

MAY 15, 2012

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY EDITION

STUDY ARTICLES

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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.

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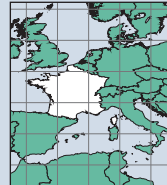
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COVER: At a truck stop in Toulouse, France, a pioneer couple witness to truck drivers. Over 1,800 trucks from various European countries pass through this city daily

FRANCE



POPULATION
62,787,000

PUBLISHERS
120,172

**PIONEER INCREASE
IN LAST FIVE YEARS**
119 percent

PURPOSE OF STUDY ARTICLES

STUDY ARTICLES 1, 2 PAGES 3-12

These articles present sound reasons for applying Jehovah's counsel on marriage. They will heighten our appreciation for God's gift of wedlock. Moreover, they show why it is vital to take a positive view of a strained marriage and point out how applying Scriptural counsel can result in marital happiness.

STUDY ARTICLE 3 PAGES 17-21

This article examines ways in which Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper. The consideration will fortify our faith in him and in his Word, the Bible. It will also strengthen our resolve to use our time wisely while we wait confidently for Jehovah's salvation.

STUDY ARTICLE 4 PAGES 23-27

Although we love God, we are imperfect. Nevertheless, we desire to reflect the glory of Jehovah. This article explains how this is possible. It shows what we must do in order to imitate God and please him. (Eph. 5:1) It also points out how we can keep on glorifying him.

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TO WISE OLDER
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THE LEAVEN OF
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DO YOU REALLY APPRECIATE GOD'S GIFT OF MARRIAGE?

"May Jehovah make a gift to you, and do you find a resting-place each one in the house of her husband."

—RUTH 1:9.

LOOK FOR THE ANSWERS:

Why can we say that past servants of God appreciated his gift of marriage?

How do we know that Jehovah is concerned about our choice of marriage mate?

What Bible counsel on wedlock do you plan to apply in your life?

"THIS is at last bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one will be called Woman, because from man this one was taken." (Gen. 2:23) How happy the first man, Adam, was to receive a wife! No wonder he waxed poetic! After Jehovah had caused Adam to fall into a deep sleep, He created this beautiful woman from one of the man's ribs. Adam later named her Eve. God united the two in happy wedlock. Since Jehovah used Adam's own rib as a base for creating her, Adam and Eve were closer than any present-day husband and wife.

² In his inimitable wisdom, Jehovah planted within humans the capacity for romantic love—a quality that would draw men and women together. Says *The World Book Encyclopedia*: "A man and woman who marry hope to share a sexual relationship and a permanent romantic attraction." That has happened countless times among Jehovah's people.

THEY WERE GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF MARRIAGE

³ Faithful Abraham had a high regard for marriage. Therefore, he sent his eldest servant to Mesopotamia to obtain a wife for Isaac. Prayer by that servant brought good results. God-fearing Rebekah became Isaac's beloved wife and played a part in Jehovah's arrangement for preserving Abraham's seed. (Gen. 22:18; 24:12-14, 67) We should not conclude from this that a person—well-meaning though he or she may be—should become an unsolicited matchmaker. In present-day society, many make

1. Describe Adam's reaction when he received a wife.
2. Why are men and women drawn to one another?
3. How did Isaac acquire a wife?

their own choice of marriage mate. Of course, marriages are not made in heaven, but God will guide Christians in this and other aspects of life if they pray for direction and are led by his spirit.—Gal. 5:18, 25.

⁴ A beautiful Shulammite girl of ancient Israel did not want her friends to pressure her to become one of King Solomon's many wives. She said: "I have put you under oath, O daughters of Jerusalem, that you try not to awaken or arouse love in me until it feels inclined." (Song of Sol. 8:4) The Shulammite and a certain shepherd did have special feelings for each other. Humbly, she said: "A mere saffron of the coastal plain I am, a lily of the low plains." Ah, but the shepherd replied: "Like a lily among thorny weeds, so is my girl companion among the daughters"! (Song of Sol. 2: 1, 2) They truly loved each other.

⁵ Because the Shulammite and the shepherd primarily loved God, their marital bond would be strong indeed. In fact, the Shulammite said to her beloved shepherd: "Place me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm; because love is as strong as death is, insistence on exclusive devotion is as unyielding as Sheol is. Its blazings are the blazings of a fire, the flame of Jah [for it is from him]. Many waters themselves are not able to extinguish love, nor can rivers themselves wash it away. If a man would give all the valuable things of his house for love, persons would positively despise them." (Song of Sol. 8:6, 7) When weighing wedlock, why should a servant of Jehovah settle for anything less?

4, 5. What convinces you that the Shulammite and the shepherd had special feelings for each other?

A CHOICE THAT MATTERS TO GOD

⁶ Jehovah cares about your choice of marriage mate. With regard to inhabitants of Canaan, the Israelites were commanded: "You must form no marriage alliance with them. Your daughter you must not give to his son, and his daughter you must not take for your son. For he will turn your son from following me, and they will certainly serve other gods; and Jehovah's anger will indeed blaze against you, and he will certainly annihilate you in a hurry." (Deut. 7:3, 4) Centuries later, Ezra the priest declared: "You yourselves have acted unfaithfully in that you gave a dwelling to foreign wives so as to add to the guiltiness of Israel." (Ezra 10:10) And the apostle Paul told fellow Christians: "A wife is bound during all the time her husband is alive. But if her husband should fall asleep in death, she is free to be married to whom she wants, *only in the Lord*."—1 Cor. 7:39.

⁷ If a dedicated servant of Jehovah married an unbeliever, this would be an act of disobedience to God. The Israelites of Ezra's day acted unfaithfully by giving "a dwelling to foreign wives," and it would be wrong to try to water down the plain statements of the Scriptures. (Ezra 10:10; 2 Cor. 6:14, 15) A Christian who marries an unbeliever is not exemplary and lacks real appreciation for God's gift of marriage. Entering such a union after baptism can cost one some privileges among God's people. And it would be illogical to expect blessings while admitting in prayer, 'Jehovah, I deliberately disobeyed you, but please bless me anyway.'

6, 7. How do we know that God cares about our choice of marriage mate?

OUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS BEST

⁸ The maker of a machine knows exactly how it works. If the device needs to be assembled, he can provide the necessary details about it. What if we ignore the instructions and assemble the pieces in our own way? The results are likely to be disastrous—if the machine works at all. Well, if we are to fulfill a desire for happy wedlock, we must follow the instructions provided by Jehovah, the Maker of marriage.

⁹ Jehovah knows everything there is to know about mankind and marriage. He implanted a sexual need in humans so that they would “be fruitful and become many.” (Gen. 1:28) God understands feelings of loneliness, for prior to creating the first woman, he said: “The man’s being alone is not good; I will make him a helper to match him.” (Gen. 2:18, *Byington*) Jehovah is also fully aware of the joy possible within the bonds of matrimony.—**Read Proverbs 5:15-18.**

¹⁰ Because of the sin and imperfection passed on to the human race by sinful Adam, no present-day marriage is perfect. Among Jehovah’s servants, however, wedlock can result in true happiness if God’s Word is followed. For instance, consider Paul’s clear counsel on intimate relations in marriage. (**Read 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.**) It is not Scripturally required that marriage mates limit sexual relations to efforts to produce offspring. Such in-

timacy can rightly fill emotional and physical needs. But perverted practices certainly do not please God. Christian husbands and wives will undoubtedly want to handle this important aspect of their life with tenderness, allowing them to display genuine affection for each other. And, of course, they should avoid any actions that would displease Jehovah.

¹¹ Wedlock should be filled with joy, not unhappiness and drudgery. Especially should a Christian home be a place of rest and peace. Consider what happened some 3,000 years ago when the aged widow Naomi and her widowed daughters-in-law, Orpah and

11. How was Ruth blessed for doing things Jehovah’s way?

Ruth showed appreciation for God’s gift of marriage



8. Explain why we should follow God’s guidance on marriage.

9. Why can we say that Jehovah understands feelings of loneliness as well as the happiness possible in marriage?

10. What factors should govern the intimate relations of Christian marriage mates?

Ruth, were on the road from Moab to Judah. Naomi urged the younger women to return to their people. The Moabitess Ruth stuck with Naomi, was faithful to the true God, and was assured ‘a perfect wage from Jehovah, under whose wings she sought refuge.’ (Ruth 1:9; 2:12) With great appreciation for God’s gift of marriage, Ruth became the wife of elderly Boaz, a true worshipper of Jehovah. When resurrected on earth in God’s new world, she will be delighted to learn that she became an ancestress of Jesus Christ. (Matt. 1:1, 5, 6; Luke 3:23, 32) What blessings she received for doing things Jehovah’s way!

A good marriage honors Jehovah and can bring great happiness to everyone in the family

SOUND COUNSEL FOR SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGE

¹² The Maker of marriage tells us what we need to know about successful wedlock. No human knows as much. The Bible is always right, and the only way anyone can direct attention to sound counsel on marriage is to stick to the standards set out in the Scriptures. For instance, the apostle Paul wrote under inspiration: “Let each one of you individually so love his wife as he does himself; on the other hand, the wife should have deep respect for

her husband.” (Eph. 5:33) There is nothing about such Biblical counsel that mature Christians cannot understand. The question is, Will they apply Jehovah’s Word? They will if they really appreciate his gift of marriage.*

¹³ A Christian husband is to deal lovingly with his wife. The apostle Peter wrote: “You husbands, continue dwelling in like manner with them according to knowledge, assigning them honor as to a weaker vessel, the feminine one, since you are also heirs with them of the undeserved favor of life, in order for your prayers not to be hindered.” (1 Pet. 3:7) A husband’s prayers can be hindered if he does not apply Jehovah’s counsel. The spiritual condition of both mates is likely to be affected detrimentally, possibly leading to great stress, quarrels, and acts of harshness.

¹⁴ A wife who is guided by Jehovah’s Word and his holy spirit can do much to make her home a place of tranquility and happiness. It is natural for a God-fearing husband to love his wife and protect her physically and spiritually. She yearns for his love, and that requires that she be lovable. “The truly wise woman has built up her house,” says Proverbs 14:1, “but the foolish one tears it down with her own hands.” A wise and loving wife contributes greatly to the success and happiness of her family. She also shows that she really appreciates God’s gift of marriage.

* For detailed discussions of marriage, see chapters 10 and 11 of the book *“Keep Yourselves in God’s Love.”*

13. What may result from failure to follow the counsel found at 1 Peter 3:7?

14. A loving wife can have what influence on family life?

12. Where can one find sound counsel on wedlock?

¹⁵ Husbands and wives who base their union on Jesus' example in dealing with his congregation show gratitude for God's gift of marriage. (*Read Ephesians 5:22-25.*) What blessings spouses enjoy when they truly love each other and never let pride, the childish silent treatment, or other unchristian traits mar their marriage!

LET NO ONE PUT THEM APART

¹⁶ Although most people plan to get married at some point in life, certain servants of Jehovah remain single because they cannot find a mate pleasing to them and to Him. Others have the God-given gift of singleness, allowing them to devote themselves to Jehovah's service without the distractions of marriage. Of course, singleness is to be enjoyed within the limits set by Jehovah.—Matt. 19:10-12; 1 Cor. 7:1, 6, 7, 17.

¹⁷ Whether single or married, all of us need to bear in mind Jesus' words: "Did you not read that he [God] who created them from the beginning made them male and female and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and his mother and will stick to his wife, and the two will be one flesh'? So that they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore, what God has yoked together let no man put apart." (Matt. 19:4-6) Coveting another person's marriage mate is a sin. (Deut. 5:21) If any Christian begins to entertain such a covetous desire, he or she should act quick-

15. What counsel is found at Ephesians 5:22-25?

16. Why do some Christians remain single?

17. (a) What words of Jesus regarding marriage should we bear in mind? (b) If any Christian should even begin to covet another person's marriage mate, what should he do without delay?



Do you show that you really appreciate Jehovah's gift of marriage?

ly to rout out the unclean desire, even at the cost of great emotional pain because of having allowed selfish cravings to develop. (Matt. 5:27-30) It is vital to correct such thinking and suppress the sinful yearning of a treacherous heart.—Jer. 17:9.

¹⁸ Even many of those who have known little or nothing about Jehovah God and his wonderful gift of marriage have shown at least a measure of gratitude for the marital bond. How much more so should we who are dedicated to "the happy God," Jehovah, rejoice in all of his provisions and give evidence that we really appreciate God's gift of marriage!—1 Tim. 1:11.

18. How do you feel that we ought to view God's gift of marriage?



*"To the married people
I give instructions,
yet not I but the Lord."*

—1 COR. 7:10.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

In what sense does God yoke marriage mates together?

How can elders help Christians who have marital problems?

How should we view marriage?

TAKE A POSITIVE VIEW OF A STRAINED MARRIAGE

WHEN Christians get married, they make a vow before God—a responsibility not to be taken lightly. (Eccl. 5:4-6) In the sense that he is the Originator of the marital arrangement, Jehovah has “yoked together” those united in wedlock. (Mark 10:9) This yoke exists in God’s sight regardless of the laws that sanctioned the wedding. Servants of Jehovah should view marriage as a binding arrangement whether they were his worshippers at the time of their wedding or not.

² A successful marriage can result in great happiness. But what can be done if the marital bond is strained? Can a weakened marriage be strengthened? What help is there for those whose marital peace is threatened?

WILL IT BE A JOY OR A HEARTACHE?

³ When a Christian’s marriage succeeds, it is a joy and brings honor to Jehovah. If it fails, it is a heartache at best. An unmarried Christian who is contemplating wedlock is in a position to get marriage off to a fine start by following God’s guidance. On the other hand, a person who makes an unwise decision when choosing a husband or a wife may experience dissatisfaction and grief. For instance, some youths begin dating when they are not ready for the responsibilities associated with married life. Certain individuals find a prospective mate on the Internet and rush into what proves to be a very unhappy marriage. Others commit a serious sin dur-

-
1. How do Christians view marriage, and why?
 2. What questions will be considered in this article?
 - 3, 4. What may happen if a person makes an unwise decision when choosing a marriage mate?

ing courtship and marry anyway, but they may begin their married life with little respect for each other.

⁴ Some Christians do not marry “only in the Lord” and suffer the often painful consequences of a religiously divided household. (1 Cor. 7:39) If that is your experience, pray for God’s forgiveness and help. He does not remove the effects of a person’s past errors, but he does assist repentant ones to cope with trials. (Ps. 130:1-4) Put your heart into pleasing him now and forever, and ‘the joy of Jehovah will be your stronghold.’ —Neh. 8:10.

WHEN MARITAL BONDS ARE THREATENED

⁵ Those who experience heartache in the marital relationship may wonder: ‘Is my unhappy marriage really worth saving? If only I could turn back the clock and begin again with another marriage mate!’ They may dream of breaking the bond—‘Oh, to be free again! Why not get a divorce? Even if I cannot get a Scriptural divorce, why not separate and enjoy life again?’ Instead of thinking in those terms or fantasizing about what might have been, Christians should make the best of their current state by seeking God’s guidance and following it.

⁶ If a Christian were to get a divorce, he or she may or may not be Scripturally free to get married again. Jesus said: “Whoever divorces his wife, except on the ground of fornication, and marries another commits adultery.” (Matt. 19:9) Here, “fornication” includes adultery and other serious sexual sins. It

5. Regarding an unhappy marriage, what kind of thinking should be avoided?

6. Explain what Jesus said, as recorded at Matthew 19:9.



Jehovah blesses Christian mates who make efforts to strengthen a strained marriage

is vital to weigh prayerfully any thought of divorce when neither mate has been guilty of sexual immorality.

⁷ A failed marriage may cast doubt on one’s spiritual state. The apostle Paul raised this serious question: “If indeed any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he take care of God’s congregation?” (1 Tim. 3:5) In fact, when both mates profess to be Christians and yet their marriage fails, observers may think that such individuals do not really practice what they preach.—Rom. 2:21-24.

⁸ When baptized marriage mates are

7. What may observers think if a Christian marriage fails?

8. What must be wrong if Christian mates decide to part?

planning to separate or to divorce each other on unscriptural grounds, something surely is spiritually wrong in their life. Scriptural principles are apparently not being applied by one partner or perhaps by both partners. If they were truly 'trusting in Jehovah with all their heart,' there would be little reason for believing that they could not avoid a failed marriage.—*Read Proverbs 3:5, 6.*

⁹ Many marriages that seemed to be headed for failure have in time turned out to be very successful. Christians who refuse to give up quickly on a difficult marriage often enjoy a fine

Christians who do not give up quickly on a strained marriage often enjoy a fine reward

reward. Consider what can happen in a religiously divided household. The apostle Peter wrote: "You wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives, because of having been eyewitnesses of your chaste conduct together with deep respect." (1 Pet. 3:1, 2) Yes, because of his mate's fine conduct, an unbeliever may embrace the true faith! Such a saved marriage honors God and can be a great blessing for the husband, the wife, and any children they may have.

9. How have some Christians been rewarded for their patient efforts in connection with marriage?

¹⁰ With a desire to please Jehovah, most single Christians choose dedicated fellow believers as marriage mates. Even then, however, circumstances may take an unexpected turn. On rare occasions, for example, a mate may develop serious emotional problems. Or some time after the wedding, a spouse may become an inactive publisher. To illustrate: Linda,* a zealous Christian and a devoted mother, watched helplessly as her baptized husband unrepentantly embarked on an unscriptural path and was disfellowshipped. What should a Christian do if his or her marriage bond seems hopelessly frayed for such a reason?

¹¹ 'Must I keep on trying to save my marriage no matter what happens?' you might ask. Nobody can or should make such a decision for you. Yet, there are sound reasons for not giving up on a marital bond that is weakening. The godly man or woman who endures the trials of a difficult marriage for the sake of conscience is precious to God. (*Read 1 Peter 2:19, 20.*) By means of his Word and spirit, Jehovah will help a Christian who makes earnest efforts to strengthen a strained marriage.

THEY ARE READY TO ASSIST

¹² If you face marital problems, do not hesitate to seek the spiritual assistance of mature Christians. The elders serve as shepherds of the flock and will gladly direct attention to the inspired

* Names have been changed.

10, 11. What unexpected problems may arise in a marriage, but of what may a Christian be certain?

12. How will the elders view us if we seek their help?

counsel found in the Scriptures. (Acts 20:28; Jas. 5:14, 15) Do not conclude that you and your mate will lose the respect of the elders if you seek spiritual assistance and discuss a serious marital problem with them. Their loving regard for you will increase as they see that you earnestly desire to please God.

¹³ When asked for help by Christians living in religiously divided households, elders refer to such counsel as that of Paul, who wrote: “To the married people I give instructions, yet not I but the Lord, that a wife should not depart from her husband; but if she should actually depart, let her remain unmarried or else make up again with her husband; and a husband should not leave his wife. . . . For, wife, how do you know but that you will save your husband? Or, husband, how do you know but that you will save your wife?” (1 Cor. 7:10-16) What a blessing it is when an unbelieving mate is won over to true worship!

¹⁴ Under what circumstances might a Christian wife “actually depart”? Some have chosen to separate because of a mate’s willful nonsupport. Others have done so because of extreme physical abuse or the absolute endangerment of a Christian’s spirituality.

¹⁵ Whether to depart or not is a personal decision. However, the baptized mate ought to give this matter prayerful and honest consideration. For example, has the unbeliever been totally responsible for the endangerment of spirituality, or has the Christian been negligent about Bible study, inconsistent in meet-



The Christian congregation can be a source of comfort and spiritual assistance

ing attendance, and irregular in the ministry?

¹⁶ The fact that we treasure our relationship with God and are grateful for his gift of marriage ought to restrain us from making hasty decisions regarding divorce. As servants of Jehovah, we are concerned about the sanctification of his holy name. Surely, then, we would never scheme to get out of one marriage while our heart is planning on another marriage.—Jer. 17:9; Mal. 2:13-16.

¹⁷ A Christian who is married to an unbeliever should earnestly endeavor to keep the marriage bond intact. Yet, a

13. What counsel is found at 1 Corinthians 7:10-16?

14, 15. When might a Christian spouse consider actually departing, but why is prayerful and honest consideration important?

16. What should restrain Christians from making hasty decisions regarding divorce?

17. Under what circumstances could it be said that God has called married Christians to peace?

Christian need not feel guilty if, despite the Christian's sincere effort to preserve the union, an unbelieving mate refuses to remain with the believer. "If the unbelieving one proceeds to depart, let him depart," wrote Paul. "A brother or a sister is not in servitude under such circumstances, but God has called you to peace."—1 Cor. 7:15.*

HOPE IN JEHOVAH

¹⁸ When dealing with any marital problem, look to Jehovah for courage and always hope in him. (*Read Psalm 27:14.*) Consider Linda, who was mentioned earlier. Her marriage eventually ended in divorce, although she had put many years of effort into trying to save it. Does she feel that she wasted her time? "Not at all," she says. "My

Always hope in Jehovah and look to him for courage

efforts gave a good witness to onlookers. I have a clear conscience. Best of all, those years helped our daughter to stay solidly in the truth. She grew up to be a zealous, dedicated Witness of Jehovah."

¹⁹ A Christian woman named Marilyn is glad that she trusted in God and put forth extra effort to save her mar-

* See "Keep Yourself in God's Love," pages 219-221; *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1988, pages 26-27; September 15, 1975, page 575.

¹⁸. Even if it is not possible to save a marriage, what good may result from efforts to do so?

¹⁹. What may happen if efforts are made to save a marriage?

riage. "I was tempted to separate from my husband because of financial non-support and spiritual endangerment," she says. "Yet, my husband served as an elder before he got involved in some unwise business arrangements. He began missing meetings, and we simply stopped communicating. A terrorist attack in our city frightened me so much that I withdrew into a shell. Then I realized that I too was at fault. We started communicating again, resumed our family study, and became regular at meetings. The elders were kind and very helpful. Our marriage blossomed anew. In time, my husband again qualified for congregation privileges. It was a hard lesson with a happy outcome."

²⁰ Whether we are single or married, let us always act courageously and hope in Jehovah. If we are encountering marital difficulties, we should earnestly seek to resolve them, remembering that those united in wedlock are "no longer two, but one flesh." (Matt. 19:6) And let us bear in mind that if we persevere in a divided household despite hardships, we may experience the joy of winning a mate over to true worship.

²¹ Regardless of our circumstances, may we be resolved to walk circumspectly in order to have a fine testimony from observers outside the congregation. If our marriage is threatened, let us pray intensely, scrutinize our motives honestly, consider the Scriptures carefully, and seek the spiritual assistance of the elders. Above all, may we be determined to please Jehovah God in all things and show real appreciation for his wonderful gift of marriage.

²⁰, ²¹. With respect to marriage, what should we be resolved to do?

I Was Drawn to Wise Older Ones

AS TOLD BY ELVA GJERDE

Some 70 years ago, a visitor to our house made a suggestion to my father that completely changed the course of my life. Since that momentous day, several other people have also had an impact on my life. In the process, I have gained a precious friendship that I value more than any other. Let me explain.

I WAS born in Sydney, Australia, in 1932, to parents who believed in God but did not attend church. My mother taught me that God was always watching, ready to punish me if I was naughty. This made me afraid of God. Yet, I was fascinated by the Bible. When my aunt visited us on weekends, she told me many interesting Bible stories. I always looked forward to her visits.

When I was a teenager, my father read a set of books that my mother had obtained from an elderly lady who was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He was so impressed with what he read in those Christian publications that he agreed to study the Bible with the Witnesses. As he was having his Bible study one evening, my father caught me eavesdropping. He was about to send me back to bed when the visitor said, "Why don't you let Elva sit in?" That suggestion marked the beginning of a new way of life and of my friendship with the true God—Jehovah.

Shortly thereafter, my father and I began attending Christian meetings. What he learned moved him to make changes in his life. He even began to control his temper. This prompted my



mother and older brother, Frank, to start attending meetings.* All four of us made progress and were eventually baptized as Jehovah's Witnesses. Since then, many older ones have influenced me in a positive way during various stages of my life.

WHEN MAKING A CAREER CHOICE

As a teenager, I was drawn to older ones in our congregation. One of them was Alice Place, the elderly sister who had first called on our family. She became like a grandmother to me. Alice trained me in the public ministry and encouraged me to reach out for baptism. At the age of 15, I attained that goal.

I also drew close to an elderly couple named Percy and Madge [Margaret] Dunham. Their association had a great impact on my future. You see, I loved mathematics, and I had my heart set on teaching math. Percy and Madge had served as missionaries in Latvia during the 1930's.

* Elva's brother, Frank Lambert, became a zealous pioneer in the Australian outback. The *1983 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pages 110-112, relates one of his many exciting preaching expeditions.

When World War II broke out in Europe, they were invited to serve at the Australia Bethel, located in an inner suburb of Sydney. Percy and Madge took a real interest in me. They related many exciting experiences that they had enjoyed in the missionary activity. I could clearly see that teaching the Bible would be far more satisfying than teaching mathematics. So I decided to become a missionary instead.

The Dunhams encouraged me to prepare for missionary service by pioneering. Thus, in 1948, at age 16, I joined the ranks of ten other young people who were happily pioneering in my home congregation in Hurstville, Sydney.

Over the next four years, I pioneered in four other towns—all in New South Wales and Queensland. One of my first Bible students was Betty Law (now Remnant). Betty, a caring girl, was two years older than I was. She later became my pioneer partner in the town of Cowra, some 145 miles (230 km) west of Sydney. Although we pioneered together for only a short time, Betty and I continue to be friends to this day.

Upon receiving a special pioneer assignment, I moved to Narrandera—a town 137 miles (220 km) southwest of Cowra. My new partner was Joy Lennox (now Hunter), a zealous pioneer who was also two years older than I was. We were the only Witnesses in town. Joy and I roomed with

a hospitable couple, Ray and Esther Irons. They along with their son and three daughters were interested in the truth. Ray and his son worked on a sheep and wheat farm outside of town during the week, while Esther and the girls ran a local boarding house. Every Sunday, Joy and I cooked a huge roast dinner for the Irons family and about a dozen of their boarders—all hungry male railway laborers. This service covered part of our rent. After we cleaned up, we served the Irons family a delicious spiritual meal—the weekly *Watchtower* study. Ray, Esther, and their four children came into the truth and became the founding members of the Narrandera Congregation.

In 1951, I attended a convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in Sydney. There I went to a special meeting for pioneers who were interested in missionary work. More than 300 were in attendance at that meeting held in a large tent. Nathan Knorr from Brooklyn Bethel addressed the group and spelled out the urgent need to carry the good news to every corner of the earth. We hung on to every word he said. Many of the pioneers present later opened up the Kingdom work in the South Pacific and other areas. I was thrilled to be 1 of 17 Australians invited to the 19th class of Gilead School in 1952. At just 20 years of age, my dream of missionary service was coming true!

Pioneering with Joy Lennox in Narrandera



WHEN NEEDING REFINEMENT

The instruction and association at Gilead not only increased my Bible knowledge and strengthened my faith but also had a profound effect on my personality. I was young and idealistic and tended to expect perfection from myself as well as others. Some of my views were overly strict. For example, when I saw Brother Knorr playing a friendly ball game with a group of young Bethelites, I was shocked.

The Gilead instructors—all discerning men with years of experience—must have seen that I was struggling. They took an interest in me and



Elva with members of the Switzerland Bethel family in 1960

helped me to adjust my thinking. Gradually, I began to see Jehovah as a loving and appreciative God, not as a strict and demanding one. Some of my classmates also helped me. I recall one of them saying: "Elva, Jehovah is not up there using a whip. Don't be so strict with yourself!" Her plain-spoken words touched my heart.

After Gilead, four of my classmates and I were assigned to Namibia, Africa. Soon we were conducting 80 Bible studies between us. I loved Namibia and missionary life, but I had fallen in love with a Gilead classmate who had been assigned to Switzerland. After spending a year in Namibia, I joined my fiancé in Switzerland. After we were married, I accompanied my husband in his work as a circuit overseer.

WHEN CONFRONTING A CRISIS

After spending five enjoyable years in the circuit work, we were invited to serve at Switzerland Bethel. In the Bethel family there, I was thrilled to be surrounded by many spiritually mature older brothers and sisters.

Soon thereafter, I received a terrible shock. I discovered that my husband had been unfaithful to me and to Jehovah. Then he walked out on me. I was devastated! I don't know how I would have coped with the situation without the love and support of my dear older friends in the Bethel family. They listened to me when I needed to talk and let me rest when I needed to rest. Their comforting words and kind deeds supported me during my unspeakable pain and helped me draw even closer to Jehovah.

I also recalled words uttered years earlier by wise older ones who had been tempered by trials. These included comments made by Madge Dunham. She once told me: "Elva, in your life of service to Jehovah, you will face many trials, but the hardest tests may come from those close to you. During those trials, draw close to Jehovah. Remember that you serve him, not imperfect humans!" Madge's counsel steered me through many dark moments. I determined that I would never allow my husband's mistakes to separate me from Jehovah.

In time, I decided to return to Australia to pioneer closer to my family. During the ocean voyage home, I enjoyed regular lively Bible discussions with a group of fellow passengers. In the group was a quiet Norwegian man named Arne Gjerde. He liked what he heard. Arne later visited my family and me in Sydney. He made rapid spiritual progress and came into the truth. In 1963, Arne and I were married, and two years later I gave birth to our son, Gary.

WHEN CONFRONTING ANOTHER LOSS

Arne, Gary, and I basked in the contentment of happy family life. Soon Arne enlarged our home to accommodate my aged parents. After six years of marriage, though, we reeled under a blow of a different kind. Arne was diagnosed with brain cancer. I visited him in the hospital every day while he undertook a lengthy course of radiation therapy. For a while he progressed well; then his condition deteriorated and he

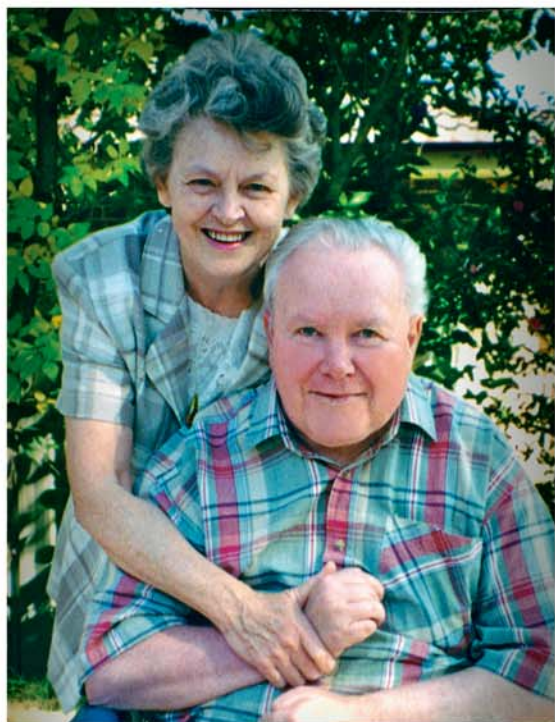
suffered a stroke. I was told that he had only weeks to live. However, Arne survived. He eventually returned home, where I slowly nursed him back to health. In time, he was able to walk again and to resume his activity as a congregation elder. His happy disposition and good sense of humor contributed to his recovery and made it easier for me to give him ongoing care.

Years later, in 1986, Arne's health again worsened. By then my parents had died, so we moved to the beautiful Blue Mountains outside of Sydney, which placed us closer to our friends. Later, Gary married a lovely spiritual sister, Karin, and they suggested that the four of us share a home. Within months, we all moved into a home only a few streets away from where Arne and I had been living.

During the last 18 months of his life, Arne was bedridden and required constant care. Since I was housebound for most of that time, I spent two hours each day studying the Bible and Bible-based publications. During those study sessions, I discovered much wise advice on how to cope with my situation. I also received loving visits from older ones in our congregation—some of whom had endured similar trials. Their visits truly lifted my spirits! Arne died in April 2003, with a sound hope in the resurrection.

MY GREATEST SUPPORT

When I was young, I was idealistic. But I found out that life seldom turns out the way we expect. I have enjoyed countless blessings and have also endured two major tragedies—losing one partner to infidelity and another to illness. Along the way, I have drawn guidance and comfort from several sources. My greatest support still is “the Ancient of Days”—Jehovah God. (Dan. 7:9) His counsel has molded my personality, and it led me to rewarding experiences in the missionary work. When problems arose, ‘Jehovah’s loving-kindness sustained me and his consolations fondled my soul.’ (Ps. 94:18, 19) I have also enjoyed the love and support of my family and



Caring for Arne when he was ill

of ‘true companions born for when there is distress.’ (Prov. 17:17) Many of these were wise older ones.

“Is there not wisdom among the aged and understanding in length of days?” asked the patriarch Job. (Job 12:12) Looking back on my life, I can say that the answer is yes. The advice of wise older ones has helped me, their comfort has supported me, and their friendships have enriched my life. I am grateful that I was drawn to them.

Now at 80, I am an older one myself. My experiences have made me especially sensitive to the needs of other elderly ones. I still love to visit and help them. But I also enjoy the company of young people. Their energy is stimulating, and their enthusiasm is contagious. When I sense that young ones are reaching out to me for guidance or support, I find it rewarding to be there for them.



TRUST IN JEHOVAH THE GOD OF “TIMES AND SEASONS”

“He is changing times and seasons, removing kings and setting up kings.”—DAN. 2:21.

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

How do creation and fulfilled prophecy show that Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper?

Appreciating that Jehovah is the God of “times and seasons” moves us to do what?

Why is Jehovah’s timetable not controlled by world events and human plans?

JEHOVAH GOD provided the means to measure time long before he created man. On the fourth creative day, God said: “Let luminaries come to be in the expanse of the heavens to make a division between the day and the night; and they must serve as signs and for seasons and for days and years.” (Gen. 1:14, 19, 26) In harmony with Jehovah’s will, that is, of course, what took place.

² Until now, however, scientists have debated the nature of time. “Time is one of the world’s deepest mysteries,” states one encyclopedia. “No one can say exactly what it is.” Yet, Jehovah fully understands time. After all, he is “the Creator of the heavens, . . . the Former of the earth and the Maker of it.” Jehovah is also “the One telling from the beginning the finale, and from long ago the things that have not been done.” (Isa. 45:18; 46:10) With a view to strengthening our faith in him and in his Word, the Bible, let us consider how creation and fulfilled prophecy show that Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper.

CREATION INSPIRES FAITH IN THE GREAT TIMEKEEPER

³ In the physical world, precise timing can be seen on a microscopic as well as on a macroscopic scale. Atoms vibrate at consistent rates. International time-standard clocks regulated by atomic vibrations are accurate to 1 second in 80 million years. The movement of planets and stars is also precisely timed. Their predictable positions in the sky have been used to mark the seasons and to navigate. Jehovah—the Maker of these reliable “timepieces”—is

- 1, 2. What shows that Jehovah fully understands time?
3. How is precise timing manifested in the physical world?

indeed “vigorous in power” and deserves our praise.—*Read Isaiah 40:26.*

⁴ Precise timing can be observed in the world of biology. The life cycles of many plants and animals are regulated by internal clocks. Many birds instinctively know when to begin their migration. (Jer. 8:7) Humans too have internal clocks, usually governed by the 24-hour cycle of day and night. After a traveler crosses several time zones by airplane, it may take days for his body to reset these clocks. Truly, the many examples of timing manifest in creation demonstrate the power and wisdom of the God of “times and seasons.” (*Read Psalm 104:24.*) Yes, the Great Timekeeper is all-wise and all-powerful. We can have faith that he is able to accomplish what he wills!

PROPHECIES FULFILLED ON TIME INSPIRE FAITH

⁵ The book of creation teaches us much about Jehovah’s “invisible qualities,” but it leaves unanswered such important questions as, What does the future hold for mankind? (Rom. 1:20) For the answer, we must turn to what God has revealed in the pages of his Word, the Bible. When we examine it, we find prophecies that have always been fulfilled right on time! Jehovah can reveal what is yet to occur because he can foresee the future accurately. Moreover, what the Scriptures foretell happens on time because Jehovah God can cause events to take place according to his purpose and timetable.

4. How does timing in the biological realm show God’s wisdom?

5. (a) Only in what way can we know about mankind’s future? (b) Why can Jehovah foretell events and their timing?

⁶ Jehovah wants his worshippers to understand Scriptural prophecies and benefit from them. Although God is not limited by our perception of time, we can relate to the terms he uses when he foretells that an event will occur at a specific time. (*Read Psalm 90:4.*) For example, the book of Revelation refers to “the four angels” who “have been prepared for the hour and day and month and year”—units of time we can understand. (Rev. 9:14, 15) Seeing how prophecies were fulfilled at specified times should inspire faith in the God of “times and seasons” and in his Word. Let us consider a few examples.

⁷ First, let us look back to the seventh century B.C.E. “In the fourth year of Jehoiakim the son of Josiah, the king of Judah,” the word of the Great Timekeeper “occurred to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah.” (Jer. 25:1) Jehovah foretold the devastation of Jerusalem and the deportation of the Jews from the land of Judah to Babylon. There they would “serve the king of Babylon seventy years.” Babylonian armies destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., and Jews from Judah were indeed deported to Babylon. But what was to happen at the end of 70 years? Jeremiah prophesied: “This is what Jehovah has said, ‘In accord with the fulfilling of seventy years at Babylon I shall turn my attention to you people, and I will establish toward you my good word in bringing you back to this place.’” (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10) This prophecy was fulfilled right on time—in 537 B.C.E. after the Medes and Persians freed the Jews from Babylon.

6. What shows that Jehovah wants us to understand the fulfillment of Bible prophecies?

7. How does the fulfillment of Jeremiah’s prophecy regarding Jerusalem and Judah show that Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper?

⁸ Consider another prophecy involving God's people of ancient times. About two years before the Jews left Babylon, God foretold through the prophet Daniel that the Messiah would appear 483 years after the order to rebuild Jerusalem was given. The Medo-Persian king gave that order in 455 B.C.E. Exactly 483 years later—in 29 C.E.—Jesus of Nazareth was anointed by holy spirit at his baptism and thus became the Messiah.*—Neh. 2: 1, 5-8; Dan. 9:24, 25; Luke 3:1, 2, 21, 22.

⁹ Now take note of what the Scriptures foretold regarding the Kingdom. Bible prophecy indicated that the Messianic Kingdom would be established in heaven in 1914. In part, the Bible did so by giving “the sign” of Jesus’ presence, pointing to the time when Satan would be cast out of heaven, which would result in great woe for the earth. (Matt. 24:3-14; Rev. 12:9, 12) Moreover, Bible prophecy pointed to the exact time—1914—when “the appointed times of the nations [would be] fulfilled” and Kingdom rule would begin in heaven.—Luke 21:24; Dan. 4:10-17.[#]

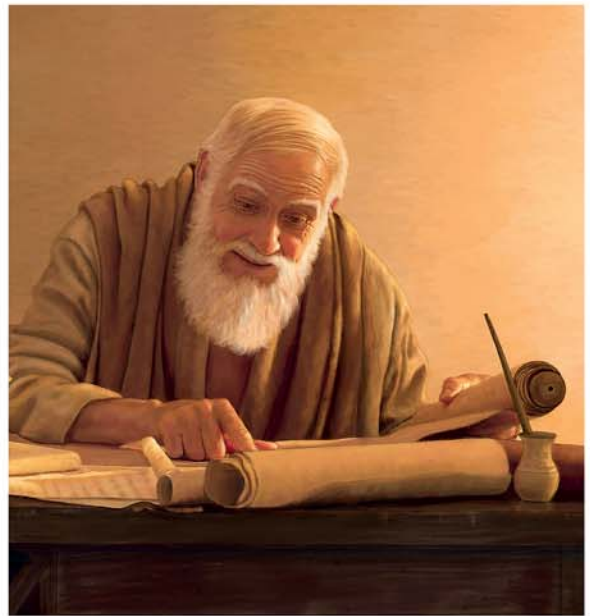
¹⁰ What lies ahead is the “great tribulation” foretold by Jesus. It will be followed by his Thousand Year Reign. There can be no doubt that these things will come to pass right on schedule. When Jesus walked the earth, Jehovah had already set the “day and hour” for

* See *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!* pages 186-195.

[#] See *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!* pages 94-97.

8, 9. How do Daniel's prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah and the establishment of the heavenly Kingdom show that Jehovah is the God of “times and seasons”?

10. What future events are sure to happen on time?



Daniel had faith in the fulfillment of God-given prophecy

these events to occur.—Matt. 24:21, 36; Rev. 20:6.

‘BUY OUT THE OPPORTUNE TIME’

¹¹ How should recognizing that Kingdom rule has begun and that we are living in “the time of the end” affect us? (Dan. 12:4) Many see the worsening world conditions yet fail to acknowledge that these developments fulfill Bible prophecy regarding the last days. They may expect this system to fall apart one day or may believe that somehow human efforts will achieve “peace and security.” (1 Thess. 5:3) But what about us? If we recognize that we are living deep in the last days of Satan’s world, should we not endeavor to use the remaining time to serve the God of “times and seasons” and help others come to know him? (2 Tim. 3:1) We ought to make wise

11. Knowing that we are living in the time of the end should have what effect on us?

decisions about how we use our time.
—*Read Ephesians 5:15-17.*

¹² “Buying out the opportune time” is not easy in a world full of distractions. “Just as the days of Noah were,” warned Jesus, “so the presence of the Son of man will be.” How were the days of Noah? It had been foretold that the world of that time would come to an end. At that time, wicked humans would drown in the waters of a global deluge. As “a preacher of righteousness,” Noah faithfully declared God’s message to the people of his day. (Matt. 24:37; 2 Pet. 2:5) But they were “eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, . . . and they took no note until the flood came and swept them all away.” Jesus therefore warned his followers: “Prove yourselves ready, because at an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming.” (Matt. 24:38, 39, 44) We must prove to be like Noah, not like the people of his day. What will help us to keep ourselves ready?

¹³ Although the Son of man is coming at an hour we do not think to be it, we need to remember that Jehovah is the Great Timekeeper. His timetable is not controlled by world events and human plans. Jehovah regulates the timing and outcome of matters to accomplish his will. (*Read Daniel 2:21.*) In fact, Proverbs 21:1 tells us: “A king’s heart is as streams of water in the hand of Jehovah. Everywhere that he delights to, he turns it.”

¹⁴ Jehovah can influence events in or-

der to accomplish his purpose and fulfill it on time. Many of the momentous changes in the world have been fulfilling prophecy, particularly in regard to the global preaching of the good news of God’s Kingdom. Think about the collapse of the Soviet Union and its consequences. Few would have thought that such enormous political changes could happen so quickly. As a result of these changes, however, the good news is now being preached throughout many lands where our work was previously banned. By all means, then, let us buy out the opportune time to serve the God of “times and seasons” faithfully.

EXERCISE FAITH IN JEHOVAH’S TIMING

¹⁵ Continuing in the Kingdom-preaching work in these last days requires faith in Jehovah’s timing. The changing world situation may call for some changes in how the disciple-making work is carried on. The organization may occasionally make adjustments to address the needs of our activity as Kingdom proclaimers. We demonstrate faith in the God of “times and seasons” by fully cooperating with such adjustments as we serve loyally under his Son, the “head of the congregation.”—Eph. 5:23.

¹⁶ Jehovah wants us to pray to him freely with complete confidence that he will provide needed “help at the right time.” (Heb. 4:16) Does that not demonstrate his loving concern for us as individuals? (Matt. 6:8; 10:29-31) We show our faith in Jehovah God by praying reg-

^{12.} What can we learn from Jesus’ statement regarding Noah’s day?

^{13, 14.} Remembering what about Jehovah will help us to serve him faithfully while we await the coming of the Son of man?

^{15.} How can we show faith with regard to organizational adjustments?

^{16.} Why can we have faith that Jehovah will provide help at the right time?

ularly for his help and then acting in harmony with our prayers and his direction. Furthermore, we remember to pray for our fellow believers.

¹⁷ Now is not the time to “waver in a lack of faith”; it is the time to become powerful by faith. (Rom. 4:20) God’s enemies—Satan and those under his influence—are trying to stop the work that Jesus assigned to His followers, including us. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Despite the Devil’s attacks, we know Jehovah as “a living God, who is a Savior of all sorts of men, especially of faithful ones.” He “knows how to deliver people of godly devotion out of trial.”—1 Tim. 4:10; 2 Pet. 2:9.

¹⁸ Soon, Jehovah will bring an end to this wicked system of things. While we have not been given all the details and the exact time when this will occur, we do know that at just the right time, Christ will do away with God’s enemies, and Jehovah’s sovereignty will be vindicated. So, then, what a mistake it would be to fail to discern “the times and the seasons” in which we now live! May we never fall into the snare of thinking that “all things are continuing exactly as from creation’s beginning.”—1 Thess. 5:1; 2 Pet. 3:3, 4.

“SHOW A WAITING ATTITUDE”

¹⁹ Jehovah God’s original purpose for humankind included endless time to learn about him and his beautiful creation. Ecclesiastes 3:11 states: “Everything he [Jehovah] has made pretty in its time. Even time indefinite he has put in their heart, that mankind may never

find out the work that the true God has made from the start to the finish.”

²⁰ How glad we can be that Jehovah has never changed his purpose for man! (Mal. 3:6) With God “there is not a variation of the turning of the shadow.” (Jas. 1:17) His timetable is not governed by human means of measuring time, such as the rotation of the earth. Jehovah is “the eternal King.” (1 Tim. 1:17, ftn.) Therefore, let us “show a waiting attitude for the God of [our] salvation.” (Mic. 7:7) Indeed, “be courageous, and may your heart be strong, all you who are waiting for Jehovah.”—Ps. 31:24.

Do you make good use of time to do Jehovah’s will?



17, 18. (a) What action will Jehovah soon take against his enemies? (b) We must avoid what snare?

19, 20. Why should we show a waiting attitude with regard to Jehovah?

How is the death of God's loyal ones "precious in the eyes of Jehovah"?

■ An inspired psalmist sang: "Precious in the eyes of Jehovah is the death of his loyal ones." (Ps. 116:15) The life of every true worshipper of Jehovah is very valuable to him. However, more than the death of an individual is meant by the words just quoted from Psalm 116.

When delivering a memorial talk for a Christian, it is not fitting to apply Psalm 116:15 to the deceased person, even though he died as a loyal servant of Jehovah. Why? Because the psalmist's statement has a broader significance. It means that God counts the death of *the entire group of his loyal ones* too costly for him to let it take place.—See Psalm 72:14; 116:8.

Psalm 116:15 assures us that Jehovah will not allow his loyal servants *as a group* to be entirely removed from the earth. In fact, our modern-day history chronicles our endurance of severe trials and persecution, thus furnishing clear evidence that God will never permit us to be exterminated.

Because of his limitless power and unfailing purpose, Jehovah will not allow us to be swept out of existence as a group. If God were to permit that, it would seem that his enemies are more powerful than he is—an impossibility! Jehovah's purpose that this globe be inhabited by people loyal to him would go unfulfilled—and there is no possibility of that. (Isa. 45:18; 55:10, 11) Why, the rendering of sacred service to Jehovah would cease on earth if no humans were left to worship him in the earthly courtyards of his great spiritual temple! There would be no foundation for the "new earth"—righteous human society living on our globe under the "new heaven." (Rev. 21:1) Then, too, Christ's Thousand Year Reign

could not become a reality without any earthly subjects.—Rev. 20:4, 5.

God's position and reputation would be called into question were he to allow his enemies to wipe out the entire group of his people on earth. Such a development would be a blot on Jehovah's position as Universal Sovereign. Furthermore, because of his respect for himself and his holy name, Jehovah will not permit the death of his loyal ones as a group. And consider this: Since "there is no injustice" with God, he will never fail to preserve the group of humans who

God will never permit his people to be exterminated

have been serving him loyally. (Deut. 32:4; Gen. 18:25) Moreover, permitting the extermination of his servants as a body would be contrary to God's Word: "Jehovah will not desert his people for the sake of his great name." (1 Sam. 12:22) Indeed, "Jehovah will not forsake his people, nor will he leave his own inheritance."—Ps. 94:14.

How comforting it is to know that Jehovah's people will never perish from the earth! By all means, then, let us ever prove loyal to God, trusting in his promise: "Any weapon whatever that will be formed against you will have no success, and any tongue at all that will rise up against you in the judgment you will condemn. This is the hereditary possession of the servants of Jehovah, and their righteousness is from me."—Isa. 54:17.



ARE YOU REFLECTING THE GLORY OF JEHOVAH?

*“We . . . reflect like
mirrors the glory of
Jehovah.”—2 COR. 3:18.*

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Despite our sinful state, how
can we glorify Jehovah?

How do our prayers and our
presence at Christian meetings
help us to reflect God’s glory?

What can help us to keep on
glorifying Jehovah?

IN ONE way or another, all of us resemble our parents. Therefore, it is not surprising to hear someone say to a boy, ‘You are just like your father.’ A girl may be told, ‘You remind me of your mother.’ And children often imitate what they see in their parents. But what about us? Can we imitate our heavenly Father, Jehovah? Although we have not seen him, we can perceive his precious qualities by studying his Word, by observing his creation, and by meditating on the Scriptures and especially on the words and deeds of God’s Son, Jesus Christ. (John 1:18; Rom. 1:20) It is possible for us to reflect Jehovah’s glory.

² Before Adam and Eve were created, God was confident that humans would be able to carry out his will for them, reflect his qualities, and bring him glory. (*Read Genesis 1:26, 27.*) In practicing godly devotion, we should display the qualities of the One who made us. If we do so, we have the blessed privilege of reflecting God’s glory regardless of our culture, our education, or our ethnic background. Why? Because “God is not partial, but in every nation the man that fears him and works righteousness is acceptable to him.”—Acts 10:34, 35.

³ Anointed Christians reflect Jehovah’s glory. The spirit-begotten apostle Paul therefore wrote: “All of us, while we with unveiled faces reflect like mirrors the glory of Jehovah, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.” (2 Cor. 3:18) When the prophet Moses descended from Mount Sinai with

1, 2. Why is it reasonable to expect that we can imitate Jehovah’s qualities?

3. What feeling can Christians experience as they serve Jehovah?

the tablets bearing the Ten Commandments, his face emitted rays because Jehovah had spoken with him. (Ex. 34:29, 30) Though Christians have not had such an experience and their faces do not emit rays, they beam with joy as they tell others about Jehovah, his qualities, and his wonderful purpose for mankind. Like burnished metal mirrors of ancient times, anointed ones and their earthly companions thus reflect Jehovah's glory in their life and ministry. (2 Cor. 4:1) Are you reflecting Jehovah's glory by your godly conduct and by your activity as a regular Kingdom proclaimer?

WE DESIRE TO REFLECT JEHOVAH'S GLORY

⁴ As Jehovah's servants, we certainly want to honor and glorify our Creator in everything we do. All too often, however, what we desire to do is not what we do. Paul had to contend with that problem personally. (*Read Romans 7:21-25.*) Explaining why we have such a struggle, Paul wrote: "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23) Yes, through inheritance from sinful Adam, mankind became subject to the harsh mastery of 'King Sin.'—Rom. 5:12; 6:12.

⁵ What is sin? It is anything contrary to Jehovah's personality, ways, standards, and will. Sin mars a person's relationship with God. Sin causes us to miss the mark, even as an archer can shoot an arrow but miss his target. We can sin intentionally or by mistake. (Num. 15:27-31) Sin is deeply ingrained in humans and creates a barrier between them and their Creator. (Ps.

51:5; Isa. 59:2; Col. 1:21) Thus, mankind in general is completely out of harmony with Jehovah and misses the priceless opportunity to reflect God's glory. Unquestionably, sin is the worst disability afflicting humankind.

⁶ Despite our sinful condition, Jehovah has proved to be "the God who gives hope." (Rom. 15:13) He has provided the means for abolishing sin—the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ. By exercising faith in that sacrifice, we are no longer "slaves to sin," but we are in a position to reflect Jehovah's glory. (Rom. 5:19; 6:6; John 3:16) Maintaining this approved relationship with God guarantees us Jehovah's blessing now as well as the future benefits of perfection and everlasting life. Although we are still sinful humans, what a blessing it is to be viewed by God as individuals who can reflect his glory!

REFLECTING GOD'S GLORY

⁷ To be in the proper position to reflect God's glory, we must honestly recognize our sinful nature. (2 Chron. 6:36) We need to acknowledge our sinful inclinations and work to control them so that we can progress to the point of truly glorifying God. For example, if we have fallen into the dishonoring sin of viewing pornography, we must face the fact that we need spiritual help—and take action to get it. (Jas. 5:14, 15) This would be the first step to take in working toward a life that fully honors God. As worshippers of Jehovah, we must continually make a self-examination to determine whether we are measuring up

6. Despite our sinful state, how can we glorify God?

7. What must we acknowledge about ourselves in order to reflect God's glory?

4, 5. (a) Like Paul, what struggle do we have? (b) How has sin affected us?

to his righteous standards. (Prov. 28:18; 1 Cor. 10:12) Whatever the nature of our sinful tendencies, we must keep on curbing them so that we can reflect God's glory.

⁸ Jesus was the only human who ever lived and died without failing to please God and reflect His glory. Although we are not perfect as Jesus was, we can and should strive to follow his example. (1 Pet. 2:21) Jehovah weighs the effort we put forth along with the progress we make, and he blesses our earnest endeavor to bring him glory.

⁹ Jehovah's written Word can illuminate for us the pathway to improvement. In-depth study of the Scriptures and meditative Bible reading are essential. (Ps. 1:1-3) Reading the Scriptures daily will help us to make improvement. (**Read James 1:22-25.**) Bible knowledge is the basis for our faith and is the means of fortifying our determination to avoid grave sin and to please Jehovah. —Ps. 119:11, 47, 48.

¹⁰ To reflect God's glory, we also need to "persevere in prayer." (Rom. 12:12) We can and should pray that Jehovah help us to serve him in an acceptable way. To that end, we can properly ask him for holy spirit, for more faith, for strength to resist temptation, and for ability to 'handle the word of the truth aright.' (2 Tim. 2:15; Matt. 6:13; Luke 11:13; 17:5) As a child depends on his father, so we need to depend on our heavenly Father, Jehovah. If we ask him to help us serve him more fully, we can

have confidence that he will do so. May we never feel that we are a bother to him! Instead, in prayer let us praise him, thank him, seek his direction especially when under trial, and ask that he help us to serve him in ways that glorify his holy name.—Ps. 86:12; Jas. 1:5-7.

¹¹ God has entrusted the care of his precious sheep to "the faithful and discreet slave." (Matt. 24:45-47; Ps. 100:3) The slave class is very interested in how fellow believers are reflecting Jehovah's glory. Our appearance as Christian ministers is adjusted at our meetings, even as we might have a tailor alter our clothing so that we look better. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Let us therefore be on time, for if we customarily arrive late, we lose out on at least some of the spiritual 'tailoring' needed to improve our appearance as Jehovah's servants.

LET US IMITATE GOD

¹² If we are to reflect Jehovah's glory, we must "become imitators of God." (Eph. 5:1) One way to imitate Jehovah is to adopt his viewpoint regarding matters. Striving to live in any other way is dishonoring to him and damaging to us. Since the world that surrounds us is under the influence of the wicked one, Satan the Devil, we must work hard to have a hatred for what Jehovah hates and a deep love for what he loves. (Ps. 97:10; 1 John 5:19) We need heartfelt conviction that the only proper way to serve God is by doing all things for his glory.—**Read 1 Corinthians 10:31.**

¹³ Jehovah hates sin, and so should

8. Although we are not perfect, what should we do?

9. What role does the Bible play in the lives of Christians who desire to measure up to God's requirements?

10. How can prayer help us to serve Jehovah more fully?

11. How do congregation meetings help us to reflect God's glory?

12. How can we imitate God?

13. Why must we hate sin, and what will this move us to do?

we. Indeed, we ought to move as far away from wrongdoing as possible and not see how close we can get to it without being overcome by sin. For instance, we need to guard against succumbing to apostasy, a sin that would make us unfit to glorify God. (Deut. 13:6-9) Let us therefore have nothing to do with apostates or anyone who claims to be a brother but who is dishonoring God. This should be the case even if he is a family member. (1 Cor. 5:11) We are not benefited by trying to refute the arguments of apostates or those who are critical of Jehovah's organization. In fact, it is spiritually dangerous and improper to peruse their information, whether it appears in written form or it is found on the Internet.—*Read Isaiah 5:20; Matthew 7:6.*

¹⁴ Displaying love is an outstanding way for us to imitate our heavenly Father. Yes, like him we should be loving. (1 John 4:16-19) In fact, the love we have among ourselves identifies us as disciples of Jesus and servants of Jehovah. (John 13:34, 35) Although our inherent sinful state may sometimes get in the way, we must push it aside and prove to be loving at all times. Cultivating love and other godly qualities will prevent us from doing unkind and sinful things.—2 Pet. 1:5-7.

¹⁵ Love makes us want to do good things for other people. (Rom. 13:8-10) For example, love for our spouse will keep the marriage bed free of defilement. Love for the elders, coupled with respect for their work, will help us to be obedient and submissive to their di-

rection. Children who love their parents obey and honor them and do not speak negatively about them. If we love our fellow humans, we will not view them as inferior or speak to them disrespectfully. (Jas. 3:9) And elders who love God's sheep will treat them with tenderness.—Acts 20:28, 29.

¹⁶ The quality of love should also stand out in our ministry. Because of our profound love for Jehovah, we will not allow ourselves to be swayed by the apathy or negative response of some householders. Instead, we will keep on preaching the good news. Love will move us to prepare well and to endeavor to be effective in the ministry. If we truly love God and our neighbor, we will not view the Kingdom-preaching work as a chore or a duty. Instead, we will consider it a great privilege and will carry it out joyfully.—Matt. 10:7.

KEEP ON GLORIFYING JEHOVAH

¹⁷ The world in general is not conscious of the seriousness of sin, but we are. This makes us aware of the need to fight against our sinful inclinations. Acknowledging our sinful nature allows us to train our conscience so that it will move us to act properly when an urge to sin begins to develop in our mind and heart. (Rom. 7:22, 23) True, we may be weak, but God can strengthen us to do what is right in any situation.—2 Cor. 12:10.

¹⁸ If we are to glorify Jehovah, we must also fight against wicked spirit

¹⁴. When working to reflect God's glory, what quality should stand out in us, and why?

¹⁵. How does love affect our relationship with others?

¹⁶. How will displaying love help us in our ministry?

¹⁷. Why do we benefit from acknowledging that we fall short of God's glory?

¹⁸, ¹⁹. (a) What enables us to succeed in our fight against wicked spirit forces? (b) What should be our resolve?

forces. Our God-given spiritual armor enables us to do this successfully. (Eph. 6:11-13) Satan ceaselessly tries to rob Jehovah of the glory that He alone deserves. The Devil also continues to make every effort to destroy our relationship with Jehovah. But what a blow it is to Satan when we and millions of other imperfect men, women, and children maintain integrity and glorify God! Therefore, let us continue to laud Jehovah, like the heavenly creatures who exclaim: "You are worthy, Jehovah, even our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things, and because of your will they existed and were created."—Rev. 4:11.

¹⁹ May it be our determination to keep on glorifying Jehovah, come what may. He surely rejoices that so many loyal individuals are doing their very best to imitate him and reflect his glory.

(Prov. 27:11) May our sentiments be like those of David, who sang: "I laud you, O Jehovah my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify your name to time indefinite." (Ps. 86:12) How we long for the day when we will reflect the glory of Jehovah perfectly and can praise him forever! This will be obedient mankind's joyful experience. Are you reflecting the glory of Jehovah God now, with the prospect of doing so throughout all eternity?

Are you reflecting Jehovah's glory
in these ways?



“Watch Out for the Leaven of the Pharisees”

Jesus warned his disciples: “Watch out for the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.” (Luke 12:1) A parallel account of Jesus’ words makes it clear that he was condemning “the teaching” of the Pharisees.—Matt. 16:12.

The Bible sometimes uses “leaven,” or yeast, as a symbol of corruption. No doubt both the teachings and the attitude of the Pharisees had a corrupting effect on their listeners. Why was the Pharisees’ teaching dangerous?



The Pharisees wore scripture-containing cases.—Matt. 23:2, 5

1 The Pharisees prided themselves on being righteous, and they looked down on the common people.

This self-righteousness figures in one of Jesus’ parables. He said: “The Pharisee stood and began to pray these things to himself, ‘O God, I thank you I am not as the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week, I give the tenth of all things I acquire.’ But the tax collector standing at a distance was not willing even to raise his eyes heavenward, but kept beating his breast, saying, ‘O God, be gracious to me a sinner.’”—Luke 18:11-13.

Jesus praised the tax collector’s humble attitude, saying: “I tell you, This man went down to his home proved more righteous than [the Pharisee]; because everyone that exalts himself will be humiliated, but he that humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 18:14) Although tax collectors had a reputation for dishonesty, Jesus sought to help those among them who listened to him. At least two tax collectors—Matthew and Zacchaeus—became his followers.

What if we were to think that we are better than others because of our God-given abilities or privileges or because of the failures and weaknesses of others? We should quickly dismiss such thoughts, for the Scriptures say: “Love is patient; love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful, nor conceited, nor rude; never selfish, not quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs; does not gloat over other men’s sins, but delights in the truth.”—1 Cor. 13:4-6, *The New English Bible*.

We should have an attitude similar to that of the apostle Paul. After mentioning that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” Paul added: “Of these I am foremost.”—1 Tim. 1:15.

Questions for meditation:

Do I recognize that I am a sinner and that my salvation depends on Jehovah’s undeserved kindness? Or do I view long years of faithful service, privileges in God’s organization, or natural abilities as a basis for feeling superior to others?

2

The Pharisees sought to impress others by public displays of their righteousness. They desired prominence and flattering titles.

But Jesus warned: “All the works they do they do to be viewed by men; for they broaden the scripture-containing cases that they wear as safeguards, and enlarge the fringes of their garments. They like the most prominent place at evening meals and the front seats in the synagogues, and the greetings in the market-places and to be called Rabbi by men.” (Matt. 23: 5-7) Contrast their attitude with that of Jesus. Although he was the perfect Son of God, he was humble. When a certain man called him “good,” Jesus said: “Why do you call me good? Nobody is good, except one, God.” (Mark 10:18) On another occasion, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples, thereby setting a pattern of humility for his followers.—John 13:1-15.

A true Christian should serve fellow believers. (Gal. 5:13) Especially is this so in the case of those who want to qualify as overseers in the congregation. It is proper to be “reaching out for an office of overseer,” but this goal should spring from a desire to help others. This “office” is not a position of prominence or power. Those serving as overseers need to be “lowly in heart,” as Jesus was.—1 Tim. 3:1, 6; Matt. 11:29.

Questions for meditation:

Do I tend to favor those who have positions of responsibility in the congregation, perhaps with the hope of gaining prominence or additional privileges? Am I inclined to focus primarily on aspects of God’s service that seem to bring recognition and praise? Indeed, am I trying to shine before others?

Unlike the haughty Pharisees, humble Christian elders serve others



3

The Pharisees' rules and traditions made the application of the Law burdensome for the common people.

The Mosaic Law furnished the overall structure for Israel's worship of Jehovah. However, minute details were not provided. For instance, the Law forbade work on the Sabbath, but it did not explicitly define what constituted work and what did not. (Ex. 20: 10) The Pharisees sought to fill in such supposed gaps by means of their laws, definitions, and traditions. While Jesus ignored the arbitrary rules of the Pharisees, he did observe the Mosaic Law. (Matt. 5:17, 18; 23:23) He saw beyond the letter of the Law. Jesus discerned the spirit behind the Law and the need for mercy and compassion. He was reasonable, even when his followers failed him. For example, although he urged three of his apostles to stay awake and keep on the watch on the night of his arrest, they fell asleep repeatedly. Nevertheless, he sympathetically remarked: "The spirit, of course, is eager, but the flesh is weak."—Mark 14:34-42.

Questions for meditation:

Do I seek to lay down arbitrary, inflexible rules or to turn my personal opinions into law? Am I reasonable in what I expect of others?

Reflect on the contrast between Jesus' teaching and that of the Pharisees. Do you see ways in which you could improve? If so, why not resolve to do so?

Like Jesus, are you reasonable about what you expect of others?



“I Am Learning to Love the Colporteur Work More Each Day”



IN 1886, one hundred copies of *Millennial Dawn*, Volume I, left the Bible House in Allegheny, Pennsylvania, U.S.A., bound for Chicago, Illinois. Charles Taze Russell hoped to distribute the new volume in bookstores.

One of the largest firms in the United States distributing books on religion had agreed to take *Millennial Dawn* on consignment. But two weeks later, the entire shipment came back to the Bible House.

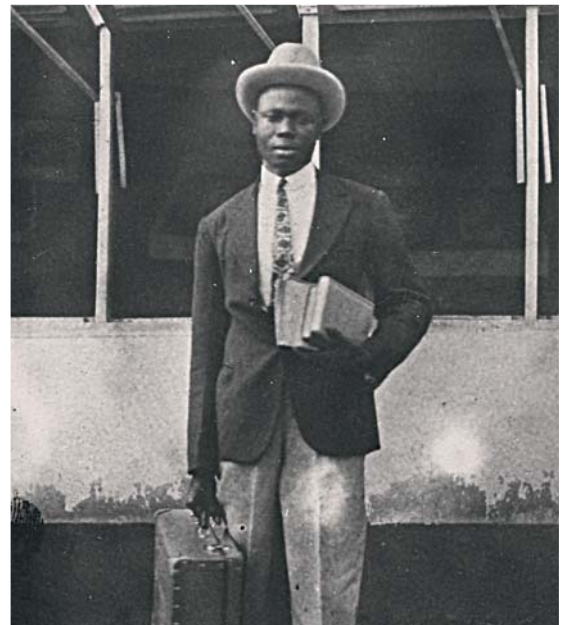
Reportedly, a well-known evangelist had become indignant at seeing *Millennial Dawn* on display with his books. If the book remained on the shelf, he fumed, he and all his famous evangelical friends would take their books—and their business—elsewhere. The distributor reluctantly returned the *Dawns*. Additionally, advertisements had been placed in newspapers. But opponents saw to it that the advertising contracts were canceled. How, then, would this new publication reach seekers of truth?

The colporteurs, as they were called, proved to be the key.* In 1881, *Zion's Watch Tower* had called for 1,000 preachers who could distribute Bible literature full-time. Although the colporteurs numbered only a few hundred, they scattered seeds of truth in printed form far and wide. By 1897, nearly one million *Dawns* had been distributed, largely by the colporteurs. Most of them lived on the small reimbursement they received for each *Watch Tower* subscription or book they placed.

Who were these intrepid colporteurs? Some started as teens, others in their later years. Many were single or married without children, but not a few families joined the ranks. Regular colporteurs worked long days, and auxiliary colporteurs put in one or two hours daily. Not everyone had the health or the circumstances to do colporteur work. But at a 1906 convention, those who could were told that they did not need to be “very learned, or very talented, or have the tongue of an angel.”

On nearly every continent, ordinary people accomplished an extraordinary work. One brother estimated that in seven years he placed 15,000

Colporteur A. W. Osei in Ghana, about 1930



* After 1931, the term “colporteur” was replaced by “pioneer.”



Top: Colporteurs Edith Keen and Gertrude Morris in England, about 1918; bottom: Stanley Cossaboom and Henry Nonkes in the United States, with empty cartons that had contained the books they placed

*They did not need to be
“very learned, or very
talented, or have the
tongue of an angel”*

books. Yet, he said, “I did not enter the colporteur work to be a book salesman, but rather, to be a witness for Jehovah and his truth.” Wherever the colporteurs went, seeds of truth took root and groups of Bible Students began to multiply.

Clergymen scorned the colporteurs, calling them mere book peddlers. The 1892 *Watch Tower* commented: “Few know [them] as the Lord’s real representatives, or recognize that dignity which the Lord sees in their humility and self-sacrifice.”

Indeed, the life of the colporteurs was no “flowery bed of ease,” as one of them put it. Sturdy shoes and bicycles were the primary means of transportation. Where cash was scarce, colporteurs bartered books for food. After a day in the field, tired but happy preachers returned to tents and rented rooms. Then came the Colporteur Wagon, a homemade house car that saved much time and money.*

Beginning at the 1893 Chicago Convention, the program included special colporteur sessions. These featured lively exchanges of experiences, suggested preaching techniques, and practical advice. Brother Russell once urged hardworking preachers to have a hearty breakfast, a midmorning glass of milk, and on a hot day, an ice-cream soda.

Colporteurs seeking a fellow worker, or preaching companion, wore a yellow ribbon. Newer colporteurs paired up with more experienced ones. Such training was apparently needed, for one new colporteur had nervously introduced the books by saying, “You don’t want these, do you?” Happily, the householder did, and later she became a sister.

One brother wondered, ‘Should I retain my present lucrative situation and donate \$1,000 (U.S.) a year to the work, or should I become a colporteur?’ The Lord would appreciate either, he was told, but giving his time to the Lord directly would bring him greater blessings. Mary Hinds saw the colporteur work as “the best way of doing the most good for the greatest number of people.” And timid Alberta Crosby stated, “I am learning to love the Colporteur work more each day.”

Today, many fleshly and spiritual descendants of the zealous colporteurs are still holding true to their spiritual heritage. If you do not yet have a colporteur or a pioneer in your family line, why not work on starting your own family tradition? You too will learn to love the full-time preaching work more each day.

* Details about house cars will appear in a future issue.