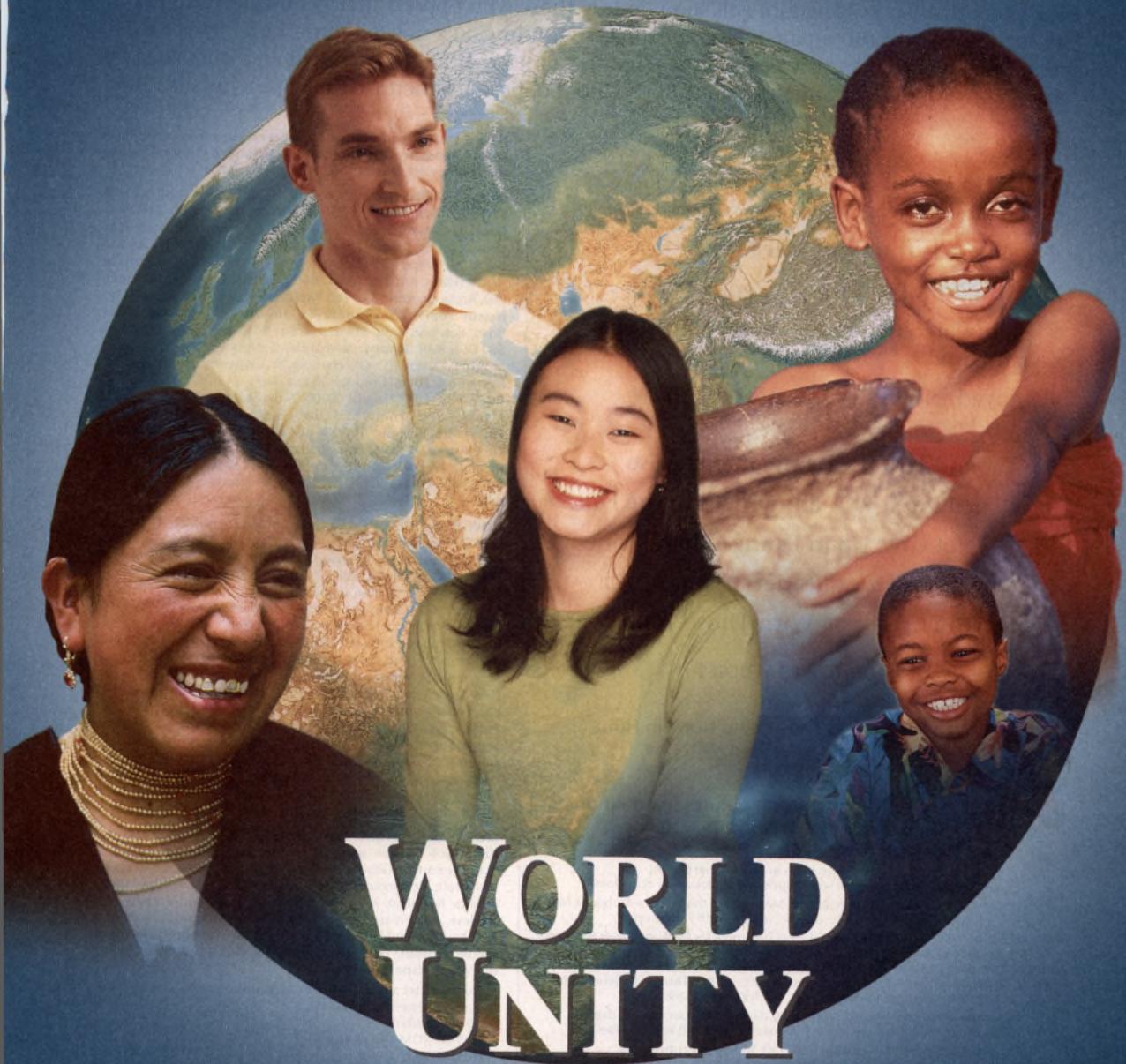


THE WATCHTOWER

JUNE 1, 2005

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



WORLD UNITY

NOT JUST A DREAM

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

June 1, 2005

Average Printing Each Issue: 26,439,000

Vol. 126, No. 11

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

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Publication of *The Watchtower* is 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*.
The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) is published semimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; M. H. Larson, President; G. F. Simons, Secretary-Treasurer; 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11201-2483. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Watchtower*, Wallkill, NY 12589.

Changes of address should reach us 30 days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label).

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Semimonthly

ENGLISH

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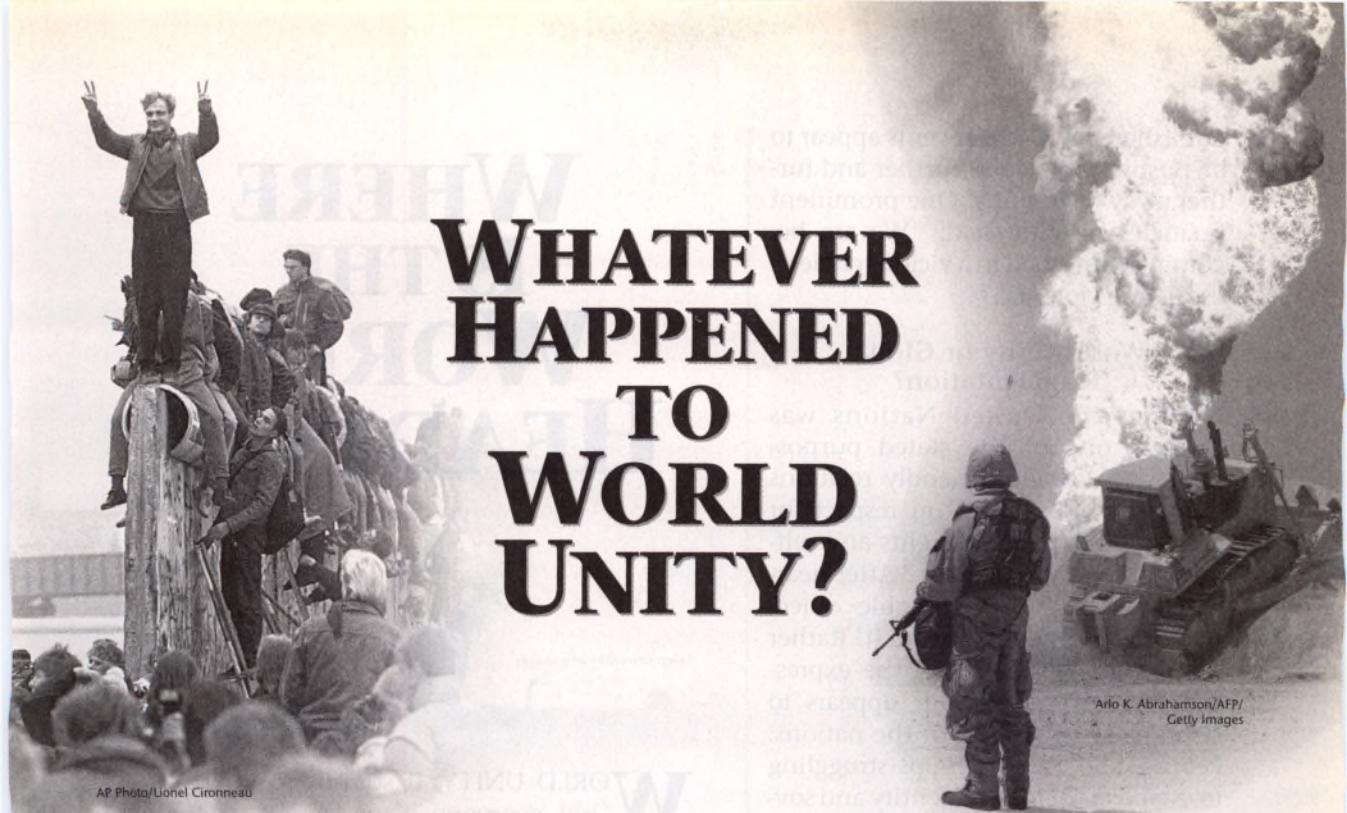
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WHATEVER HAPPENED TO WORLD UNITY?

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"For the first time since World War II the international community is united.... The world can therefore seize this opportunity to fulfill the long-held promise of a new world order."

SO SAID a president of the United States in the last decade of the 20th century. At that time, international events seemed to suggest that world unity was on the horizon. Totalitarian governments fell one after another. The Berlin Wall came down, signaling a new era for Europe. The Soviet Union, viewed by many in the West as an instigator of global conflicts, disappeared before the eyes of an astonished world. The Cold War came to an end, and there was optimistic talk about disarmament, including nuclear disarmament. Granted, war broke out in the Persian Gulf, but that seemed to be just a momentary blip that left much of the world more determined to pursue a peaceful order.

Positive signs could be seen not only on the political front but also in other areas of life.

The standard of living was improving in many parts of the world. Advancements in the medical field made it possible for doctors to do things that would have been called miracles just a few decades earlier. Economic growth in many countries moved ahead at a pace that appeared to be leading to global prosperity. It looked as though things were heading in the right direction.

Today, not many years later, we cannot help but ask: 'What happened? Where is the promised world unity?' If anything, the world seems to be moving in the opposite direction. Suicide bombings, terrorist attacks, the reported proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and other disturbing developments have become regular features of

published news. Such events appear to be pushing the world further and further away from unity. One prominent financier recently said: "We are becoming enmeshed in a vicious circle of escalating violence."

World Unity or Global Fragmentation?

When the United Nations was formed, one of the stated purposes was "to develop friendly relations among nations based on respect for the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples." After nearly 60 years, has that noble objective been reached? Far from it! Rather than "friendly relations," the expression "self-determination" appears to be more on the mind of the nations. Peoples and ethnic groups struggling to establish their own identity and sovereignty have increasingly divided the world. When the United Nations was formed, it had 51 member nations. Today, there are 191.

As we have seen, toward the end of the 20th century, hope for a united world was in the air. Since then, that hope has turned to dismay as mankind has witnessed the progressive fragmentation of the world community. The violent disintegration of Yugoslavia, the clashes between Chechnya and Russia, the war in Iraq, and the continued carnage in the Middle East—all of this has been evidence of ever greater disunity.

There is no doubt that many of the efforts for peace have been sincere and well-meant. In spite of this, world unity seems unattainable. Many are left wondering: 'Why does world unity remain so elusive? Where is the world heading?'

WHERE IS THE WORLD HEADING?

Saeed Khan/AFP/Getty Images



WORLD UNITY. It sounds so good. Does not everyone want it? Yes, there has been much talk about unity. Again and again, meetings of world leaders have focused on the subject. In August 2000, more than 1,000 religious leaders met at the United Nations in New York for the Millennium World Peace Summit. They discussed solutions to world conflicts. However, the conference itself was a reflection of the world's simmering controversies. A mufti from Jerusalem refused to come because of the presence of a Jewish rabbi. Others were offended because the Dalai Lama was not invited to the first two days for fear of antagonizing China.

In October 2003, world security issues were discussed by Pacific Rim nations at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit held in Thailand. The 21 nations present pledged to dismantle terrorist groups and agreed on ways to increase global security. Yet, during the conference several representatives grumbled about one prime minister's remarks, which were said to be a hate-filled attack on the Jews.



Woman grieving: Igor Dutina/AFP/Getty Images; protesters: Said Khatib/AFP/Getty Images; armored cars: Joseph Barrak/AFP/Getty Images

Why No Unity?

Though there is a lot of talk about unifying the world, we see few concrete results. Despite the sincere efforts of many, why has world unity continued to elude mankind into the 21st century?

Part of the answer is reflected in the comments of one of the prime ministers who attended the APEC conference. He said, "There is this thing called national pride." Yes, human society is steeped in nationalism. Each nation and ethnic group is driven by the desire for self-determination. National sovereignty combined with the spirit of competition and greed has produced a volatile mix. In one case after another, when national interests conflict with global interests, national interests win out.

Nationalism is well described by the psalmist's expression, "the pestilence causing adversities." (Psalm 91:3) It has been like a plague on humanity, leading to untold suffering. Nationalism with its resultant ha-

tred of other peoples has existed for centuries. Today, nationalism continues to fan the flames of divisiveness, and human rulers have not been able to stop it.

Many authorities recognize that nationalism and self-interest are the root of the world's problems. For example, former United Nations Secretary-General U Thant observed: "So many of the problems that we face today are due to, or the result of, false attitudes . . . Among these is the concept of narrow nationalism—'my country, right or wrong.'" Still, nations today, engrossed in self-interest, are clamoring more and more for their own sovereignty. Those who have the advantage do not wish to give up even a little of it. For example, the *International Herald Tribune* made this observation about the European Union: "Rivalry and mistrust remain basic patterns of European politics. For most EU member states, it is still unacceptable for one of their peers to gain greater influence and take the lead."

God's Word, the Bible, correctly describes the result of all human rule, saying: "Man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) By breaking the world up into their own separate dominions, groups of men as well as individuals have experienced the fulfillment of this Bible principle: "One isolating himself will seek his own selfish longing; against all practical wisdom he will break forth."—Proverbs 18:1.

Our Creator, who knows what is best for us, never purposed for humans to set up their own governments and rule themselves. By doing so, men have ignored God's purpose and the fact that everything belongs to him. Psalm 95:3-5 says: "Jehovah is a great God and a great King over all other gods, he in whose hand are the inmost depths of the earth and to whom the peaks of the mountains belong; to whom the sea, which he himself made, belongs and whose own hands formed the dry land itself." God is the rightful Sovereign to whom all should look for rulership. By pursuing their own sovereignties, the nations are working against his will.—Psalm 2:2.

What Is Needed?

The only way the world will become united is by having one world authority that works in the interests of all people. Many thinking people recognize this need. Those who do, however, often look in the wrong place. For example, many commentators, including religious leaders, have urged people to look to the United Nations for world unity. However, human organizations, no matter how noble their ideals, have *never* been able to solve mankind's international problems. Rather, most of these organizations have simply become a reflection of the disunity that exists among various nations.

The Bible warns against looking to human institutions for the solution when it says:

"Do not put your trust in nobles, nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs." (Psalm 146:3) Does this leave us at a dead end as far as world unity is concerned? Not at all. There is another way.

Many are unaware that God has already set up a government that is capable of uniting the world. The Bible says about Jehovah God: "I, even I, have installed my king upon Zion, my holy mountain. Ask of me, that I may give nations as your inheritance and the ends of the earth as your own possession." (Psalm 2:6, 8) Note that the scripture refers to Jehovah God as having 'installed his king,' whom he refers to as "my son" in verse 7. This is none other than God's foremost spirit Son, Jesus Christ, who has been given authority over all nations.

How World Unity Will Come About

Most people do not recognize this heavenly rulership that God has set up. The nations tenaciously hang on to their own perceived right to sovereignty. However, God will not tolerate those who refuse to recognize his sovereignty and the government that he has set up. Concerning those who refuse to accept this arrangement, Psalm 2:9 says: "You [the Son, Jesus Christ] will break them with an iron scepter, as though a potter's vessel you will dash them to pieces." Whether they realize it or not, the nations are now on a march that will lead to a collision with God. The last book of the Bible speaks of "the kings of the entire inhabited earth" being gathered together "to the war of the great day of God the Almighty." (Revelation 16:14) The nations and their divisive ways will be put out of existence. This will pave the way for God's government to go about its work unhindered.

As the Universal Sovereign, Jehovah God through his Son will wisely exert the power

to make the changes necessary for a united world. God's government will bring about true unity and will bless all lovers of righteousness. Why not take a few minutes to read Psalm 72 in your Bible? There, a prophetic picture is given of what rulership under God's Son will do for mankind. People will experience true world unity, and all their problems—oppression, violence, poverty, and so forth—will be gone.

In today's divided world, many think that such a hope is unrealistic. But it would be a mistake to think so. God's promises have

never failed, and they never will. (Isaiah 55: 10, 11) Would you like to see this change? You can. In fact, there is already a people who are preparing for that time. They come from all nations, but instead of fighting, they are now unitedly submitting to God's sovereignty. (Isaiah 2:2-4) Who are they? They are known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Why not accept the invitation to visit their meeting places? Likely, you will enjoy refreshing association with a people who can help you to submit to God's sovereignty and enjoy unity that will never end.

*People from all nations
are preparing for life in
a united world*



An Honest People Brings Praise to Jehovah

THROUGHOUT the earth, Jehovah's Witnesses—young and old—are known for their honesty. Consider examples from three continents.

Seventeen-year-old Olusola, who lives in Nigeria, was going home from school one day when she found a purse on the ground. She took it to the principal, who counted the money, and it came to ₦6,200 (about \$45, U.S.). The principal returned the purse to the teacher who had lost it. In appreciation, the teacher gave Olusola ₦1,000 (about \$7, U.S.) and told her to pay her school fees with it. When other students heard what had happened, they ridiculed Olusola. Some weeks later, a student reported his money stolen, so the teachers were asked to search all the students. "You stand here," the teacher told Olusola. "I know that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you cannot steal." The money was found with two of the boys who had ridiculed Olusola, and they were severely punished. Olusola wrote: "I am very happy that I am known as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, who will never steal, thus giving glory to Jehovah."

Upon leaving home one day, Marcelo, a native of Argentina, found a briefcase on the ground a few yards from his back door. Taking the briefcase inside the house, he and his wife carefully opened it. Much to their



surprise, they found a huge sum of money in cash, credit cards, and several signed checks, one of which was for a million pesos. On an invoice, they found a phone number. They called the owner and arranged to return the briefcase with its contents at the place where Marcelo works. When the owner arrived, he seemed nervous. The employer told him to calm down, for Marcelo was one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

As a reward for finding the briefcase, the owner gave Marcelo only 20 pesos (about \$6, U.S.). This infuriated the employer because he was very much impressed by Marcelo's honesty. This gave Marcelo the opportunity to explain that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, he wants to be honest at all times.

From Kyrgyzstan comes the following experience. Rinat, a six-year-

old boy, found a purse belonging to a lady who lived nearby. The purse contained 1,100 som (about \$25, U.S.). When Rinat returned the lost purse to the lady, she counted the money and then told Rinat's mother that 200 som was missing. Rinat said that he had not taken the money. Then all went out to search for the missing money and found it near the place where the purse had been found. The woman was astonished. She expressed her gratitude to Rinat and his mother, first for returning the lost money and second, for his Christian upbringing.

JEHOVAH SAFEGUARDS THOSE WHO HOPE IN HIM

"Let your loving-kindness and your trueness themselves constantly safeguard me."

—PSALM 40:11.

KING DAVID of ancient Israel "earnestly hoped in Jehovah" and was moved to say that Jehovah "inclined his ear to [him] and heard [his] cry for help." (Psalm 40:1) He repeatedly saw firsthand how Jehovah safeguarded those who loved Him. David, therefore, could ask to be *constantly* safeguarded by Jehovah. (Psalm 40:11) Counted among the faithful men and women to whom "a better resurrection" is promised, David is presently secure in Jehovah's memory as one who will receive that reward. (Hebrews 11:32-35) His future is thus assured in the best possible way. His name is inscribed in Jehovah's "book of remembrance."—Malachi 3:16.

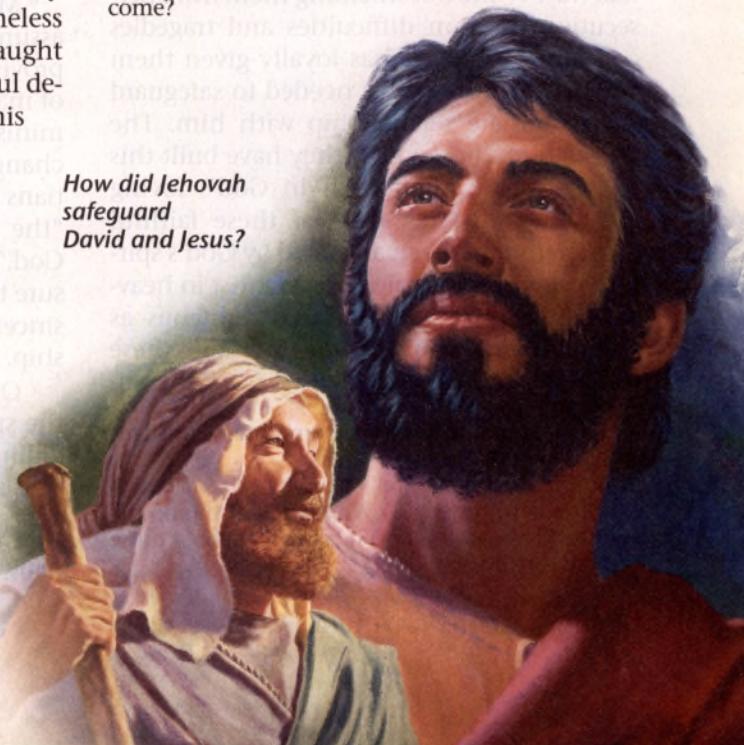
² Although the faithful ones mentioned in Hebrews chapter 11 lived before the earthly sojourn of Jesus Christ, they nevertheless lived in harmony with what Jesus taught when he said: "He that is fond of his soul destroys it, but he that hates his soul in this world will safeguard it for everlasting life." (John 12:25) Thus, being safeguarded by Jehovah clearly does not mean immunity from suffering or persecution. It does mean that one is protected in a spiritual way so as to be able to maintain a fine standing before God.

1. What did King David request of Jehovah, and how is that request presently being granted?
2. How do the Scriptures help us to understand what is meant by being safeguarded by Jehovah?

³ Jesus himself was the object of cruel persecution and reproach, and his enemies finally succeeded in putting him to a most disgraceful and painful death. Yet, this is no contradiction of God's promise to safeguard the Messiah. (Isaiah 42:1-6) Jesus' resurrection on the third day after his ignominious death proves that Jehovah heard his cry for help—just as Jehovah had heard David's. In response, Jehovah gave Jesus the strength to maintain integrity. (Matthew 26:39) Thus safeguarded, Jesus gained immortality in the heavens, and millions of humans who have exercised faith in the ransom have come in line for everlasting life.

3. What evidence do we have that Christ Jesus was safeguarded by Jehovah, and what was the outcome?

*How did Jehovah
safeguard
David and Jesus?*



⁴ We can be confident that Jehovah is just as willing and able to safeguard his servants now as he was in the days of David and of Jesus. (James 1:17) The relatively few remaining anointed brothers of Jesus still on earth can rely on Jehovah's promise: "An incorruptible and undefiled and unfading inheritance . . . is reserved in the heavens for you, who are being safeguarded by God's power through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last period of time." (1 Peter 1:4, 5) The "other sheep," who have an earthly hope, can likewise put their trust in God and his promise through the psalmist: "O love Jehovah, all you loyal ones of his. The faithful ones Jehovah is safeguarding."—John 10:16; Psalm 31:23.

Safeguarded Spiritually

⁵ In modern times, Jehovah has made provisions for safeguarding his people in a spiritual way. While not shielding them from persecution or from difficulties and tragedies common to life, he has loyally given them the help and incentive needed to safeguard their intimate relationship with him. The foundation upon which they have built this relationship is their faith in God's loving ransom provision. Some of these faithful Christians have been anointed by God's spirit to become joint rulers with Christ in heaven. They have been declared righteous as spiritual sons of God, and to them these words apply: "He delivered us from the au-

4. What assurance is given to anointed Christians and to the "other sheep"?

5, 6. (a) How have God's people been safeguarded in modern times? (b) What relationship do the anointed have with Jehovah, and what about those with an earthly hope?

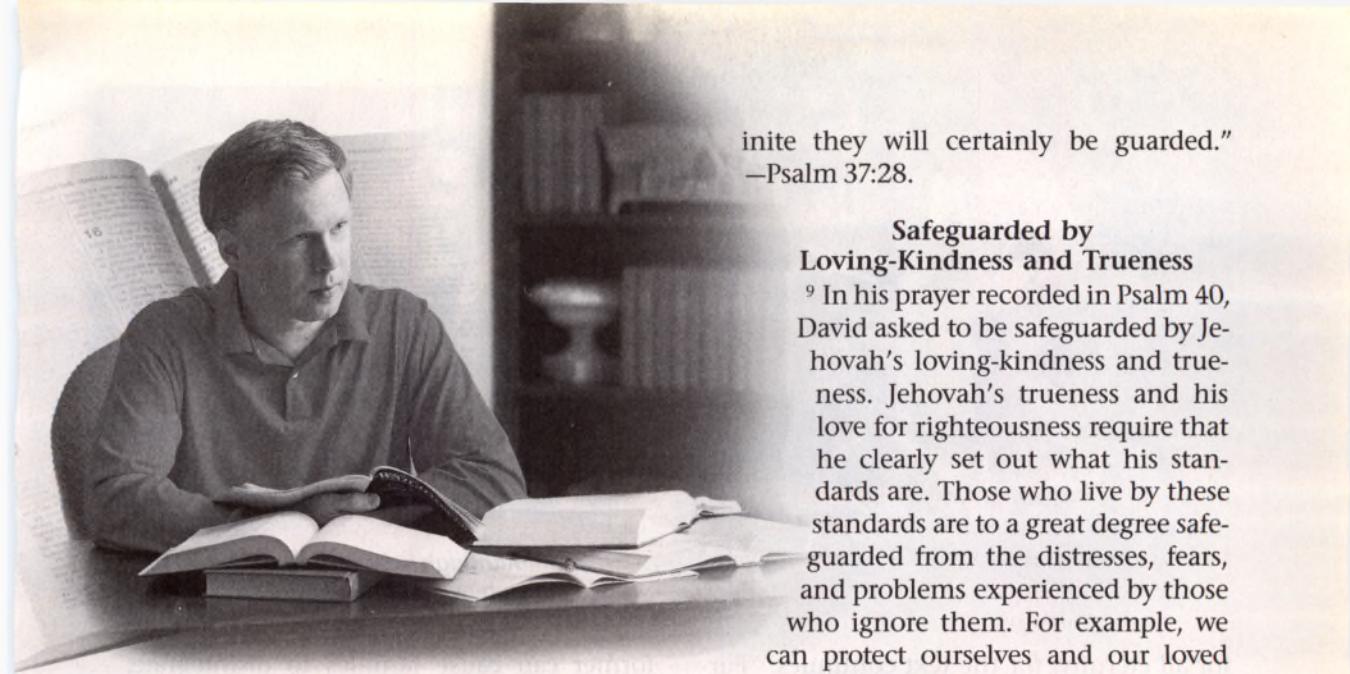


thority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love, by means of whom we have our release by ransom, the forgiveness of our sins."—Colossians 1:13, 14.

⁶ Millions of other faithful Christians are assured that they too can benefit from God's provision of the ransom. We read: "The Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Mark 10:45) Those Christians look forward to enjoying in due time "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) Meanwhile, they treasure their personal friendship with God and sincerely strive to strengthen that relationship.

⁷ One way in which Jehovah safeguards the spiritual welfare of his people is by providing a program of progressive training. This allows them to come to an ever more ac-

7. By what means does Jehovah today safeguard the spiritual welfare of his people?



In what ways are God's people safeguarded spiritually today?

curate knowledge of truth. Jehovah also provides ongoing guidance through his Word, his organization, and his holy spirit. Under the direction of "the faithful and discreet slave," God's people around the world are like an international family. The slave class looks after the spiritual needs and when necessary even the physical needs of the family of Jehovah's servants—irrespective of their national origin or social standing.—Matthew 24:45.

⁸ As Jehovah did not physically shield Jesus from the onslaughts of his enemies, He does not shield Christians that way today. But this is no indication of God's displeasure. Far from it! Rather, it underscores his confidence that they will uphold his side of the great universal issue. (Job 1:8-12; Proverbs 27:11) Jehovah will never forsake those loyal to him, "for Jehovah is a lover of justice, and he will not leave his loyal ones. To time indef-

8. What confidence does Jehovah place in his loyal ones, assuring them of what?

inite they will certainly be guarded."
—Psalm 37:28.

Safeguarded by Loving-Kindness and Trueness

⁹ In his prayer recorded in Psalm 40, David asked to be safeguarded by Jehovah's loving-kindness and trueness. Jehovah's trueness and his love for righteousness require that he clearly set out what his standards are. Those who live by these standards are to a great degree safeguarded from the distresses, fears, and problems experienced by those who ignore them. For example, we can protect ourselves and our loved ones from many heartbreakingly problems

if we avoid drug and alcohol abuse, sexual promiscuity, and a violent life-style. And even those who wander from Jehovah's way of trueness—as did David at times—have the assurance that God is still "a place of concealment" for repentant wrongdoers. Such can joyfully cry out: "You will safeguard me from distress itself." (Psalm 32:7) What an expression of God's loving-kindness!

¹⁰ Another example of divine loving-kindness is that God warns his servants to remain separate from the wicked world, which he will soon destroy. We read: "Do not be loving either the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him; because everything in the world—the desire of the flesh and the desire of the eyes and the showy display of one's means of life—does not originate with the Father, but originates with the world." By giving heed to this warning and acting accordingly, we can literally safeguard our life

9, 10. (a) How does Jehovah's trueness safeguard his people? (b) How does the Bible show that Jehovah safeguards his loyal ones by means of his loving-kindness?



Although we are proud to be serving Jehovah, we must always remain humble

for all eternity, for the text continues: "Furthermore, the world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever."—1 John 2:15-17.

Safeguarded by Thinking Ability, Discernment, and Wisdom

¹¹ To those hoping to gain God's approval, David's son Solomon was inspired to write: "Thinking ability itself will keep guard over you, discernment itself will safeguard you." He also urged: "Acquire wisdom . . . Do not leave it, and it will keep you. Love it, and it will safeguard you."—Proverbs 2:11; 4:5, 6.

¹² We exercise thinking ability if we meditate on what we learn from God's Word. Doing so enables us to develop greater discernment so that we can set proper priorities. This is vital, since most of us know—possibly through personal experience—that problems arise when people either purposely or unintentionally set unwise priorities. Satan's world puts before us as goals material riches, prominence, and power, while Jehovah stresses the more important spiritual values. A failure to give the latter priority over the

11, 12. Explain how thinking ability, discernment, and wisdom safeguard us.

former can cause families to disintegrate, friendships to collapse, and spiritual goals to fade. As a result, a person can be left with nothing more than the sad reality indicated by Jesus' words: "Of what benefit is it for a man to gain the whole world and to forfeit his soul?" (Mark 8:36) Wisdom dictates that we heed Jesus' counsel: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:33.

The Danger of Becoming Self-Centered

¹³ Humans are by nature interested in themselves. When personal desires and interests become paramount in life, however, trouble results. Therefore, to safeguard our friendship with him, Jehovah instructs us to avoid being self-centered. This term means being "concerned solely with one's own desires, needs, or interests." Does that not accurately describe many people today? Significantly, the Bible foretells that "in the last days" of Satan's wicked system, "men will be lovers of themselves," or will become self-centered.—2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

13, 14. What does it mean to be self-centered, and why is it unwise to become so?

¹⁴ Christians appreciate the wisdom of observing the Bible command to take an interest in others, loving them as one loves oneself. (Luke 10:27; Philippians 2:4) People in general may view this as impractical, yet it is vital if we are to enjoy successful marriages, happy family relationships, and satisfying friendships. Thus, a true servant of Jehovah must never allow the natural interest in self to dominate his life to the exclusion of more important interests. First and foremost, this means the interests of Jehovah, the God he worships.

¹⁵ A self-centered attitude can lead to one's being self-righteous, which, in turn, can cause a person to become narrow-minded, presumptuous. The Bible aptly says: "You are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are, if you judge; for in the thing in which you judge another, you condemn yourself, inasmuch as you that judge practice the same things." (Romans 2:1; 14:4, 10) The religious leaders in Jesus' day became so convinced of their own righteousness that they felt qualified to censure Jesus and his followers. By so doing, they set themselves up as judges. Being blind to their own shortcomings, they actually brought condemnation upon themselves.

¹⁶ Judas, the follower of Jesus who betrayed him, allowed himself to become a person judging others. On the occasion at Bethany when Mary, Lazarus' sister, anointed Jesus with perfumed oil, Judas strongly objected. He voiced his indignation by arguing: "Why was it this perfumed oil was not sold for three hundred denarii and given to the poor people?" But the report continues in explanation: "He said this, though, not because he was concerned about the poor, but because he was a thief and had the money box and used to carry off the monies put in it." (John 12:1-6) Let us never become like Judas or the

15, 16. (a) To what can a self-centered attitude lead, as exemplified by whom? (b) In reality, what does a person do when he is quick to judge others?

religious leaders, who were quick to judge others, only to condemn themselves.

¹⁷ Regrettably, some early Christians, while they were not thieves like Judas, did fall victim to pride, becoming self-assuming. Of them, James wrote: "You take pride in your self-assuming brags." Then he added: "All such taking of pride is wicked." (James 4:16) Boasting about what we have done or about our privileges in Jehovah's service is self-defeating. (Proverbs 14:16) We recall what happened to the apostle Peter, who in a moment of excessive self-confidence boasted: "Although all the others are stumbled in connection with you, never will I be stumbled! ... Even if I should have to die with you, I will by no means disown you." In reality, we have nothing to boast about in ourselves. Everything we enjoy is only because of Jehovah's loving-kindness. Remembering this will keep us from being self-assuming.—Matthew 26:33-35, 69-75.

¹⁸ "Pride is before a crash, and a haughty spirit before stumbling," we are told. Why? Jehovah answers: "Self-exaltation and pride ... I have hated." (Proverbs 8:13; 16:18) No wonder Jehovah was incensed at "the insolence of the heart of the king of Assyria and for the self-importance of his loftiness of

17. Illustrate the danger inherent in being self-assuming or in becoming excessively self-confident.
18. How does Jehovah feel about pride?

Do You Recall?

- How were King David and Jesus Christ safeguarded?
- How are Jehovah's people today safeguarded?
- Why should we avoid overemphasizing self?
- Why can we be proud and yet humble?

eyes”! (Isaiah 10:12) Jehovah called him to account. Soon all of Satan’s world, together with its proud, self-important leaders, visible and invisible, will also be called to account. May we never mirror the self-willed attitude of Jehovah’s adversaries!

¹⁹ True Christians have every reason to be proud of being servants of Jehovah. (Jeremiah 9:24) At the same time, they have every reason to remain humble. Why? Because “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” (Romans 3:23) So to safeguard our position as Jehovah’s servants, we must have the attitude of the apostle Paul, who said that “Christ Jesus came into the world to save sin-

19. In what respect are God’s people proud and yet humble?

ners,” and then he added: “Of these I am foremost.”—1 Timothy 1:15.

²⁰ Since Jehovah’s people gladly push self into the background in order to place divine interests in the foreground, we can be assured that Jehovah will continue to safeguard them spiritually. We can also be assured that when the great tribulation strikes, Jehovah will safeguard his people not only spiritually but also physically. Upon entering into God’s new world, they will be able to cry out: “Look! This is our God. We have hoped in him, and he will save us. This is Jehovah. We have hoped in him. Let us be joyful and rejoice in the salvation by him.”—Isaiah 25:9.

20. How does Jehovah safeguard his people now, and how will he safeguard them in the future?

SAVED, NOT BY WORKS ALONE, BUT BY UNDESERVED KINDNESS

“You have been saved through faith . . . It is not owing to works, in order that no man should have ground for boasting.”—EPHESIANS 2:8, 9.

PEOPLE today take great pride in personal accomplishments, and they are often quick to boast about them. Christians are different. They refrain from overemphasizing their own accomplishments, even those having to do with true worship. While they rejoice over what Jehovah’s people accomplish as a whole, they keep their individual contribution in the background. They realize that in Jehovah’s service, right motives are more important than personal accomplishments. Anyone who is eventually given the gift of

1. How do Christians differ from people in general as regards personal accomplishments, and why?

eternal life will have gained it, not by personal accomplishments, but through faith and by God’s undeserved kindness.—Luke 17:10; John 3:16.

² The apostle Paul was well-aware of this fact. After having prayed three times for relief from “a thorn in the flesh,” he received Jehovah’s reply: “My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you; for my power is being made perfect in weakness.” Humbly accepting Jehovah’s decision, Paul said: “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather boast as respects my weaknesses, that the power of the Christ may

2, 3. Of what did Paul boast, and why?

like a tent remain over me." Paul's humble attitude is one that we should want to imitate.—2 Corinthians 12:7-9.

³ Even though Paul was outstanding in performing Christian works, he recognized that his achievements were not owing to any particular abilities of his own. With modesty, he noted: "To me, a man less than the least of all holy ones, this undeserved kindness was given, that I should declare to the nations the good news about the unfathomable riches of the Christ." (Ephesians 3:8) No boastful attitude here nor holier-than-thou haughtiness. "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5) Do we follow Paul's example, humbly considering ourselves to be less than the least of our brothers?

"Considering That the Others Are Superior"

⁴ The apostle Paul counseled Christians:

4. Why may we sometimes find it difficult to consider others to be superior to us?

"My undeserved kindness is sufficient for you"

"[Do] nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind considering that the others are superior to you." (Philippians 2:3) This may be a challenge, especially if we happen to be in a position of responsibility. Perhaps the difficulty arises because we have been influenced, to a certain extent, by the spirit of competition so prevalent in the world today. Possibly, as children we were taught to compete, either with our siblings at home or with our classmates at school. We were perhaps constantly urged to reach out for the honor of being the school's star athlete or its top student. Of course, giving our best in any proper undertaking is commendable. However, Christians do so, not to call undue attention to themselves, but to benefit fully from the activity and perhaps to benefit others as well. However, aspiring always to be praised as number one can be dangerous. How so?

⁵ If left unchecked, a competitive or egotistical spirit can cause a person to become disrespectful and arrogant. He may become envious of the abilities and privileges of others. Proverbs 28:22 says: "A man of envious eye is bestirring himself after valuable things, but he does not know that want itself will come upon him." He might even presumptuously reach out for positions to which he is not entitled. To justify his actions, he may start to murmur and become critical of others—tendencies that Christians should shun. (James 3:14-16) At any rate, he is running the risk of developing a me-first attitude.

⁶ The Bible, therefore, urges Christians: "Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one

5. If left unchecked, to what can a competitive spirit lead?

6. How does the Bible warn against a competitive spirit?

another." (Galatians 5:26) The apostle John spoke of a fellow Christian who evidently fell victim to this kind of spirit. "I wrote something to the congregation," said John, "but Diotrephes, who likes to have the first place among them, does not receive anything from us with respect. That is why, if I come, I will call to remembrance his works which he goes on doing, chattering about us with wicked words." What a sad situation for a Christian to fall into!
—3 John 9, 10.

⁷ Of course, it is unrealistic to think that a Christian can completely avoid all competitive pursuits. His secular work, for example, may involve economic competition with other individuals or businesses producing similar products or offering similar services. Even in such instances, however, a Christian will want to carry on his business in a spirit of respect, love, and consideration. He will rule out illegal or unchristian practices and avoid becoming a person known primarily for a competitive, dog-eat-dog attitude. He will not feel that being number one—in whatever pursuit—is the most important thing in life. If that is true of secular pursuits, how much more it is true in the realm of worship!

"Not in Comparison With the Other Person"

⁸ The attitude Christians should have in their worship is set out in these inspired words: "Let each one prove what his own

7. What will a Christian want to avoid in today's competitive workplace?

8, 9. (a) Why do Christian elders have no reason to compete with one another? (b) Why does 1 Peter 4:10 apply to all of God's servants?



work is, and then he will have cause for exultation in regard to himself alone, and not in comparison with the other person." (Galatians 6:4) Elders in the congregation, knowing that they are not in competition with one another, cooperate and work closely together as a body. They rejoice in the contribution each one can make to the overall welfare of the congregation. They thus ward off disruptive competition and set a fine example in unity for the rest of the congregation.

⁹ Because of age, experience, or natural abilities, some elders may be more efficient than others, or they may be endowed with greater insight. As a result, elders have different responsibilities in Jehovah's organization. Instead of making comparisons, they bear in mind the counsel: "In proportion as each one has received a gift, use it in ministering to one another as fine stewards of God's undeserved kindness expressed in various ways." (1 Peter 4:10) In reality, this text applies to all of Jehovah's servants, for to some extent all have received the



Elders rejoice in the contribution each one can make to the welfare of the congregation

gift of accurate knowledge and all enjoy the privilege of sharing in the Christian ministry.

¹⁰ Our sacred service is pleasing to Jehovah only when it is rendered out of love and devotion, not for the sake of elevating ourselves over others. It is therefore vital to have a balanced view of our activity in support of true worship. While no one can accurately judge another's motives, Jehovah "is making an estimate of hearts." (Proverbs 24:12; 1 Samuel 16:7) Thus, we do well to ask ourselves from time to time, 'What is my motive for performing works of faith?'—Psalm 24:3, 4; Matthew 5:8.

Proper View of Our Work

¹¹ If motive is all-important in gaining Jehovah's approval, then to what extent should we be concerned about our works of faith? As long as we perform our ministry



with the right motive, is it really necessary to keep account of what we do or how much? These are reasonable questions, since we do not want to put numbers ahead of acts of faith or let having a good report become a major concern regarding our Christian activity.

¹² Notice what the book *Organized to Do Jehovah's Will* says: "Early followers of Jesus Christ took an interest in reports of progress in the preaching work. (Mark 6:30) The Bible book of Acts tells us that there were about 120 persons present when holy spirit was poured out on the disciples at Pentecost. Soon the number of disciples grew to 3,000 and then to 5,000.... (Acts 1:15; 2:5-11, 41, 47; 4:4; 6:7) What fine encouragement the news of these increases must have brought to the disciples!" For the same reason, Jehovah's Witnesses today endeavor to keep accurate records of what is accomplished worldwide in fulfillment of Jesus' words: "This good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a

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10. In what way only will our sacred service be acceptable to Jehovah?
 11. What questions about our activity in the ministry can reasonably be considered?

- 12, 13. (a) What are some reasons why we keep a record of our field service? (b) What reasons do we have for joy when viewing the overall report of our preaching activity?

witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) Such reports provide a realistic picture of what is done in the world field. They show where help is needed and which kind of literature and how much of it is required to advance the preaching work.

¹³ Thus, reporting our preaching activity enables us to carry out our commission to preach the Kingdom good news more effectively. Besides, are we not encouraged when we hear about the work that our brothers are doing in other parts of the world? News of growth and expansion earth wide fills us with joy, moves us to greater activity, and assures us of Jehovah's blessing. And how gratifying to know that *our personal report* is included in that worldwide report! Ours is small in comparison with the grand total, but it does not go unnoticed by Jehovah. (Mark 12:42, 43) Remember, without *your report*, the overall report would be incomplete.

¹⁴ Of course, much of what every Witness does in fulfilling his responsibility as a dedicated servant of Jehovah does not appear on his report. For instance, the report does not include regular personal Bible study, attendance and participation at Christian meetings, congregational duties, assistance to fellow believers as needed, financial support of the worldwide Kingdom work, and so on. Thus, while our field service report plays its part, helping us to maintain our zeal in preaching and to avoid slacking off, we must keep it in proper perspective. It is not to be viewed as a spiritual license or passport, determining our eligibility for everlasting life.

14. Besides preaching and teaching, what is included in our worship of Jehovah?



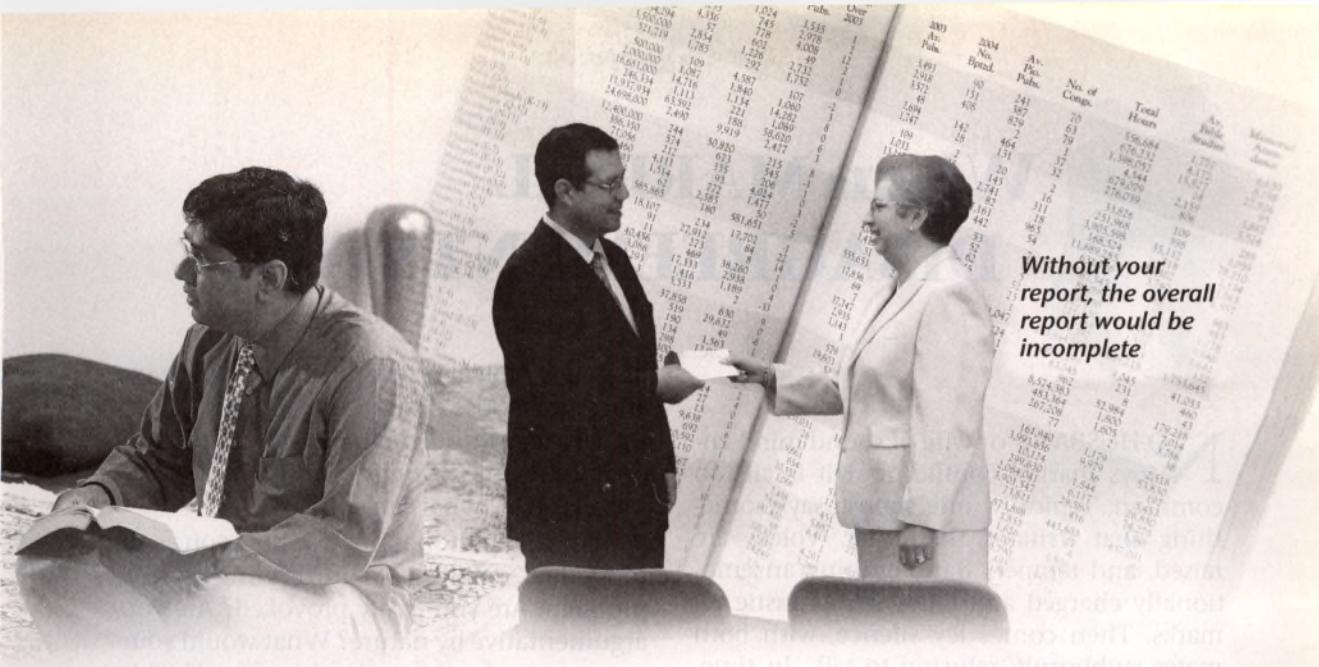
"Zealous for Fine Works"

¹⁵ Clearly, even though works alone cannot save us, they are necessary. That is why Christians are called "a people peculiarly his own, zealous for fine works" and why they are encouraged to "consider one another to incite to love and fine works." (Titus 2:14; Hebrews 10:24) More to the point, another Bible writer, James, simply says: "As the body without spirit is dead, so also faith without works is dead."—James 2:26.

¹⁶ Important though the good works themselves may be, the motives for doing them are even more important. It is therefore wise for us to check our motives from time to time. Since no human can accurately know the motives of others, however, we must beware of judging others. "Who are you to judge the house servant of another?" we are asked, with the obvious answer: "To his own master he stands or falls." (Romans 14:4) Jehovah, the Master of all, and his appointed Judge, Christ Jesus, will judge us,

15. Though works alone cannot save us, why are they necessary?

16. What is even more important than works, but of what should we beware?



Without your report, the overall report would be incomplete

not on the basis of our works alone but also on the basis of our motives, our opportunities, our love, and our devotion. Only Jehovah and Christ Jesus can accurately judge whether we have done what Christians are admonished to do, in the words of the apostle Paul: “*Do your utmost* to present yourself approved to God, a workman with nothing to be ashamed of, handling the word of the truth aright.”—2 Timothy 2:15; 2 Peter 1:10; 3:14.

¹⁷ Jehovah is reasonable in what he expects of us. According to James 3:17, “the wisdom from above is,” among other things, “*reasonable*.” Would it not be the course of wisdom, as well as a true accomplishment, for us to imitate Jehovah in this regard? Thus, we should not try to set unreasonable and unreachable expectations for ourselves or for our brothers.

¹⁸ As long as we keep a balanced view of our works of faith and Jehovah’s un-

deserved kindness, we will maintain the joy that is a distinguishing mark of true servants of Jehovah. (Isaiah 65:13, 14) We can rejoice in the blessings that Jehovah is pouring out on his people as a whole, regardless of how much we personally may be able to do. Continuing in “prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving,” we will petition God to help us do our utmost. Then, beyond all doubt, “the peace of God that excels all thought will guard [our] hearts and [our] mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-7) Yes, we can draw comfort and encouragement from knowing that we can be saved, not by works alone, but by Jehovah’s undeserved kindness!

17. While striving to do our utmost, why should we keep James 3:17 in mind?

18. What can we look forward to when we have a balanced view of our works and Jehovah’s undeserved kindness?

deserved kindness, we will maintain the joy that is a distinguishing mark of true servants of Jehovah. (Isaiah 65:13, 14) We can rejoice in the blessings that Jehovah is pouring out on his people as a whole, regardless of how much we personally may be able to do. Continuing in “prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving,” we will petition God to help us do our utmost. Then, beyond all doubt, “the peace of God that excels all thought will guard [our] hearts and [our] mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.” (Philippians 4:4-7) Yes, we can draw comfort and encouragement from knowing that we can be saved, not by works alone, but by Jehovah’s undeserved kindness!

Can You Explain Why Christians

- refrain from boasting about personal accomplishments?
- avoid showing a competitive spirit?
- report their Christian activity in the field ministry?
- avoid judging fellow Christians?



When MARITAL DISAGREEMENTS Arise

NO HUSBAND or wife of sound mind enjoys marital conflict, but it is all too common. Typically, one spouse says something that irritates the other. Voices are raised, and tempers flare, igniting an emotionally charged argument with caustic remarks. Then comes icy silence, with both mates stubbornly refusing to talk. In time, the anger subsides and apologies are exchanged. Peace is restored—at least until the next disagreement.

Marital spats are the topic of an endless stream of jokes and story lines of television programs, but the reality is far from amusing. Indeed, a Bible proverb says: "Thoughtless words can wound as deeply as any sword." (*Proverbs 12:18, Today's English Version*) Yes, harsh speech may leave emotional scars that linger long after the dispute has ended. Arguing may even lead to violence.
—Exodus 21:18.

Of course, because of human imperfection, problems in marriage are sometimes unavoidable. (*Genesis 3:16; 1 Corinthians 7:28*) Still, frequent and intense disputes should not be dismissed as normal. Experts have noted that a pattern of quarreling increases the likelihood that a couple will eventually divorce. Hence, it is vital that you and your spouse learn to handle disagreements in a peaceful manner.

Assessing the Situation

If your marriage is plagued by arguments, try to determine if there is a pattern to your

disputes. Typically, what happens when you and your spouse disagree on a matter? Does the discussion quickly veer off course and deteriorate into a volley of insults and accusations? If so, what can you do?

First, take an honest look at how you as an individual might be contributing to the problem. Are you easily provoked? Are you argumentative by nature? What would your spouse say about you in this regard? This last question is important to consider, for you and your mate may have different views about what constitutes being argumentative.

For example, suppose that your spouse tends to be somewhat reserved, while you are candid and highly intense when expressing yourself. You might say: "When I was growing up, that's the way *everyone* in my family communicated. It's not arguing!" And perhaps to you it is not. Possibly, though, what you see as uninhibited straight talk is perceived by your mate as hurtful and combative arguing. Simply being aware that you and your mate have different communication styles can help prevent misunderstandings.

Remember, too, that arguing does not always involve shouting. Paul wrote to Christians: "Let . . . screaming and abusive speech be taken away from you." (*Ephesians 4:31*) "Screaming" alludes to a raised voice, whereas "abusive speech" refers to the content of the message. Viewed in that light, even whispered words can be argumentative if they are irritating or demeaning.

Do you listen?

With the foregoing in mind, look again at how you handle disagreements with your mate. Are you argumentative? As we have seen, the real answer to that question largely depends on the perception of your spouse. Rather than dismissing your mate's view as oversensitive, try to see yourself as that one sees you, and make adjustments where they are needed. Paul wrote: "Let each one keep seeking, not his own advantage, but that of the other person."—1 Corinthians 10:24.



"Pay Attention to How You Listen"

Another aspect of handling disagreements is found in Jesus' words: "Pay attention to how you listen." (Luke 8:18) True, Jesus was not talking about communication in marriage. Nevertheless, the principle applies. How well do you listen to your spouse? Do you listen at all? Or do you abruptly interrupt with pat solutions to problems that you have not completely understood? "When anyone is replying to a matter before he hears it, that is foolishness on his part and a humiliation," the Bible says. (Proverbs 18:13) When a disagreement arises, then, you and your spouse need to talk the matter out and truly listen to each other.

Rather than downplay your spouse's viewpoint, strive to show "fellow feeling." (1 Peter 3:8) In the original Greek, this term basically denotes suffering with another person. If your mate is distressed over something, you should share the feeling. Endeavor to look at the matter from his or her perspective.

Evidently, the godly man Isaac did that. The Bible tells us that his wife, Rebekah, was deeply disturbed over a family issue involv-

ing her son Jacob. "I have come to abhor this life of mine because of the daughters of Heth," she said to Isaac. "If Jacob ever takes a wife from the daughters of Heth like these from the daughters of the land, of what good is life to me?"—Genesis 27:46.

Granted, out of anxiety, Rebekah likely overstated matters. After all, did she really abhor her life? Would she literally prefer to die if her son married one of the daughters of Heth? Probably not. Still, Isaac did not minimize Rebekah's feelings. Instead, Isaac saw that Rebekah's concern had merit, and he took action accordingly. (Genesis 28:1) Do the same the next time your mate is anxious over a matter. Instead of dismissing it as something trivial, *listen* to your mate, *respect* his or her view, and *respond* in a compassionate manner.

Listening and Insight

A Bible proverb states: "The insight of a man certainly slows down his anger." (Proverbs 19:11) In the heat of a disagreement, it is so easy to react impulsively to every sharp word that is uttered by your spouse. Usually, though, this only serves to escalate the argument. Hence, when listening to your

Three Steps to Defusing an Argument

- Listen to your spouse.
Proverbs 10:19
- Respect his or her viewpoint.
Philippians 2:4
- Respond in a loving manner.
1 Corinthians 13:4-7



spouse, make it your determination to hear not only the words being said but also the feelings behind the words. Such insight will help you to see past personal annoyances and get to the root of the problem.

For instance, suppose your wife says to you, "You never spend any time with me!" You could be inclined to get irritated and deny the charge with cold facts. "I spent a whole day with you last month!" you might reply. But if you listen attentively, you might find that your wife is not really asking for more minutes or hours. Instead, she may be asking for reassurances, telling you that she feels neglected and unloved.

Suppose that you are a wife and your husband expresses his concern over a recent purchase. "How could you spend that much money?" he asks in utter disbelief. Your im-

pulse might be to defend yourself with facts regarding the family finances or by comparing your purchase with one of his own. Insight, however, will help you to see that your husband may not be talking about dollars and cents. Instead, he may be troubled because he was left out of the decision-making process when it came to a major purchase.

Of course, each couple may have a different way to address how much time they spend together and how purchasing decisions are made. The point is that when matters become subjects of contention, insight will slow down your anger and enable you to perceive the real issues at hand. Rather than impulsively reacting, follow the Bible writer James' admonition to be "swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath."—James 1:19.

When you do speak, remember that how you speak to your mate is important. The Bible says that "the tongue of the wise ones is a healing." (Proverbs 12:18) When you and your spouse are caught up in a disagreement, do your words hurt or do they heal? Do they build roadblocks, or do they pave the way for reconciliation? As we have already seen, angry or impulsive responses only stir up contention.—Proverbs 29:22.

If a disagreement deteriorates into a verbal boxing match, put forth more effort to stick to the point. Focus on the cause, not

"I feel neglected and unloved"

"You never spend any time with me!"

"I spent a whole day with you last month!"



What You Can Do Now

Ask your spouse the questions below, and listen to the answers without interrupting. Then your spouse can do the same with you.

- Do I tend to be argumentative?
- Do I really listen when you express yourself, or do I impulsively respond before you are finished speaking?
- Do my words come across to you as insensitive or angry?
- What can we both do to improve our style of communication—especially when we do not agree on a matter?



the person. Be more concerned with *what* is right than *who* is right. Be careful that your words do not fan the flames of the argument. The Bible says: "A word causing pain makes anger to come up." (Proverbs 15:1) Yes, what you say and how you say it may make a difference in whether you elicit your mate's cooperation or not.

Aim to Resolve, Not to Win

In our dealing with disagreements, the goal is a solution rather than a victory. How can you reach a solution? The surest way is to search out and apply the Bible's counsel, and husbands especially should take the initiative to do so. Rather than being quick to express strong opinions on the issues or problems at hand, why not look at them from Jehovah's viewpoint? Pray to him, and seek the peace of God that will guard your hearts and mental powers. (Ephesians 6:18; Philippians 4:6, 7) Make an earnest effort to look out for the personal interest of not just you but also your mate.—Philippians 2:4.

What often makes a bad situation worse is letting hurt feelings and uncontrolled emotions dominate your thoughts and actions. On the other hand, being willing to be re-adjusted by the counsel of God's Word leads to peace, agreement, and Jehovah's blessing. (2 Corinthians 13:11) Therefore, be guided by "the wisdom from above," manifest godly qualities, and reap benefits as "those who are making peace."—James 3:17, 18.

Really, all should learn to handle disagreements peacefully, even if this means sacrificing personal preferences. (1 Corinthians 6:7) Indeed, apply Paul's admonition to put away "wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth. . . . Strip off the old personality with its practices, and clothe yourselves with the new personality."—Colossians 3:8-10.

At times, of course, you will say things that you later regret. (James 3:8) When this happens, apologize to your spouse. Continue to put forth effort. In time, you and your spouse will likely see great improvement in how you handle disagreements.



“THE LIFE NOW” —ENJOYING IT TO THE FULL!

AS TOLD BY
TED BUCKINGHAM

I had been a full-time minister for six years and married for six months when I was suddenly stricken with poliomyelitis. It was 1950, and I was just 24 years old. Nine months in the hospital gave me plenty of time to reflect on my life. With my new disabilities, what would the future hold for my wife, Joyce, and me?

IN 1938 my father, never a religious man, obtained a copy of the book *Government*.* The political turmoil and prospect of war probably prompted him to get the book. To my knowledge, he never read it, but my deeply religious mother did. Her reaction to its message was immediate. She left the Church of England, and despite opposition from my father, she became a faithful Witness of Jehovah and remained such until her death in 1990.

* Published in 1928 by Jehovah's Witnesses, but no longer in print.

Mother took me to my first Christian meeting at a Kingdom Hall in Epsom, south of London. The congregation met in a former store, and we listened to a recording of a talk by J. F. Rutherford, who was overseeing the work of Jehovah's Witnesses at that time. It left a deep impression on me.

The heavy bombing during the blitz on London posed increasing dangers. So in 1940 my father decided to move the family to a safer location—Maidenhead, a small town 30 miles west of London. This was beneficial, as the 30 members of the congrega-

tion there proved to be a fine source of encouragement. Fred Smith, a spiritual stalwart baptized in 1917, took me under his wing and trained me to become a more effective preacher. I remain greatly indebted to him for his example and loving help.

Entering Full-Time Service

In 1941, at age 15, I was baptized in the river Thames on a cold March day. By then, my elder brother, Jim, had enrolled as a full-time evangelizer. Today, he and his wife, Madge, live in Birmingham, after spending a lifetime in Jehovah's service in circuit and district assignments throughout Britain. My younger sister, Robina, and her husband, Frank, also remain faithful servants of Jehovah.

I was working as an accountant for a dress manufacturer. One day the managing director called me to his office to offer me the prospect of a promising career as a buyer for the firm. For some time, however, I had been thinking of following my brother's example, so I politely declined my employer's offer, explaining why. To my surprise, he warmly commended me for wanting to pursue such worthwhile Christian activity. So after a district convention in Northampton in 1944, I became a full-time evangelizer.

My first assignment was to Exeter, in the county of Devon. This city was by then slowly recovering from wartime bombing. I shared an apartment already occupied by two pioneers, Frank and Ruth Middleton, who were very kind to me. I was just 18 with little experience in laundry and cooking, but things improved as I developed my skills.

My preaching companion was 50-year-old Victor Gurd, an Irishman who had been



*With my mother
in 1946*

witnessing since the 1920's. He taught me to schedule my time profitably, to develop a deeper interest in Bible reading, and to appreciate the value of different Bible translations. During those formative years, Victor's steadfast example was just what I needed.

The Challenge of Neutrality

The war was drawing to a close, but the authorities were still pursuing young men for military service. I had appeared before a tribunal in 1943 at

Maidenhead, where I clearly stated my case for exemption as a minister of the Gospel. Although my appeal was refused, I decided to move to Exeter to take up my assignment. So it was at Exeter that I was eventually summoned to appear before the local court. Sentencing me to six months of hard labor in prison, the magistrate told me that he was sorry it could not be for longer. After serving those six months, I was sent back to prison for an additional four months.

As I was the only Witness in the prison, the warders called me Jehovah. It was rather strange responding to that name at roll call, as I had to, but what a privilege to hear God's name heralded day after day! It let the other prisoners know that it was my conscientious stand as one of Jehovah's Witnesses that had put me among them. Later, Norman Castro was sent to the same prison, and there was a name change. We then became Moses and Aaron.

I was moved from Exeter to Bristol and finally to Winchester prison. Conditions were not always pleasant, but it helped to have a sense of humor. Norman and I were happy to observe the Memorial together while at Winchester. Francis Cooke,

who visited us in prison, gave a fine talk for us.

Changes in the Postwar Years

At the Bristol convention in 1946, where the Bible study aid "*Let God Be True*" was

During our first year of marriage, another move took us south to Brixham, a delightful port town where the technique of trawling for fish was first developed. We had not been there long, however, when I was stricken with polio while traveling to a London convention. I fell into a coma. I was eventually discharged from the hospital—after nine months, as mentioned earlier. My right hand and both legs were badly affected, as they still are, and I had to use a walking stick. My dear wife was my constant cheerful companion and source of encouragement, especially as she managed to continue in the full-time ministry. But what would we do now? I was soon to learn that Jehovah's hand is never short.

The following year we attended an assembly at Wimbledon, London. By this time I was walking without my stick. There we met Pryce Hughes, who was overseeing the work

in Britain. He immediately greeted me: "Hey! We want you in the circuit work!" I could have received no greater encouragement! Was I fit enough? Joyce and I both wondered about that, but with a week's training and full trust in Jehovah, we were on our way back to the southwest of England, where I had been assigned to serve as a circuit overseer. I was by then just 25 years of age, but I still recall with deep appreciation

the kindness and patience of those Witnesses who were so helpful to me.

Of all our different fields of theocratic activity, Joyce and I found that visiting the congregations brought us closest to our Christian brothers and sisters. We had no car, so we traveled either by train or by bus.



With Joyce on our wedding day, in 1950



At a Bristol convention in 1953

released, I met a pretty lass, Joyce Moore, who was also pioneering in Devon. Our friendship blossomed, and we were married four years later at Tiverton, where I had been since 1947. We made our home in a rented room for which we paid 15 shillings (\$1.10, U.S.) a week. It was a great life!

Although I was still adapting to the restrictions brought about by my illness, we enjoyed our privileges right up to 1957. It was a fulfilling life, but that year a further challenge presented itself.

To Missionary Service

Receiving an invitation to attend the 30th class of Gilead was thrilling for us. I was coping well with my paralysis, so Joyce and I gladly accepted the call. From experience, we knew that Jehovah always provides the strength if we seek to do his will. Five months of intensive training at the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, located in beautiful South Lansing, New York, U.S.A., quickly passed. The students were mainly married couples in the traveling work. When the class was asked if any would like to volunteer for the foreign missionary field, we were among those who readily did so. Where would we go? To Uganda, East Africa!

Since the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in Uganda at that time, I was advised to settle in the country and find secular employment. After a long journey by train and boat, we arrived at Kampala, Uganda. The immigration officials were not pleased to see us and allowed us to stay for just a few months. We were then ordered to leave. On instructions from headquarters, we traveled to Northern Rhodesia (now Zambia). There it was a great joy to meet four of our Gilead classmates—Frank and Carrie Lewis and Hayes and Harriet Hoskins. From there, we were reassigned shortly afterward to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe).

We traveled by train and had our first glimpse of the magnificent Victoria Falls before arriving in Bulawayo. We stayed for a while with the McLuckie family, who had been among the first Witnesses to settle there. It was our privilege to get to know them well during the next 16 years.



Serving an isolated group (above) and a congregation (left) in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe

Adapting to Changes

After two weeks' training to become acquainted with the African field, I was appointed to serve as district overseer. Witnessing in the African bush meant carrying water, food, bedding, personal clothing, a film projector and electric generator, a large screen, and other necessities. All of this was packed into a truck sturdy enough to carry us over the rough terrain.

I worked with the African circuit overseers while Joyce happily helped their wives and

children who came along too. Walking in the African veld can be tiring, especially during the heat of the day, but I soon found that in this climate, my physical limitations were easier to cope with, and for that I was grateful.

The people were generally poor. Many were steeped in tradition and superstition and practiced polygamy; yet they showed a deep respect for the Bible. In some areas, congregation meetings were held under large, shady trees, and during the evenings, illumination came from suspended oil lamps. We always experienced a sense of awe when studying God's Word directly under the starry heavens, such a magnificent part of his creation.

Showing the Watch Tower Society's films on African reserves was another unforgettable experience. A congregation might number 30 Witnesses, but on those occasions, we knew we could often expect an attendance of 1,000 or more people!

In the tropics, ill health can be a problem, of course, but at all times it is essential to keep a positive outlook. Joyce and I learned to manage quite well—I dealt with my occasional bouts of malaria, and Joyce coped with sickness caused by amoebas.

We were later assigned to the branch office in Salisbury (now Harare), where it was a privilege to work alongside other faithful servants of Jehovah, among them Lester Davey and George and Ruby Bradley. The government appointed me to serve as a marriage officer, which enabled me to conduct weddings for the African brothers, thereby strengthening the bond of Christian marriage within the congregations. A few years later, another privilege came my way. I was to visit all the non-Bantu congregations in the country. For more than a decade, Joyce and I enjoyed getting to know our brothers in this way, and we rejoiced at their spiritual

progress. During that time we also visited our brothers in Botswana and Mozambique.

Moving On Again

After many happy years in southern Africa, we were reassigned in 1975 to Sierra Leone, West Africa. We soon settled in at the branch office to enjoy our new field of activity, but this was not to last. I became sick and weak because of a severe attack of malaria, and eventually I had to be treated in London, where I was advised not to return to Africa. We were saddened by this, but Joyce and I were warmly welcomed into the London Bethel family. The numerous African brothers in many of the London congregations made us feel right at home too. As my health improved, we adapted to yet another routine, and I was asked to care for the Purchasing Department. With all the expansion we have seen over the ensuing years, this has been absorbing work.

In the early 1990's, my dear Joyce became ill with motor neuron disease, and she died in 1994. She had proved to be a loving, loyal, and faithful wife, always willing to adjust to the varying circumstances we faced together. To deal with a loss such as this, I have found that it is important to maintain a clear spiritual outlook and keep looking forward. Prayerfully holding to a good theocratic schedule, including preaching, also helps me to keep my mind fully occupied.—Proverbs 3:5, 6.

Serving at Bethel is a privilege and a fine way of life. There are so many young folk to work with and many joys to be shared. One blessing is the number of visitors we receive here in London. Sometimes I see dear friends from my African assignments, and happy memories come flooding back. All of this helps me to continue to enjoy fully "the life now" and to contemplate with confidence and hope the life "which is to come." —1 Timothy 4:8.

Do Not Give Up in Doing What Is Fine

"MAINTAIN your conduct fine among the nations," exhorted the apostle Peter. (1 Peter 2:12) The Greek word translated "fine" refers to something that is "beautiful, noble, honorable, excellent." In this day and age, it may seem hopelessly unrealistic to expect noble or honorable conduct from people in general. By and large, however, Jehovah's people today have succeeded in following Peter's exhortation. In fact, they are known the world over for their fine conduct.

This is particularly noteworthy when we consider the stresses and strains we face during these "critical times hard to deal with." (2 Timothy 3:1) Trials are part of our daily life, and opposition to the Christian way of life is common. In addition, while some trials are short-lived, others persist without letup, even increasing in intensity. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul admonished: "Let us not give up in doing what is fine, for in due season we shall reap if we do not tire out." (Galatians 6:9) Just how is it possible to do—and continue to do—what is fine in the face of heartrending trials and unrelenting hostilities?

Help in Doing What Is Fine

Being "noble, honorable, excellent" is clearly a state of the inner person, a quality of the heart. Therefore, maintaining fine conduct in the face of trials and hardships is,

not a spur-of-the-moment reaction, but the result of daily following and practicing Bible principles in all aspects of life. What are some things that can help in this regard? Consider the following.

Cultivate the mental attitude of Christ. It takes humility to endure what may seem unjust. A person who thinks highly of himself is unlikely to tolerate mistreatment. Je-

sus, however, "humbled himself and became obedient as far as death." (Philippians 2:5, 8) By imitating him, we will not 'get tired or give out' in our sacred service. (Hebrews 12:2, 3) Practice humble obedience by co-operating willingly with those taking the lead in

your local congregation. (Hebrews 13:17) Learn to view others as "superior" to you, putting their interests ahead of your own. —Philippians 2:3, 4.

Remember that Jehovah loves you. We must be convinced that Jehovah "is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him." (Hebrews 11:6) He genuinely cares for us and wants us to get everlasting life. (1 Timothy 2:4; 1 Peter 5:7) Remembering that nothing can nullify God's love for us will help us not to give up under trial. —Romans 8:38, 39.

Put full trust in Jehovah. Trust in Jehovah is essential, especially when trials seem to be unending or life threatening. We must have implicit trust that Jehovah will not

We must have implicit trust that Jehovah will not allow any test 'beyond what we can bear,' that he will always make the way out





allow any test 'beyond what we can bear,' that he will always "make the way out." (1 Corinthians 10:13) Even the threat of death can be faced courageously when our trust is in Jehovah.—2 Corinthians 1:8, 9.

Persevere in prayer. Heartfelt prayer is vital. (Romans 12:12) Sincere prayer is one of the ways that we draw close to Jehovah. (James 4:8) Through personal experience, we learn that "no matter what it is

Keeping busy in theocratic activities can help prepare us to face trials

that we ask . . . , he hears us." (1 John 5:14) If Jehovah allows our trial to continue as a test of our integrity, we pray for his help to endure. (Luke 22:41-43) Prayer teaches us that we are never alone, that with Jehovah on our side, we will always come off victorious.—Romans 8:31, 37.

Fine Works—'Cause for Praise and Honor'

From time to time, all Christians are "grieved by various trials." Yet, we must "not give up in doing what is fine." When under stress, draw strength from the knowledge that your faithfulness will ultimately be "a cause for praise and glory and honor." (1 Peter 1:6, 7) Take full advantage of all spiritual provisions from Jehovah to build you up. When you need personal attention, go to those who serve as shepherds, teachers, and counselors in the Christian congregation. (Acts 20:28) Be regular in attending all congregation meetings, which 'incite us to love and fine works.' (Hebrews 10:24) A program of daily Bible reading and personal study will help keep you alert and spiritually strong; so will having a regular share in the Christian ministry.

—Psalm 1:1-3; Matthew 24:14.

The more you taste of Jehovah's love and care, the greater will be your desire to be "zealous for fine works." (Titus 2:14) Remember, "he that has endured to the end is the one that will be saved." (Matthew 24:13) Yes, be determined 'not to give up in doing what is fine'!

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

Work—A Blessing or a Curse?

Parents,
Provide for the Needs of Your Family

Praising Jehovah at School

Questions From Readers

Upon hearing that the imprisoned Peter was at the door, why did the disciples say: "It is his angel"?—Acts 12:15.

The disciples may erroneously have assumed that an angelic messenger representing Peter stood at the gate. Consider the context of this passage.

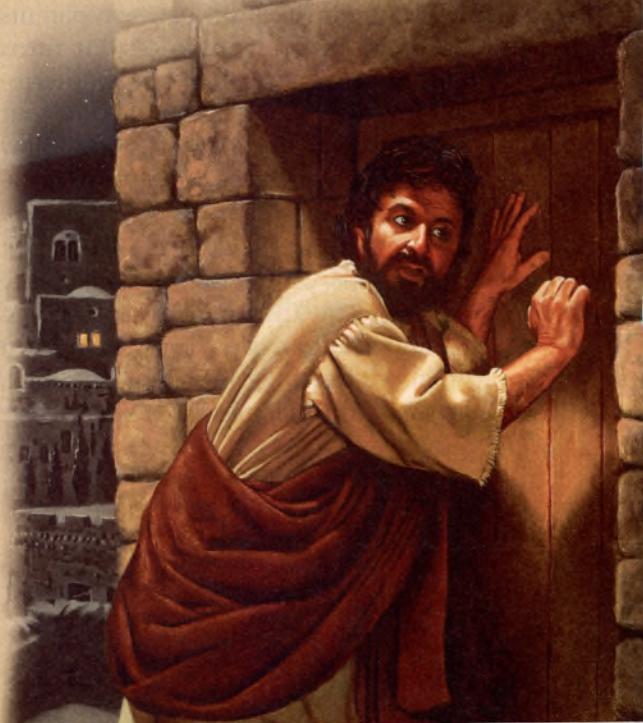
Peter had been arrested by Herod, who had put James to death. So the disciples had good reason to believe that Peter would meet a similar end. Bound by chains, the imprisoned Peter was guarded by four shifts of four soldiers each. Then, one night he was miraculously freed and led out of the prison by an angel. When Peter finally realized what was happening, he said: "Now I actually know that Jehovah sent his angel forth and delivered me out of Herod's hand."—Acts 12:1-11.

Peter immediately went to the house of Mary the mother of John Mark, where a number of the disciples were gathered. When he knocked on the door of the gateway, a servant girl named Rhoda went to answer. Upon recognizing Peter's voice, she ran to tell the others without even letting him in! At first, the disciples could not believe that Peter was at the gate. Instead, they erroneously assumed: "It is his angel."—Acts 12:12-15.

Did the disciples believe that Peter had already been put to death and that his disembodied spirit was at the gate? This could hardly be the case, for Jesus' followers knew the Scriptural truth about the dead—that they are "conscious of nothing at all." (Ecclesiastes 9:5, 10) What, then, could the disciples have meant when they said: "It is his angel"?

Jesus' disciples knew that throughout history, angels rendered personal assistance to God's people. For example, Jacob spoke of "the angel who has been recovering me from all calamity." (Genesis 48:16) And regarding a young child in their midst, Jesus told 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."—Matthew 18:10.

Interestingly, *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* renders the word *ag'ge-los* ("angel") as "messenger." It appears that there was a belief among some Jews that each servant of God had his own angel—in effect, a "guardian angel." Of course, this view is not directly taught in God's Word. Still, it is possible that when the disciples said, "It is his angel," they were assuming that an angelic messenger representing Peter stood at the gate.





Do You Converse With Those You Love?

"OUR ability to communicate with loved ones is decreasing dramatically," reports the Polish weekly *Polityka*. In the United States, it is estimated that marriage mates spend only six minutes a day conversing with each other in a meaningful way. Some authorities think that half of all separations and divorces are the result of this decline.

How about conversation between parents and children? In most instances, "it turns out to be, not a conversation, but an interrogation: How was school? How about your friends?" observes the above report. "How are our children to learn to develop emotional relationships?" it asks.

Since good communication skills do not just happen, how can we improve our ability to converse? The Christian disciple James gave us important advice: "Every man must be swift about hearing, slow about speaking, slow about wrath." (James 1:19) Yes, to have



an upbuilding conversation, we need to listen attentively and not interrupt impatiently or jump to conclusions. Avoid criticism because it can easily smother a conversation. Moreover, Jesus used tactful questions, not to interrogate, but to draw out what was in the heart of his listener and to strengthen the bond between them.—Proverbs 20:5; Matthew 16:13-17; 17:24-27.

Applying the fine principles found in the Bible, take the initiative to converse and communicate with those dear to you. That may result in a warm relationship that will be cherished for many years—even a lifetime.