Jehovah God for the way he uses the angels to help us do the divine will and gain everlasting life.

21. What action will the angel "with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand" take against Satan and his demons?

22. How are the angels involved in what is just ahead, and how should we feel about their role?

How Would You Answer?

- How are heavenly spirit creatures organized?
- What did some angels do in Noah's day?
- How has God used angels to assist us?
- What role do righteous angels play in our time?



Imitate the Loyalty of **ITTAI**

“**G**REAT and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity. Who will not really fear you, Jehovah, and glorify your name, because you alone are loyal?” This song, sung in heaven by “those who come off victorious from the wild beast and from its image,” draws attention to God’s loyalty. (Rev. 15:2-4) Jehovah wants his worshippers to imitate him in displaying this desirable quality.—Eph. 4:24.

Satan the Devil, on the other hand, does everything in his power to separate God’s earthly servants from the love of the God whom they worship. Still, many have maintained loyalty to God even under very harsh conditions. How grateful we can be that Jehovah highly esteems such devotion! Indeed, we are assured: “Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones.” (Ps. 37:28) To help us remain loyal, he has included in his Word a record of the acts of

many loyal ones. One such account is that of Ittai the Gittite.

'A Foreigner and an Exile'

Ittai was presumably a native of the renowned Philistine city of Gath, the home of the giant Goliath and other formidable foes of Israel. Without introduction, the seasoned warrior Ittai steps into the Bible record at the time of Absalom's rebellion against King David. Ittai and 600 Philistine men who had followed him were then living in exile in the vicinity of Jerusalem.

The situation of Ittai and his followers may have caused David to recall his own days as an exiled fugitive when he and 600 Israelite warriors relocated to Philistine territory and entered the domain of Achish, the king of Gath. (1 Sam. 27:2, 3) What would Ittai and his men do as David faced his son Absalom's revolt? Would they side with Absalom, remain neutral, or throw in their lot with David and his men?

Picture the scene as David, fleeing Jerusalem, comes to a halt at a place called Bethmerhak, meaning "The Far House." It is perhaps the last house in Jerusalem in the direction of the Mount of Olives before crossing the Kidron Valley. (2 Sam. 15:17; ftn.) Here David reviews his forces as they pass by. Look! With him are not only loyal Israelites but also all the Cherethites and all the Pelethites. Moreover, there are all the Gittites—Ittai and his 600 warriors.—2 Sam. 15:18.

With heartfelt empathy, David says to Ittai: "Why should you yourself also go with us? Go back and dwell with the king [evidently meaning Absalom]; for you are a foreigner and, besides, you are an exile from your place. Yesterday was when you came and today shall I make you wander with us, to go when I am going wherever I am going? Go back and take your brothers back

with you, and may Jehovah exercise toward you loving-kindness and trustworthiness!" —2 Sam. 15:19, 20.

Ittai's declaration of unflinching loyalty rings out. He answers: "As Jehovah is living and as my lord the king is living, in the place where my lord the king may come to be, whether for death or for life, there is where your servant will come to be!" (2 Sam. 15:21) This may have reminded David of similar words spoken by his great-grandmother Ruth. (Ruth 1:16, 17) His heart touched by Ittai's statement, David tells him: "Go and cross over" the Kidron Valley. At that, "Ittai the Gittite crossed over, and also all his men and all the little ones that were with him."

—2 Sam. 15:22.

"For Our Instruction"

"All the things that were written aforetime were written for our instruction," states Romans 15:4. So we do well to ask, What lessons can we learn from Ittai's example? Consider what may have prompted him to be loyal to David. Even though he was a foreigner and an exile from Philistia, Ittai recognized Jehovah as the living God and David as Jehovah's anointed one. Ittai was able to look beyond the animosity that existed between the Israelites and the Philistines. He viewed David as more than someone who had killed the Philistine champion Goliath and many more of Ittai's countrymen. (1 Sam. 18:6, 7) Ittai saw David as a man who loved Jehovah and no doubt took note of David's remarkable qualities. In turn, David came to have high regard for Ittai. Why, David even placed one third of his forces "under the hand of Ittai" in the climactic battle against Absalom's forces! —2 Sam. 18:2.

We too should strive to look beyond cultural, racial, or ethnic differences—any lingering prejudices and animosities—and

recognize the good qualities in others. The bond that formed between David and Ittai illustrates that our coming to know and love Jehovah can help us to overcome such barriers.

As we reflect on Ittai's example, we can ask ourselves: 'Do I display a similar loyal attachment to the Greater David, Christ Jesus? Do I show my loyalty by having a zealous share in the work of Kingdom preaching and disciple making?' (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) 'How far am I willing to go to prove my loyalty?'

Family heads also benefit by meditating on Ittai's example of loyalty. His allegiance

to David and his decision to go with God's anointed king affected Ittai's men. Likewise, the decisions that family heads make in support of true worship affect their families and may even bring temporary hardships. Yet, we are assured: "With someone loyal [Jehovah] will act in loyalty."—Ps. 18:25.

Following David's battle with Absalom, the Scriptures say nothing more about Ittai. The glimpse of him in God's Word nevertheless provides remarkable insight into his character during that difficult time in David's life. Ittai's inclusion in the inspired record is proof that Jehovah recognizes and rewards such loyalty.—Heb. 6:10.

WHY FOLLOW “THE CHRIST”?

“If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself . . . and follow me continually.”—LUKE 9:23.

HOW delighted Jehovah must feel to see among the congregated throngs of his worshippers on earth you newly interested ones and young ones! As you continue to study the Bible, attend Christian meetings regularly, and grow in your knowledge of the lifesaving truth found in God's Word, you need to take to heart Jesus' invitation: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake day after day and follow me continually." (Luke 9:23) Jesus is saying that disowning yourself and becoming his follower is something you would want to do. It is important for us, then, to consider why we should follow "the Christ."—Matt. 16:13-16.

1, 2. Why is it important for us to consider why we should follow "the Christ"?

2 What about those of us who are already walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ? We are exhorted to "keep on doing it more fully." (1 Thess. 4:1, 2) Whether we embraced true worship recently or decades ago, reflecting on reasons for following the Christ will help us to apply Paul's exhortation and follow Him ever more fully in our daily lives. Let us consider five reasons why we should want to follow the Christ.

To Increase Our Intimacy With Jehovah

³ When addressing the Athenians as he "stood in the midst of the Areopagus," the apostle Paul said: "[God] decreed the appointed times and the set limits of the

3. In what two ways can we get to know Jehovah?

dwelling of men, for them to seek God, if they might grope for him and really find him, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us." (Acts 17:22, 26, 27) We can seek God and really come to know him. For example, the book of creation speaks volumes about God's qualities and abilities. Appreciatively reflecting on his creative works can teach us a great deal about the Creator. (Rom. 1:20) Jehovah has also revealed details about himself in his written Word, the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16, 17) The more we 'meditate on his activity' and 'concern ourselves with his dealings,' the better we can get to know Jehovah.—Ps. 77:12.

⁴ A very fine way to become even more intimately acquainted with Jehovah is to follow the Christ. Just think of the glory Jesus had alongside his Father "before the world was"! (John 17:5) He is "the beginning of the creation by God." (Rev. 3:14) As "the firstborn of all creation," he lived for aeons in heaven with his Father, Jehovah. During his prehuman existence, Jesus did more than just spend time with his Father. He was God's personal companion, happily working together with the Almighty, forming with him the strongest bond of love ever. Jesus not only *observed* his Father's way of doing things, taking note of His feelings and attributes, but also *absorbed* and *adopted* all of what he learned about his Father. As a result, this obedient Son became just like his Father—so much so that the Bible refers to him as "the *image* of the invisible God." (Col. 1:15) By

4. How can following the Christ help us to become intimately acquainted with Jehovah?

closely following the Christ, we can become more intimately acquainted with Jehovah.

To Imitate Jehovah More Fully

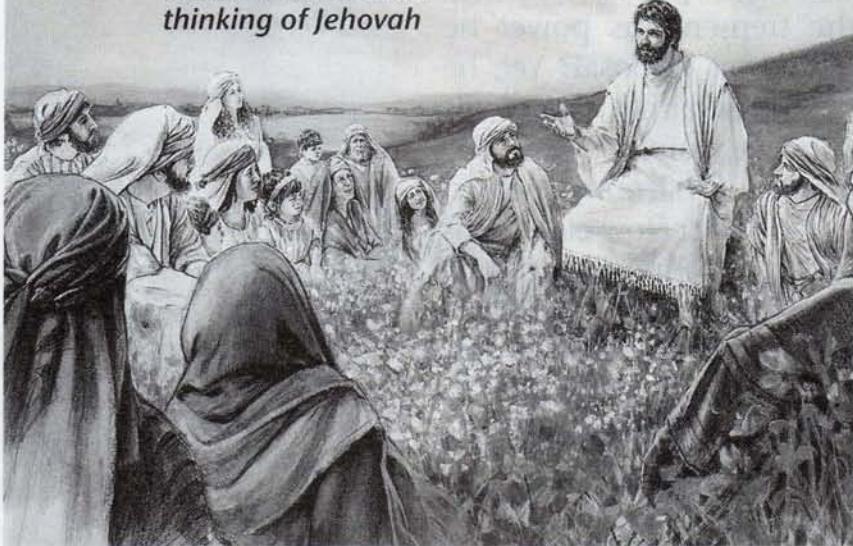
⁵ We are 'made in God's image, according to his likeness,' so we have the capacity to reflect godly attributes. (Gen. 1:26) The apostle Paul exhorted Christians to "become imitators of God, as beloved children." (Eph. 5:1) Following the Christ helps us to imitate our heavenly Father. This is because Jesus reflected God's thinking, feelings, and personality better and explained him more fully than anyone else could. When on earth, Jesus did not simply make Jehovah's name known. Rather, he revealed the Person that name represents. (*Read Matthew 11:27*) Jesus did this by his words and deeds, his teachings and example.

⁶ By his teachings, Jesus showed what God requires of us and how he feels about his worshippers. (Matt. 22:36-40; Luke 12: 6, 7; 15:4-7) For example, after quoting one

5. What will help us to imitate Jehovah more fully, and why?

6. What do Jesus' teachings reveal about Jehovah?

*Jesus' teachings
reflected the exalted
thinking of Jehovah*



of the Ten Commandments—"you must not commit adultery"—Jesus explained God's view of what takes place inside the heart of a man long before he commits that act. He said: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Ex. 20:14; Matt. 5:27, 28) After stating the Pharisaic interpretation of a statement in the Law—"you must love your neighbor and hate your enemy"—Jesus made known Jehovah's thinking, saying: "Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you." (Matt. 5:43, 44; Ex. 23:4; Lev. 19:18) Gaining insight into how God thinks and feels and what he requires of us equips us to imitate him more fully.

⁷ Jesus also revealed what his Father is like by example. When we read in the Gospels that Jesus felt compassion for the needy, empathy for those suffering, indignation at his disciples who reprimanded young children, do we not see the Father feeling the same emotions? (Mark 1:40-42; 10:13, 14; John 11:32-35) Think of how Jesus' actions shed light on God's cardinal attributes. Do not the miracles Christ performed show the tremendous power he had at his disposal? Yet, he never used that power for personal gain or with the intent of harming others. (Luke 4:1-4) How clearly his action of throwing greedy merchants out of the temple shows his sense of justice! (Mark 11:15-17; John 2: 13-16) His teachings and the

7, 8. What do we learn about Jehovah from Jesus' example?

winsome words he used to reach people's hearts indicate that he was "more than Solomon" in wisdom. (Matt. 12:42) What can we say about the love Jesus displayed by surrendering his soul in behalf of others except that "no one has love greater than this"?—John 15:13.

⁸ The Son of God represented Jehovah so perfectly in everything he said and did that he could say: "He that has seen me has seen the Father also." (*Read John 14:9-11.*) Following the Christ is tantamount to imitating Jehovah.

Jesus Is the Anointed One of Jehovah

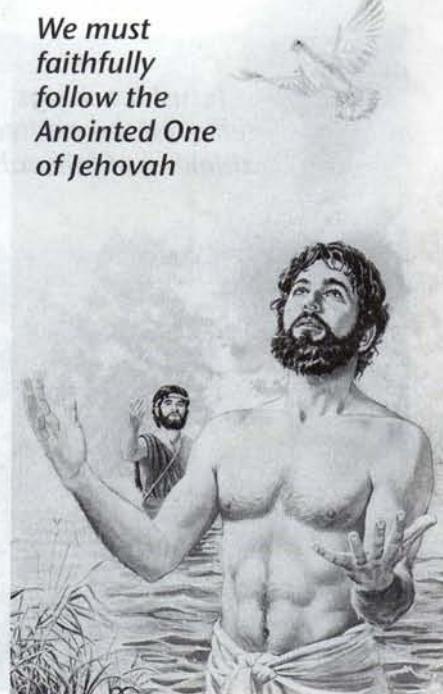
⁹ Consider what took place in the autumn of 29 C.E. when 30-year-old Jesus came to John the Baptizer. "After being baptized Jesus immediately came up from the water; and, look! the heavens were opened up, and he saw descending like a dove God's spirit coming upon him." At that time, he became the Christ, or Messiah. At that time, Jehovah himself made known

that Jesus was his Anointed One, saying: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matt. 3:13-17) What a fine reason that is for us to want to follow the Christ!

¹⁰ In the Bible, the title "Christ" is used with reference to Jesus in various ways, such as Jesus Christ, Christ Jesus, and the Christ. Jesus himself first used the term "Jesus Christ"—the

9. When and how did Jesus become God's Anointed One?

10, 11. (a) In what ways is the title "Christ" used with reference to Jesus? (b) Why should we not fail to follow Jesus Christ?



name followed by the title. In prayer to his Father, he said: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." (John 17:3) This usage clearly draws attention to the one who was sent forth by God and became his Anointed One. When the title is placed ahead of the name, as in "Christ Jesus," the emphasis shifts from the person to the position, or office, held by him. (2 Cor. 4:5) Using the expression "the Christ," the title preceded by the definite article, is another way to emphasize Jesus' office as the Messiah.—Acts 5:42.

¹¹ Regardless of how the title "Christ" is used with reference to Jesus, it highlights this important truth: Even though the Son of God came to the earth as a man and made his Father's will known, he was neither just an ordinary man nor merely a prophet; he came to be the Anointed One of Jehovah. We must not fail to follow this One.

Jesus Is the Only Way to Salvation

¹² Another vital reason to keep on following the Messiah is stated in Jesus' words to his faithful apostles, spoken just a few hours before his death. In response to Thomas' question about Jesus' statement concerning going away and preparing a place for them, Jesus said: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:1-6) Jesus was then speaking to the 11 faithful apostles. He promised them a place in heaven, but his words also have meaning for those who hope to gain everlasting life on earth. (Rev. 7:9, 10; 21:1-4) How so?

¹³ Jesus Christ is "the way." That is, he is the only one through whom it is possible for

12. What statement made to the apostle Thomas holds meaning for us?

13. In what sense is Jesus "the way"?

us to approach God. This is true in the matter of prayer, for only by praying through Jesus do we have the assurance that the Father will give us whatever we may request in harmony with His will. (John 15:16) However, Jesus is "the way" also in a further sense. Sin has alienated mankind from God. (Isa. 59:2) Jesus gave "his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt. 20:28) As a result, the Bible explains: "The blood of Jesus . . . cleanses us from all sin." (1 John 1:7) The Son has thus opened up the way of reconciliation with God. (Rom. 5:8-10) It is by putting faith in Jesus and obeying him that we can have an approved relationship with God.—John 3:36.

¹⁴ Jesus is "the truth" not only because he always spoke and lived the truth but also because all the prophecies written about the Messiah—scores of them—were fulfilled in him. "No matter how many the promises of God are," wrote the apostle Paul, "they have become Yes by means of him." (2 Cor. 1:20) Even "a shadow of the good things to come" contained in the Mosaic Law became a reality in Christ Jesus. (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:17) Jesus is the focal point on which all prophecies concentrate, and they shed light on his central role in the outworking of Jehovah's purpose. (Rev. 19:10) To benefit from the

14. How is Jesus "the truth"?

What Did You Learn?

- Why can following "the Christ" increase our intimacy with Jehovah?
- Why is imitating Jesus tantamount to imitating Jehovah?
- How is Jesus "the way and the truth and the life"?
- Why should we listen to Jehovah's Anointed One?

fulfillment of what God has purposed for us, we need to follow the Messiah.

¹⁵ Jesus is “the life” because he has bought the human race with his lifeblood, and everlasting life is a gift that God gives “by Christ Jesus our Lord.” (Rom. 6:23) Jesus is “the life” also to those who have died. (John 5:28, 29) Moreover, think of what he will do as High Priest during his Millennial Reign. Why, he will obtain everlasting deliverance from sin and death for his earthly subjects!

—Heb. 9:11, 12, 28.

¹⁶ Jesus’ answer to Thomas, then, has great meaning for us. Jesus is the way and the truth and the life. He is the one God sent forth into the world for the world to be saved

15. In what sense is Jesus “the life”?

16. What reason do we have for following Jesus?

Jehovah declared: “This is my Son . . . listen to him”



through him. (John 3:17) And no one comes to the Father except through him. The Bible clearly states: “There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved.” (Acts 4:12) Whatever our background may be, therefore, it is the course of wisdom for us to believe in Jesus, follow him, and thus be led to life.—John 20:31.

We Are Commanded to Listen to the Christ

¹⁷ Peter, John, and James witnessed the transfiguration. At that time, they heard a voice from heaven say: “This is my Son, the one that has been chosen. Listen to him.” (Luke 9:28, 29, 35) Our obeying the command to listen to the Messiah is a serious matter.—Read Acts 3:22, 23.

¹⁸ Listening to Jesus involves ‘looking intently at him, considering his example closely.’ (Heb. 12:2, 3) Hence, we do well to “pay more than the usual attention to the things” we read about him in the Bible and in the publications of “the faithful and discreet slave,” as well as what we hear about him at Christian meetings. (Heb. 2:1; Matt. 24:45) As his sheep, let us be eager to listen to Jesus and follow him.—John 10:27.

¹⁹ Can we succeed in following the Christ continually, no matter what comes our way? Yes, we can, provided that we “keep holding the pattern of healthful words” by practicing what we learn “with the faith and love that are in connection with Christ Jesus.”—2 Tim. 1:13.

17. Why is it important for us to listen to God’s Son?

18. How may we listen to Jesus Christ?

19. What will help us to follow the Christ continually?