

APRIL 15, 2002

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

Where
Does
Your
Security
Lie?

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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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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ENGLISH

Where Does Your Security Lie?

In a small West African village, young Josué waves good-bye to his family and friends. He then treks off to the big city in search of financial security. Soon after he arrives, however, his hope dims as he realizes that the city does not have streets paved with gold.*

STTRUGGLING to adjust to city life, Josué becomes quite disillusioned. The big city is far from what he had imagined it would be. All the while, deep in Josué's heart burns a longing to return to his family and friends in that humble village he left behind. But he fears that some villagers will mock him. 'They will call me a failure,' he worries, 'because I couldn't make it in the city.'

Weighing even more heavily on him is the disappointment that his parents may feel. They are counting on him for financial assistance. While trying to cope with this emotional burden, Josué works long hours at a menial job and earns only a fraction of what he had dreamed of. He is exhausted from overwork. And the time left for Christian activities, which he values very highly, dwindles

with each passing week. So far away from the warmth of his family and old friends, he feels sad and alone. He finds that the city has not given him the security that he desired so much.

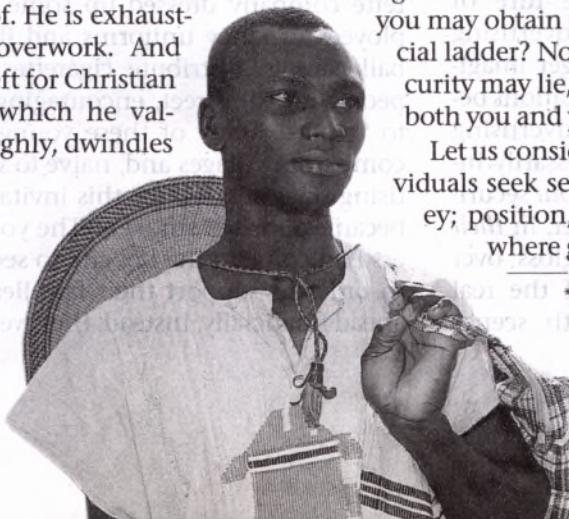
Although names and places vary, Josué's sad story is one that is told and retold. It is not that Josué was being selfish in his desire to move—he was just seeking security. He sincerely felt that his chances in the city were better than in his small village. Of course, sometimes a person may improve his position materially, but that does not mean real security. It certainly did not for Josué, nor will it most likely for the majority of others who try the same thing. This makes us ask, 'What is security?'

Security is perceived differently by different people. One dictionary says that security is "freedom from danger" or "freedom from fear or anxiety." Most people realize that complete "freedom from danger" is nonexistent today. They are satisfied as long as they *feel* secure, despite the threatening situations that may surround them.

What about you? Where do you look for security? Is it found in the city as opposed to the village, as Josué thought? Or is it in money, regardless of where or how you may obtain it? Is it perhaps in climbing the social ladder? No matter where you believe your security may lie, how long will that security last for both you and your family?

Let us consider three ways in which many individuals seek security—geographic location; money; position, or status. Then we will examine where genuine, permanent security lies.

* Name has been changed.



Feeling Secure Now Being Secure Forever

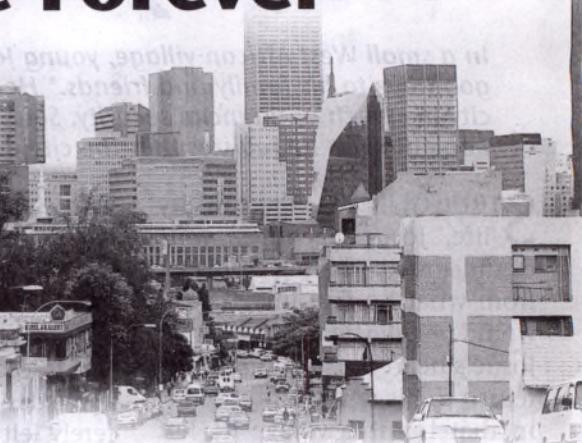
WHY is security often elusive and, if found, temporary? Could it be that our sense of security is based on imagination—on what we hope to attain rather than on what is attainable? Such a delusion might be called living in a dream world.

Imagination allows the mind to leave the reality of life with its insecurities and to enter a beautiful, secure condition, dismissing anything that may spoil the dream. Often, though, the problems of the real world suddenly intrude on this dream world and mercilessly obliterate the feeling of well-being, awakening the dreamer to sober reality.

Let us look at one area where people seek security—geographic location. For example, the big city may look promising, triggering visions of good times, large paychecks, and fancy living quarters. Yes, that could seem to offer long-awaited security. But is this vision realistic?

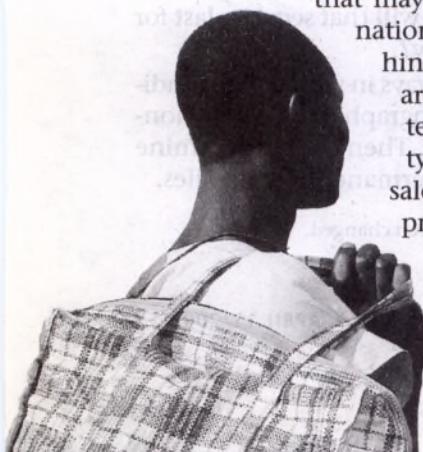
Location—Big City or Big Dreams?

In developing countries, the lure of the big city is promoted by advertising that may tempt eager imaginations. Organizations behind such advertising are not necessarily interested in *your* security but, rather, in *their* sales. They gloss over problems of the real world with scenes



of success depicting security. Thus, security becomes associated with their advertised product and the big city.

Consider the following example. Officials in one West African city put up billboards vividly illustrating that smoking is in reality no different from burning up hard-earned money. That was part of a campaign to warn its citizens against smoking. Cigarette manufacturers and sellers countered by posting cleverly designed billboards that showed smokers in eye-appealing scenes of happiness and success. In addition, one cigarette company dressed up some of its employees in fancy uniforms and flashy baseball caps to distribute cigarettes to young people on the street, encouraging each one to "try it." Many of these young ones had come from villages and, naive to slick advertising schemes, fell for this invitation. They became addicted smokers. The young villagers had come to the big city to seek security in order to support their families or to get ahead financially. Instead, they were burning



up much of the money they could have used for better purposes.

Advertisements portraying a successful life in the big city do not always originate with merchants. They may come from the mouths of people who have moved to the big city and who are embarrassed to return to their home village. Not wanting to appear to be failures, they brag about supposed wealth and achievements they have found in the city. A closer examination of their claimed status, however, reveals that their present life-style is not an improvement over their former village life; they are struggling financially like most other city dwellers.

It is especially in large cities that the newly arrived security seekers fall prey to the unscrupulous. Why? By and large, they have not had time to develop close friendships and are far away from family members. So they have no advisers who might help them to avoid the pitfalls of materialistic urban living.

Josué did not fall into the trap of smoking. Furthermore, he came to realize that the demands of city life were far beyond his capacity to handle successfully. In his case, at best, the only thing that the city could really offer him was big, unfulfilled dreams. He recognized that he did not have genuine security in the city; he just did not belong there. Feelings of emptiness, inferiority, and failure took over, and he eventually swallowed his pride and returned to the village.

He had been fearful that he would be mocked. Instead, his family and real friends welcomed him home with open arms. Thanks to the warmth of his family, the familiar surroundings of the village, and the love of his friends in the Christian congregation, he soon felt much more secure than in the big city, where the dreams of many turn into nightmares. To his surprise, working hard with his father in the fields actually brought him and his family a higher income than his net gain would have been in the city.

Money—What Is the Real Problem?

Will money give you a feeling of security? Liz from Canada states: "As a young person, I believed that money brought freedom from worry." She fell in love with a man who was financially secure. Soon they married. Did she feel secure? Liz continues: "When I married, we had a beautiful home and two cars, and our financial situation allowed us freedom to enjoy virtually anything in the way of material things, travel, and recreation. Oddly enough, I still worried about money." She explains why: "We had so much to lose. *It seems that the more you have, the less secure you feel.* Money did not bring freedom from worry or anxiety."

If you feel that you do not have enough money to be secure, ask yourself, 'What is the real problem? Is it really a lack of money, or is it a lack of wise money management?' Reflecting on her past, Liz says: "I now realize that the source of my family's problems when I was a child was poor money management. We purchased on credit, and therefore we always had a debt hanging over our heads. This brought anxiety."

Today, however, Liz and her husband feel much more secure, although they have less money. When they learned the truth of God's Word, they stopped listening to enticing claims about money and began listening to God's wisdom, including these words: "As for the one listening to me, he will reside in security and be undisturbed from dread of calamity." (Proverbs 1:33) They wanted their life to have more meaning than a large



bank account could give. Now, as missionaries in a distant land, Liz and her husband are teaching rich and poor people alike that Jehovah God will soon bring about genuine security earth wide. This activity provides deep satisfaction and stability that stem from a superior purpose and surpassing values, not from financial gain.

Remember this basic truth: Being rich with God is far more valuable than having material riches. Throughout the Sacred Scriptures, the emphasis is placed, not on possess-

ing material riches, but on having a good standing with Jehovah, one that we can maintain by continually doing the divine will in faith. Christ Jesus encouraged us to be "rich toward God" and to store up "treasure in the heavens."—Luke 12:21, 33.

Position—Where Are You Going?

If you are tempted to feel that climbing the social ladder is the way to security, ask yourself: 'Who on the ladder is actually at the point of real security? How much high-

Told in Benin

This story has been told thousands of times with many variations. Recently, one senior villager in Benin, West Africa, related the following version to some younger ones.

The fisherman returns home in his pirogue and is met by a foreign expert serving in this developing country. The expert asks the fisherman why he is back so early. He replies that he could have stayed out longer but that he had caught enough to care for his family.

"And now, what do you do with all your time anyway?" the expert asks.

The fisherman responds: "Well, I do a little fishing. I play with my children. We all have a siesta when it gets hot. In the evening, we have supper together. Later, I get together with my friends for some music, and so on."

The expert interrupts: "Look, I have a university degree and have studied these matters. I want to help you. You should stay out fishing longer. You would earn more and soon be able to purchase a bigger boat than this pirogue. With a bigger boat, you would earn still more and soon be able to build up a fleet of trawlers."

"And then?" the fisherman inquires.

"Then, instead of selling fish through a middleman, you could negotiate directly with the factory or even start your own fish-processing plant. You would be able to leave your village and move to Cotonou, or Paris, or New York and run the whole thing from there. You could even consider putting your business on the stock market and earn millions."

"How long would that all take?" the fisherman asks.

"Perhaps 15 to 20 years," the expert answers.

"And then?" the fisherman continues.

"That is when life gets interesting," the expert explains. "Then you could retire. You could move away from the hustle and bustle of it all to some remote village."

"And what then?" asks the fisherman.

"Then you have time to do a little fishing, play with your children, have a siesta when it gets hot, have supper with the family, and get together with friends for some music."





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Does promotion bring security?

er must I climb to attain it?" A successful career may give you a false sense of security, leading to disappointment or, worse, a disastrous fall.

Actual experiences show that a good name with God affords much more security than a name with man. Only Jehovah can grant humans the gift of life eternal. That involves writing our name, not in some social directory, but in God's book of life.—Exodus 32:32; Revelation 3:5.

When you put wishful thinking aside, how do you appraise your present situation, and what can you honestly expect from the future? No one has everything. As one wise Christian put it, "I had to learn that life is never this AND that but this OR that." Stop for a moment and read the box "Told in Benin."

Now answer these questions: What is an important destination, or goal, in my life? What is the most direct route to get there? Could it be that I am on a long, insecure detour and that what I really want and what is realistically possible can be attained by a less complicated route?

After giving counsel on the relative value of material things compared with the value of spiritual things, Jesus said to keep the eye "simple," or "in focus." (Matthew 6:22; footnote) He made clear that the main things in life are spiritual values and goals that center on God's name and on his Kingdom. (Matthew 6:9, 10) Other things are less important or, as it were, out of focus.

Many cameras today focus automatically on things both far and near. Are you inclined to be like that? Is almost everything that you view "in focus"—that is, important, desirable and, with some wishful thinking, attainable? If this is even partially so, the important object for Christians, the Kingdom, can easily be lost in a clutter of other images, each vying for your attention. Jesus' strong admonition was: "Keep on, then, seeking first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these other things will be added to you."—Matthew 6:33.

Secure Now and Forever

We may all dream of better things for ourselves and our loved ones. However, the fact that we are imperfect, live in an imperfect world, and have a limited life span forces us to limit the things we can realistically hope to attain. A Bible writer explained thousands of years ago: "I returned to see under the sun that the swift do not have the race, nor the mighty ones the battle, nor do the wise also have the food, nor do the understanding ones also have the riches, nor do even those having knowledge have the favor; because time and unforeseen occurrence befall them all."—Ecclesiastes 9:11.

Sometimes we become so consumed by the daily grind of life that we forget to look at the larger picture of who we are and what we really need in order to feel genuinely secure. Consider these ancient words of wisdom: "If you love money, you will never be satisfied; if you long to be rich, you will never get all you

want. It is useless. A working man may or may not have enough to eat, but at least he can get a good night's sleep. A rich man, however, has so much that he stays awake worrying." (Ecclesiastes 5:10, 12, *Today's English Version*) Yes, where does your security lie?

If your situation is somewhat similar to Josué's unrealistic dream, can you change your plans? Those who really love you will be supportive, just as Josué's family and friends in the Christian congregation were. You may find greater security in humble surroundings together with those who love you than in the city with those who may try to take advantage of you.

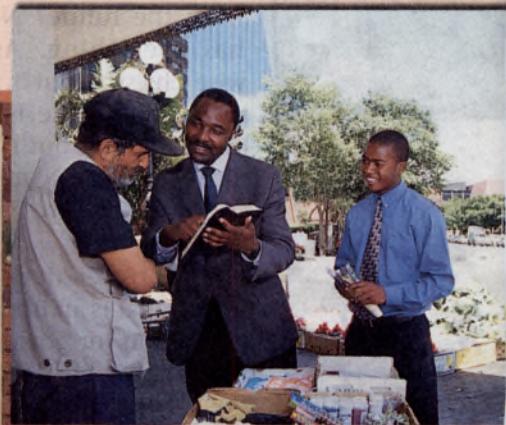
If you already have an abundance, as did Liz and her husband, can you adjust your lifestyle to channel more time and energy into helping people, whether rich or poor, to learn about the Kingdom, the means of gaining real security?

If you have been climbing the social or corporate ladder, you might want to reflect hon-

estly on what is motivating you. Granted, some conveniences at your disposal may add enjoyment to life. Yet, are you able to keep the Kingdom—the true means of attaining permanent security—in focus? Recall Jesus' words: "There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving." (Acts 20:35) If you involve yourself in the various activities in the Christian congregation, you will experience rewarding security.

Those putting full trust in Jehovah and his Kingdom thrive in a heartwarming security now and look forward to complete security in the future. The psalmist said: "I have placed Jehovah in front of me constantly. Because he is at my right hand, I shall not be made to totter. Therefore my heart does rejoice, and my glory is inclined to be joyful. Also, my own flesh will reside in security."

—Psalm 16:8, 9.



Your fellow Christians
are truly interested
in your security



Glorifying God in the Philippine Mountains

If you think of the Philippines as an island nation, you are right. But it is also a country of impressive mountains. For Jehovah's Witnesses, preaching in the cities and lowland areas has been relatively easy and effective. However, the mountain regions are a different story.

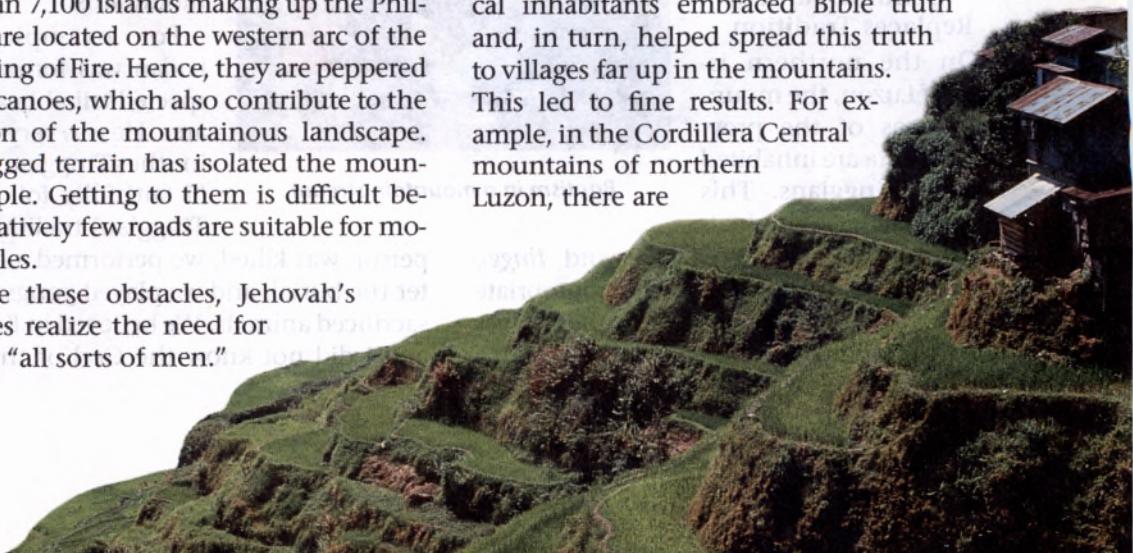
THE glorious mountains of the country stand in stark contrast with the sandy beaches, the coral reefs, the fishing villages, and the bustling towns of the island plains. The mountains also stand as a challenging obstacle to preaching the "good news" of God's Kingdom.—Matthew 24:14.

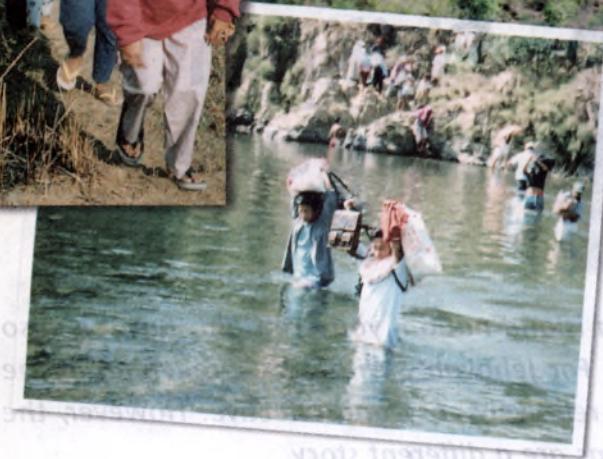
The Philippine Islands are located at a point where two tectonic plates collide. Buckling of the land in this area has created sharp mountain ridges on the larger islands. The more than 7,100 islands making up the Philippines are located on the western arc of the Pacific Ring of Fire. Hence, they are peppered with volcanoes, which also contribute to the formation of the mountainous landscape. Such rugged terrain has isolated the mountain people. Getting to them is difficult because relatively few roads are suitable for motor vehicles.

Despite these obstacles, Jehovah's Witnesses realize the need for reaching "all sorts of men."

(1 Timothy 2:4) Thus, Witnesses in the Philippines have worked in harmony with the spirit of Isaiah 42:11, 12: "Let the inhabitants of the crag cry out in joy. From the top of the mountains let people cry aloud. Let them attribute to Jehovah glory, and in the islands let them tell forth even his praise."

Concentrated efforts to witness to the people of the mountains started over 50 years ago. After World War II, missionaries helped give impetus to the work. Many local inhabitants embraced Bible truth and, in turn, helped spread this truth to villages far up in the mountains. This led to fine results. For example, in the Cordillera Central mountains of northern Luzon, there are





Preaching in the mountains involves hiking for hours across rugged terrain

over 6,000 publishers of the good news. Most of them are native peoples, including the Ibaloi, Ifugao, and Kalinga.

However, there are still hard-to-reach areas up in the mountains. The people living there have not been forgotten. How have some of them been reached, and what has been the response?

Genuine Faith Replaces Tradition

On the northern island of Luzon, the mountain areas of the province of Abra are inhabited by the Tinggians. This name may have originated from the ancient Malay word *tinggi*, which means "mountain." Very appropriate indeed! The people also refer to themselves and their language as Itneg. They believe in a



Baptism in a mountain stream

god called Kabunian, and daily life is greatly influenced by superstitions. For example, if a person planning to go somewhere sneezes, it is a bad omen. He must wait a couple of hours for the bad effect to wear off.

In 1572, the Spanish came with Catholicism, but they failed to teach genuine Christianity to the Tinggians. Those who did become Catholics hung on to their belief in Kabunian and followed native customs. Accurate knowledge about the Bible first reached these people in the 1930's when Jehovah's Witnesses began spreading the Kingdom message in those mountains. Many sincere Tinggians have since begun glorifying Jehovah "from the top of the mountains."

For example, Lingbaoan was formerly a respected tribal head in the area. He was very involved in the Tinggian culture. "I faithfully followed the Tinggian traditions. If a person was killed, we performed a dance after the burial, and we played gongs. We also sacrificed animals. We believed in Kabunian, and I did not know the God of the Bible."

This was despite the fact that he was a nominal Catholic.

Ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses came to preach in that area. They met Lingbaoan and encouraged him to read the Bible. He recalls: "It was the Bible that convinced me that Jehovah is the true God." A Witness then studied the Bible with him, and Lingbaoan made the decision to serve the true God. He left his former ways, including his position as tribal leader, a step that angered the local priest and Lingbaoan's former associates. Lingbaoan, however, was determined to follow the truths he had found in the Bible. He now serves as a congregation elder.

Seven Days and Six Nights

Although some parts of Abra now quite regularly hear the good news, others are remote and only occasionally get a witness. Some time ago, an effort was made to reach one of these areas. A group of 35 Witnesses set out to preach in unassigned territory in Tineg, Abra, a place that had not been reached for 27 years.

This preaching expedition was carried out on foot, over a period of seven days. Imagine crossing hanging bridges and deep rivers and walking hours across mountain ridges while carrying your supplies—all to preach the good news to those who rarely hear it! Of the six nights during the trek, four were spent sleeping in the open mountain air.

Although the hardy Witnesses making up the expedition carried some food, they could not carry enough for the entire trip. This was not a problem, however, because people were more than happy to exchange food for Bible-based publications. The Witnesses received plenty of farm produce, fish, and deer meat. Although there were some inconveniences, the group said: "These sacrifices were compensated for by the overflowing joy we experienced."



Globe: Mountain High Maps® Copyright © 1997 Digital Wisdom, Inc.

During the seven days, these ministers witnessed in ten villages, placing 60 books, 186 magazines, 50 brochures, and many tracts. They demonstrated Bible studies to 74 groups of people. In the town of Tineg, at the request of the local officials and some prominent citizens, a congregation meeting was held with 78 present. Most attending were teachers and policemen. Hopefully, many more Tinggians will yet join those 'crying out' and praising Jehovah from the mountain tops.

Something Better Than Gold

Farther south in the Philippines are some islands where the Spanish found gold. This gave rise to the name Mindoro, a contraction of the Spanish *mina de oro*, or "gold mine." However, something better than gold is now being found in those islands—people who want to serve the true God, Jehovah.

About 125,000 indigenous people called Mangyans reside in the remote forest interior of Mindoro. They live a simple life, mostly keep to themselves, and have their own language. Most are animists and polytheists, and they believe in various spirits in nature.

Occasionally, when they lack food or other supplies, individual Mangyans come down to the coastal areas to look for work. This was the case with Pailing, who is from a subgroup of Mangyans called Batangan. He grew up among his people back in the mountain forests, and he subscribed to Batangan beliefs and practices. The common clothing was a simple loin cloth. To ensure a good crop, Batangan tradition required that worshipers kill a chicken, letting the blood drip into water while they prayed.

Pailing no longer follows those traditions. Why not? When he went to the lowlands, he found work with families of Jehovah's Witnesses. One of these families took advantage of this situation to introduce Bible truth to Pailing. He responded well and really appreciated learning about Jehovah's purpose for man and the earth. They arranged for him to go to elementary school, as well as study the Bible. Pailing was baptized as one of Jehovah's Witnesses at the age of 24. At the age of 30, he was in his second year of high school, and he made the school his preaching territory. Now they call him Rolando (a lowland name).

If you meet Rolando, you will find a well-dressed smiling minister who is serving as a full-time preacher and as a ministerial servant in one of the congregations on Mindoro. Rolando recently went back to the mountains, not to join with the Batangans in their traditions, but to share with them life-giving truths from the Bible.

Eager to Get a Kingdom Hall

The province of Bukidnon—meaning "People of the Mountains" in Cebuano—is located on the southern island of Mindanao. This is an area of mountains, canyons, river valleys, and plateaus. The fertile land supports crops of pineapples, corn, coffee, rice, and bananas. The highland tribes of Ta-

laandig and Higaonon live there. These people too need to learn about Jehovah. Recently, near the town of Talakag, this opportunity opened up in a very interesting way.

Witnesses going up to the highlands found a cool climate but a warm welcome. The local people professed to believe in the almighty God, the Father, but they did not know his name. Since they spend most of their time in the forest, this was the first time they met Jehovah's Witnesses. God's name was introduced to them, as well as his wonderful purpose in connection with the Kingdom. The people were delighted, so it was decided that further visits should be made to their village.

Several visits ensued. As a result, the locals offered a site for a "house" of Jehovah's Witnesses. The Witnesses gladly accepted the offer. The site was on the top of the highest hill in the area, overlooking the road. The building was constructed of wood, bamboo, and palm leaves. The project was completed in three months and ten days. The sign "Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses" was prominent in front of the building. Think about it, a Kingdom Hall erected before a congregation was formed!

Since then, a congregation elder who is a full-time minister moved there, as did a ministerial servant. Along with Witnesses from neighboring areas, they worked toward the goal of forming a congregation. This became a reality in August of 1998. A small congregation is now making full use of this Kingdom Hall, helping mountain people to learn the Bible's truths.

Truly, Jehovah has mightily used his willing servants in the Philippines to spread the Kingdom truth even in hard-to-reach mountains. We are reminded of Isaiah 52:7, which says: "How comely upon the mountains are the feet of the one bringing good news."

DIVINE LAWS ARE FOR OUR BENEFIT

"How I do love your law!"—PSALM 119:97.

OBEYING divine laws is not popular today. For many, deferring to an invisible higher authority seems pointless. We live in an era of moral relativism, of blurred boundaries between right and wrong, and of huge gray areas. (Proverbs 17:15; Isaiah 5:20) Reflecting a way of thinking that is common in many secularized societies, a recent poll noted that "most Americans want to decide for themselves what is right, good and meaningful." They opt for "no strong God. No strong rules. No strong superiors, moral or otherwise." A social analyst observed that today "individuals are expected to determine for themselves what it means to lead a good and virtuous life." He continued: "Any form of higher authority has to tailor its commandments to the needs of real people."²

Since so many are second-guessing the value of Jehovah's laws, we need to fortify our conviction that divine standards are for our benefit. It is of interest to consider the account where law is first mentioned in the Bible. At Genesis 26:5, we read God's words: "Abraham . . . continued to keep his obliga-



Abraham was richly blessed for obeying Jehovah's law

tions to me, my commands, my statutes, and my laws." Those words were uttered centuries before Jehovah gave a detailed law code to Abraham's descendants. How did God reward Abraham's obedience, including obedience to His laws? Jehovah God promised him: "By means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:18) Obedience to divine laws is thus closely linked to divine blessing and approval.

³ One of the psalmists—likely a prince of Judah and a future king—expressed a feeling that is not usually associated with law. He exclaimed to God: "How I do love your law!" (Psalm 119:97) This was no mere emotional outburst. It was an expression of love for God's will as set out in his law. Jesus Christ, the perfect Son of God, had similar feelings. Jesus was prophetically described as saying: "To do your will, O my God, I have delighted, and your law is within my inward parts." (Psalm 40:8; Hebrews 10:9) What about us? Do we find delight in doing God's will? Are we convinced of the usefulness and benefits of Jehovah's laws? What place does obedience to God's laws have in

1. What is the prevalent attitude toward obedience to divine laws?

2. How is the first mention of law in the Bible closely related to divine blessing and approval?

3. (a) What feeling toward Jehovah's law did one psalmist express? (b) What questions merit our attention?

our worship, in our daily life, in our decision-making, and in our relationships with others? To love divine law, we do well to understand why God has the right to formulate and enforce laws.

Jehovah—The Rightful Lawgiver

⁴ As the Creator, Jehovah is the ultimate, rightful Lawgiver in the universe. (Revelation 4:11) The prophet Isaiah stated: "Jehovah is our Statute-giver." (Isaiah 33:22) He has set the physical laws governing animate and inanimate creation. (Job 38:4-38; 39:1-12; Psalm 104:5-19) As a creation of God, man is subject to Jehovah's physical laws. And although man is a free moral agent, capable of reasoning on his own, he is happy only when he subjects himself to God's moral and spiritual laws.—Romans 12:1; 1 Corinthians 2:14-16.

⁵ As we know, Jehovah's physical laws are unbreakable. (Jeremiah 33:20, 21) If a person goes contrary to some physical laws, such as the law of gravity, he experiences the consequences. Similarly, the moral laws of God are irrevocable and cannot be circumvented or violated with impunity. They are enforced as surely as are his natural laws, though the outcome may not be as immediate. "God is not one to be mocked. For whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap."—Galatians 6:7; 1 Timothy 5:24.

The Scope of Jehovah's Law

⁶ An outstanding expression of divine law was the Law of Moses. (Romans 7:12) In time, Jehovah God replaced the Mosaic Law with "the law of the Christ."* (Galatians 6:2; 1 Co-

* For a detailed discussion of "the law of the Christ," see *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1996, pages 14-24.

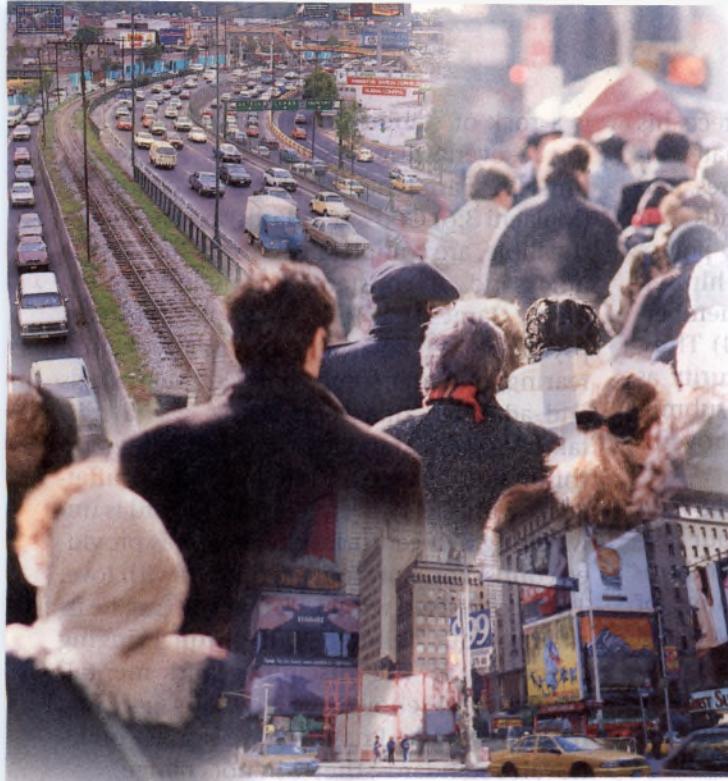
4. Why is Jehovah the ultimate, rightful Lawgiver?
5. How does the principle at Galatians 6:7 prove true regarding divine laws?
6. How inclusive are divine laws?

rinthians 9:21) As Christians under "the perfect law that belongs to freedom," we appreciate that God does not limit his directives to certain aspects of our life, such as doctrinal beliefs or ceremonial rites. His standards cover all aspects of life, including family affairs, business dealings, conduct toward those of the opposite sex, attitudes toward fellow Christians, and participation in true worship. —James 1:25, 27.

⁷ For example, the Bible says: "Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men kept for unnatural purposes, nor men who lie with men, nor thieves, nor greedy persons, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit God's kingdom." (1 Corinthians 6:9, 10) Yes, adultery and fornication are not just "love affairs." Homosexual acts are not merely an "alternative lifestyle." These are violations of Jehovah's law. And so are such things as stealing, lying, and slander. (Psalm 101:5; Colossians 3:9; 1 Peter 4:15) James condemned bragging, while Paul advised us to avoid foolish talking and obscene jesting. (Ephesians 5:4; James 4:16) For Christians, all these rules of conduct are part of the perfect law of God.—Psalm 19:7.

⁸ Such fundamental regulations in Jehovah's Word reveal that his law is much more than just a list of cold, legalistic statutes. It forms the basis for a balanced, productive life, with all aspects of conduct being affected for good. Divine law is edifying, ethical, and instructive. (Psalm 119:72) The word "law" as used by the psalmist is translated from the Hebrew word *toh·rah'*. One Bible scholar says: "This word is formed from a verb which means to direct, to guide, to aim, to shoot forwards. Its . . . meaning, then, would be a rule of conduct." To the psalmist the law was a gift

7. Give examples of important divine laws.
8. (a) What is the nature of Jehovah's law?
(b) What is the basic meaning behind the Hebrew word for "law"?



Anxieties of today's busy life distract many from divine law

independent of divine guidance: "There exists a way that is upright before a man, but the ways of death are the end of it afterward."—Proverbs 14:12.

Reasons for Cherishing Jehovah's Law

¹¹ We do well to cultivate a deep desire to understand Jehovah's law. The psalmist expressed such a yearning when he said: "Uncover my eyes, that I may look at the wonderful things out of your law." (Psalm 119:18) The more we come to know God and his ways, the deeper will be our appreciation of the truth of Isaiah's words:

"I, Jehovah, am your God, the One teaching you to benefit yourself, the One causing you to tread in the way in which you should walk. O if only you would actually pay attention to my commandments!" (Isaiah 48:17, 18) It is Jehovah's earnest desire that his people avoid calamity and enjoy life by paying attention to his commandments. Let us examine some major reasons why we should cherish God's law.

¹² *Divine law comes from the One who knows us best.* Since Jehovah is our Creator, it is logical that he would know humans through and through. (Psalm 139:1, 2; Acts 17:24-28) Close friends, relatives, even parents cannot know us as well as Jehovah does. Why, God knows us even better than we know ourselves! Our Maker has unparalleled comprehension of our spiritual, emotional,

from God. Should we not esteem it similarly, allowing it to shape our life pattern?

⁹ All creatures need dependable direction and trustworthy guidance. This is true of Jesus and other angels, who are higher than man. (Psalm 8:5; John 5:30; 6:38; Hebrews 2:7; Revelation 22:8, 9) If these perfect creatures can benefit from divine guidance, how much more that is so for imperfect humans! Human history and our personal experience have proved the validity of the prophet Jeremiah's observation: "I well know, O Jehovah, that to earthling man his way does not belong. It does not belong to man who is walking even to direct his step."—Jeremiah 10:23.

¹⁰ If we desire to have a delightful and successful life, we must look to God for guidance. King Solomon recognized the danger of living according to personal standards,

9, 10. (a) Why do we need dependable direction? (b) How only can we have a delightful and successful life?

11. Why should we desire to understand God's law? 12. How does Jehovah's knowledge of us make him the best Lawgiver?

mental, and physical needs. As he directs his attention to us, he shows an intimate understanding of our makeup, our desires, and our aspirations. Jehovah understands our limitations, but he also knows our potential for good. Says the psalmist: "He himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14) Thus, we can have a sense of spiritual security as we seek to walk in his law, willingly submitting ourselves to divine guidance.—Proverbs 3:19-26.

¹³ *Divine law comes from the One who loves us.* God is deeply concerned about our lasting welfare. Did he not at great cost to himself give his Son as "a ransom in exchange for many"? (Matthew 20:28) Has Jehovah not promised that 'he will not let us be tempted beyond what we can bear'? (1 Corinthians 10:13) Does not the Bible assure us that he 'cares for us'? (1 Peter 5:7) No one is more lovingly interested in providing beneficial guidelines for human creation than Jehovah is. He knows what is good for us and where the line between happiness and sorrow is drawn. Even though we are imperfect and make mistakes, if we pursue righteousness, he shows his love for us in ways that will result in life and blessings.—Ezekiel 33:11.

¹⁴ *God's law is reassuringly unchangeable.* In the turbulent times in which we live, Jehovah

13. Why can we be confident that Jehovah has our best interests at heart?
14. In what important way does God's law differ from human ideas?

Do You Recall?

- Why can we trust that God's laws are for our benefit?
- For what reasons should we cherish Jehovah's law?
- In what ways are God's laws beneficial?

is a rock of stability, existing from everlasting to everlasting. (Psalm 90:2) He said of himself: "I am Jehovah; I have not changed." (Malachi 3:6) God's standards, as recorded in the Bible, are completely reliable—unlike the quicksand of constantly changing human ideas. (James 1:17) For example, for years psychologists advocated permissive child rearing, but later some changed their minds and admitted that their advice was a mistake. Worldly standards and guidelines on this matter sway to and fro as though buffeted by winds. However, Jehovah's Word is unwavering. For centuries the Bible has provided counsel on how to rear children with love. The apostle Paul wrote: "Fathers, do not be irritating your children, but go on bringing them up in the discipline and mental-regulating of Jehovah." (Ephesians 6:4) How reassuring it is to know that we can rely on Jehovah's standards; they will not change!

Blessings for Those Obeying God's Laws

¹⁵ Through his prophet Isaiah, God said: "My word that goes forth from my mouth ... will have certain success." (Isaiah 55:11) Just as surely, when we earnestly strive to follow the standards found in his Word, we will have success, accomplish good, and find happiness.

¹⁶ Consider how God's laws are a sound guide to a successful marriage. "Let marriage be honorable among all," wrote Paul, "and the marriage bed be without defilement, for God will judge fornicators and adulterers." (Hebrews 13:4) Marriage mates are to be respectful and loving toward each other: "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." (Ephesians 5:33) The kind of love that

- 15, 16. (a) What will result if we apply Jehovah's standards? (b) How can God's laws prove to be a sound guide in marriage?

is needed is described at 1 Corinthians 13:4-8: "Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." A marriage marked by this kind of love will not fail.

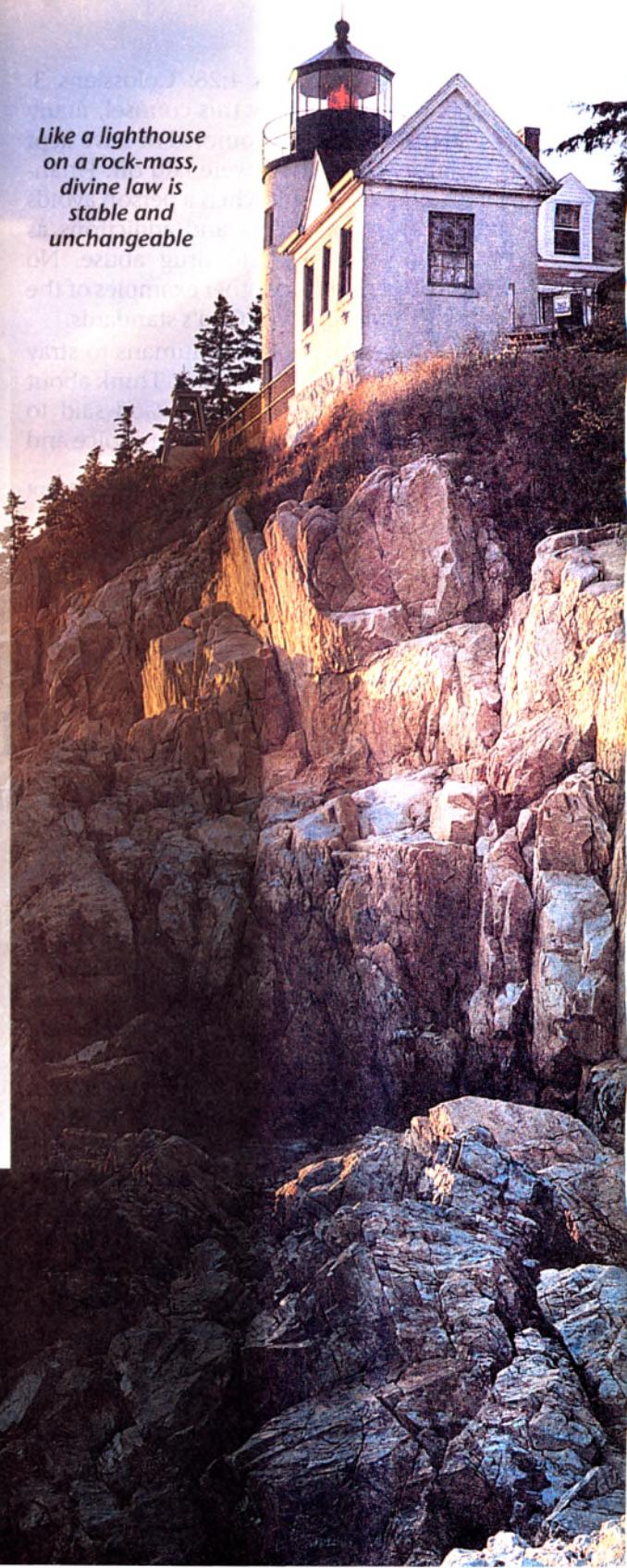
¹⁷ Another evidence that Jehovah's standards are beneficial, is the fact that he condemns drunkenness. He even disapproves of 'giving oneself to a lot of wine.' (1 Timothy 3:3; 8; Romans 13:13) Many who ignore God's standards on this matter suffer diseases caused or aggravated by excessive drinking. Ignoring the Bible's counsel on moderation, some have got into the habit of heavy drinking to "help them relax." The problems resulting from overdrinking are many, including loss of respect, strained family relationships or family breakup, wasted income, and loss of employment. (Proverbs 23:19-21, 29-35) Are not Jehovah's standards regarding the use of alcohol a safeguard?

¹⁸ God's standards have also proved to be practical in financial matters. The Bible urges Christians to be honest and diligent.

17. What benefits come from applying Jehovah's standards on the use of alcohol?

18. Are God's laws practical in financial matters? Explain.

*Like a lighthouse
on a rock-mass,
divine law is
stable and
unchangeable*



(Luke 16:10; Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:23) Because they follow this counsel, many Christians have been promoted or have kept their jobs when others were laid off. Financial benefits also result when a person avoids such unscriptural habits and addictions as gambling, smoking, and drug abuse. No doubt you can think of other examples of the economic practicality of God's standards.

¹⁹ It is easy for imperfect humans to stray from God's laws and standards. Think about the Israelites at Mount Sinai. God said to them: "If you will strictly obey my voice and

^{19, 20.} Why is it the course of wisdom to accept and hold to divine laws?

will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples." They responded: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." Yet, how contrary was the course they chose to follow! (Exodus 19:5, 8; Psalm 106:12-43) In contrast, let us accept and hold to God's standards.

²⁰ The course of wisdom and happiness is to stick closely to the incomparable laws that Jehovah has provided to help guide our lives. (Psalm 19:7-11) In order to do this successfully, we also need to appreciate the value of godly principles. This is the subject of the following article.

GUIDE YOUR STEPS BY GODLY PRINCIPLES

"[Jehovah is] teaching you to benefit yourself."—ISAIAH 48:17.

AS SCIENTISTS labor to unlock the secrets of the universe, they are amazed by the tremendous amount of energy that is packed in the cosmos around us. Our sun—a medium-sized star—produces as much energy as "100 billion hydrogen bombs exploding every second." The Creator can control and direct such massive heavenly bodies by his sheer power. (Job 38:32; Isaiah 40:26) What about us humans, gifted with free will, moral capacity, reason, and the potential for spirituality? In what way has our Maker seen fit to lead us? He lovingly guides us by his perfect laws and lofty principles, in conjunction with our well-trained conscience. —2 Samuel 22:31; Romans 2:14, 15.

1. How does the Creator lead humans?

² God finds delight in intelligent creatures who choose to obey him. (Proverbs 27:11) Instead of programming us to submit blindly as mindless robots, Jehovah endowed us with free will so that we can make informed decisions to do what is right.—Hebrews 5:14.

³ Jesus, who perfectly reflected his Father, said to his disciples: "You are my friends if you do what I am commanding you. I no longer call you slaves." (John 15:14, 15) In ancient times, a slave had little choice but to obey the orders of his master. On the other hand, friendship is forged by the display of qualities that appeal to the heart. We can become Jehovah's friends. (James 2:

2, 3. In what kind of obedience does God find delight?

23) This friendship is strengthened by mutual love. Jesus linked obedience to God with love when he said: "If anyone loves me, he will observe my word, and my Father will love him." (John 14:23) To that end—and to guide us safely—Jehovah invites us to live by his principles.

Godly Principles

⁴ What are principles? A principle is defined as "a general or fundamental truth; a comprehensive and fundamental law, doctrine, or assumption on which others are based or from which others are derived." (*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*) A careful study of the Bible reveals that our heavenly Father provides fundamental directives that cover a variety of situations and aspects of life. He does this with our eternal benefit in view. That is in line with what wise King Solomon wrote: "Hear, my son, and accept my sayings. Then for you the years of life will become many. I will instruct you even in the way of wisdom; I will cause you to tread in the tracks of uprightness." (Proverbs 4:10, 11) The key principles provided by Jehovah have a bearing on our relationship with him and with fellow humans, our worship, and our everyday lives. (Psalm 1:1) Let us consider some of those fundamental principles.

⁵ Regarding our relationship with Jehovah, Jesus stated: "You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind." (Matthew 22:37) Additionally, God provides principles related to our dealings with fellow humans, such as the Golden Rule: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them." (Matthew 7:12; Galatians 6:10; Titus 3:2) With respect to worship, we are admonished:

4. How would you describe principles?
5. Give examples of some fundamental principles.

"Let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together." (Hebrews 10:24, 25) As to everyday aspects of our life, the apostle Paul says: "Whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory." (1 Corinthians 10:31) There are countless other principles in God's Word.

⁶ Principles are living, essential truths, and wise Christians learn to love them. Jehovah inspired Solomon to write: "To my words do pay attention. To my sayings incline your ear. May they not get away from your eyes. Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those finding them and health to all their flesh." (Proverbs 4:20-22) How do principles differ from laws? Principles provide the basis for laws. Rules, which tend to be specific, may be for some particular time or situation, but principles are timeless. (Psalm 119:111) Divine principles do not become outdated or pass away. The inspired words of the prophet Isaiah prove true: "The green grass has dried up, the blossom has withered; but as for the word of our God, it will last to time indefinite."—Isaiah 40:8.

Think and Act on the Basis of Principles

⁷ Time and again, "the word of our God" encourages us to think and act on the basis of principles. When Jesus was asked to summarize the Law, he made two succinct statements—one emphasizing love for Jehovah, the other stressing love for fellowman. (Matthew 22:37-40) In doing so, Jesus partially quoted from an earlier brief summary of basic tenets of the Mosaic Law, stated at Deuteronomy 6:4, 5: "Jehovah our God is one Jehovah. And you must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all

6. How are principles distinguished from laws?
7. How does God's Word encourage us to think and act on the basis of principles?

your vital force." Evidently, Jesus also had in mind God's directive found at Leviticus 19:18. In the clear, terse, and powerful ending of the book of Ecclesiastes, King Solomon's words epitomize a host of divine laws: "The conclusion of the matter, everything having been heard, is: Fear the true God and keep his commandments. For this is the whole obligation of man. For the true God himself will bring every sort of work into the judgment in relation to every hidden thing, as to whether it is good or bad."—Ecclesiastes 12:13, 14; Micah 6:8.

⁸ Having a firm grasp of such basic principles can help us to understand and apply more specific directives. Furthermore, if we do not thoroughly comprehend and accept basic principles, we might not be able to make sound decisions and our faith may be easily shaken. (Ephesians 4:14) If we fix such principles in our mind and heart, we will be ready to use them in making decisions. When we apply them with understanding, they bring success.—Joshua 1:8; Proverbs 4:1-9.

⁹ Discerning and applying Bible principles is not as easy as following a set of laws. As imperfect humans we may shy away from the effort required to reason on principles. We may prefer the convenience of a rule when we are faced with a decision or a dilemma. Sometimes we may seek direction from a mature Christian—maybe a congregation elder—expecting to receive a specific rule that applies to our situation. Yet, the Bible or Bible-based publications may not provide a definite rule, and even if we are given one, it might not be a blanket guide for all times and under all circumstances. You may remember that a certain man asked Jesus: "Teacher, tell

8. Why is it a protection to have a firm grasp of basic Bible principles?
9. Why is it not always easy to discern and apply Bible principles?

Wilson, a Christian from Ghana, was notified that in a few days, he would be fired from his job. On his final day at work, he was assigned to wash the private car of the managing director of the company. When Wilson found a sum of money in the car, his superior told him that God had sent the money because Wilson was about to be laid off that day. However, applying Bible principles on honesty, Wilson gave the money back to the director. Surprised and impressed, the director not only offered Wilson permanent employment immediately but also promoted him to be a senior member of the company staff.—Ephesians 4:28.

my brother to divide the inheritance with me." Instead of quickly providing a ruling to resolve disputes between siblings, Jesus gave him a more general principle: "Keep your eyes open and guard against every sort of covetousness." Thus Jesus provided a guideline that was useful then and remains so now.—Luke 12:13-15.

¹⁰ You have probably seen people who are inclined to obey laws grudgingly, out of fear of a penalty. Respect for principles precludes such an attitude. The very nature of principles moves those governed by them to respond from the heart. In fact, most principles do not involve an immediate punishment for those not conforming to them. This gives us the opportunity to reveal why we obey Jehovah, what our heart motivation is. We find an example in Joseph's refusing the immoral advances of Potiphar's wife. Though Jehovah had not yet given a written law against adultery and no divine sentence

10. How does conducting ourselves in harmony with principles reveal the motives of our heart?

was prescribed for having relations with another man's wife, Joseph was aware of the principles of God-ordained marital faithfulness. (Genesis 2:24; 12:18-20) We can see from his response that such principles powerfully affected him: "How could I commit this great badness and actually sin against God?"—Genesis 39:9.

¹¹ Today, Christians want to be guided by Jehovah's principles when it comes to personal matters, such as choice of associates, entertainment, music, and reading material. (1 Corinthians 15:33; Philippians 4:8) As we grow in knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of Jehovah and his standards, our conscience, our moral sense, will help us to apply divine principles under whatever circumstances we face, even in very private matters. Guided by Bible principles, we will not look for loopholes in God's laws; nor will we imitate those who try to see how far

11. In what areas do Christians want to be guided by Jehovah's principles?

Rukia is an Albanian woman in her 60's. Because of a family disagreement, she did not speak to her brother for over 17 years. She began studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses and learned that true Christians have to be at peace with others, not holding grudges. She prayed all night, and with her heart pounding, she walked to her brother's house. Her niece opened the door. Surprised, she asked Rukia: "Who died? What are you doing here?" Rukia asked to see her brother. She calmly explained that learning about Bible principles and about Jehovah had motivated her to make peace with her brother. After tears and hugs, they celebrated this special reunion!—Romans 12:17, 18.

they can go without actually breaking a certain law. We realize that such thinking is self-defeating and harmful.—James 1:22-25.

¹² Mature Christians recognize that a key to following godly principles is wanting to know how Jehovah feels about a matter. "O you lovers of Jehovah," exhorts the psalmist, "hate what is bad." (Psalm 97:10) Listing some of the things that God would classify as bad, Proverbs 6:16-19 says: "There are six things that Jehovah does hate; yes, seven are things detestable to his soul: lofty eyes, a false tongue, and hands that are shedding innocent blood, a heart fabricating hurtful schemes, feet that are in a hurry to run to badness, a false witness that launches forth lies, and anyone sending forth contentions among brothers." When a desire to reflect how Jehovah feels on such fundamentals governs our lives, living in accord with principles becomes a consistent practice. —Jeremiah 22:16.

Good Motive Is Needed

¹³ Knowing and applying principles also protects us from the snare of empty, formal worship. There is a difference between following principles and legalistically obeying rules. Jesus clearly showed this in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew 5:17-48) Remember that Jesus' listeners were Jews, so their conduct should have been governed by the Mosaic Law. But in reality they had a distorted view of the Law. They had come to stress the letter of the Law rather than its spirit. And they emphasized their traditions, putting such above the teaching of God. (Matthew 12:9-12; 15:1-9) As a consequence, the people in general were not taught to think in terms of principles.

12. What is a key to being guided by godly principles?

13. What type of thinking did Jesus stress in his Sermon on the Mount?

¹⁴ In contrast, Jesus included in the Sermon on the Mount principles in five areas of morality: anger, marriage and divorce, promises, revenge, and love and hate. In each case, Jesus showed the benefit of following a principle. Thus Jesus raised the moral standard for his followers. For example, on the matter of adultery, he gave us a principle that guards not only our acts but also our thoughts and desires: "Everyone that keeps on looking at a woman so as to have a passion for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart."—Matthew 5:28.

¹⁵ This example illustrates that we should never lose sight of the intent and spirit of Jehovah's principles. We should certainly not try to earn God's favor through moral formalism. Jesus exposed the fallacy of such an attitude by pointing to God's mercy and love. (Matthew 12:7; Luke 6:1-11) Following Bible principles, we will avoid trying to live (or demand others to live) by an extensive and rigid set of dos and don'ts that go beyond the teachings of the Bible. We will be more concerned about principles of love and obedience toward God than about the outside appearance of worship.—Luke 11:42.

Happy Results

¹⁶ As we strive to obey Jehovah, it is important to realize that his laws are based on key principles. For example, Christians are to avoid idolatry, sexual immorality, and the misuse of blood. (Acts 15:28, 29) What underlies the Christian stand on those issues? God deserves our exclusive devotion; we should be faithful to our mate; and Jehovah is the Life-Giver. (Genesis 2:24; Exodus 20:5; Psalm 36:9) Appreciating these under-

14. How did Jesus help his listeners to think on the basis of principles?
15. How can we avoid any tendency to be legalistic?
16. Give examples of the principles behind some Bible directives.

lying principles makes it easier to accept and follow the related laws.

¹⁷ As we discern the underlying principles and apply them, we realize that they are for our good. The spiritual blessings enjoyed by God's people are often accompanied by tangible benefits. For example, those who abstain from smoking, who live moral lives, and who respect the sanctity of blood avoid falling victim to certain diseases. Similarly, living in harmony with divine truth may benefit us in economic, social, or domestic ways. Any such tangible benefits prove the value of Jehovah's standards, that they truly are practical. But gaining such practical advantages is not in itself the main reason for applying God's principles. True Christians obey Jehovah because they love him, because he deserves their worship, and because it is the right thing to do.—Revelation 4:11.

¹⁸ Letting our life be guided by Bible principles leads to a superior way of life, which in itself may attract others to the way of God. Most important, our life course honors Jehovah. We realize that Jehovah is really a loving God who wants the best for us. When we make decisions in accord with Bible principles and see how Jehovah blesses us, we come to feel even closer to him. Yes, we further develop a loving relationship with our heavenly Father.

17. What good results can come from perceiving and applying Bible principles?

18. If we want to be successful Christians, what should guide our life?

Do You Recall?

- What is a principle?
- How are principles distinguished from laws?
- Why is it beneficial for us to think and act on the basis of principles?



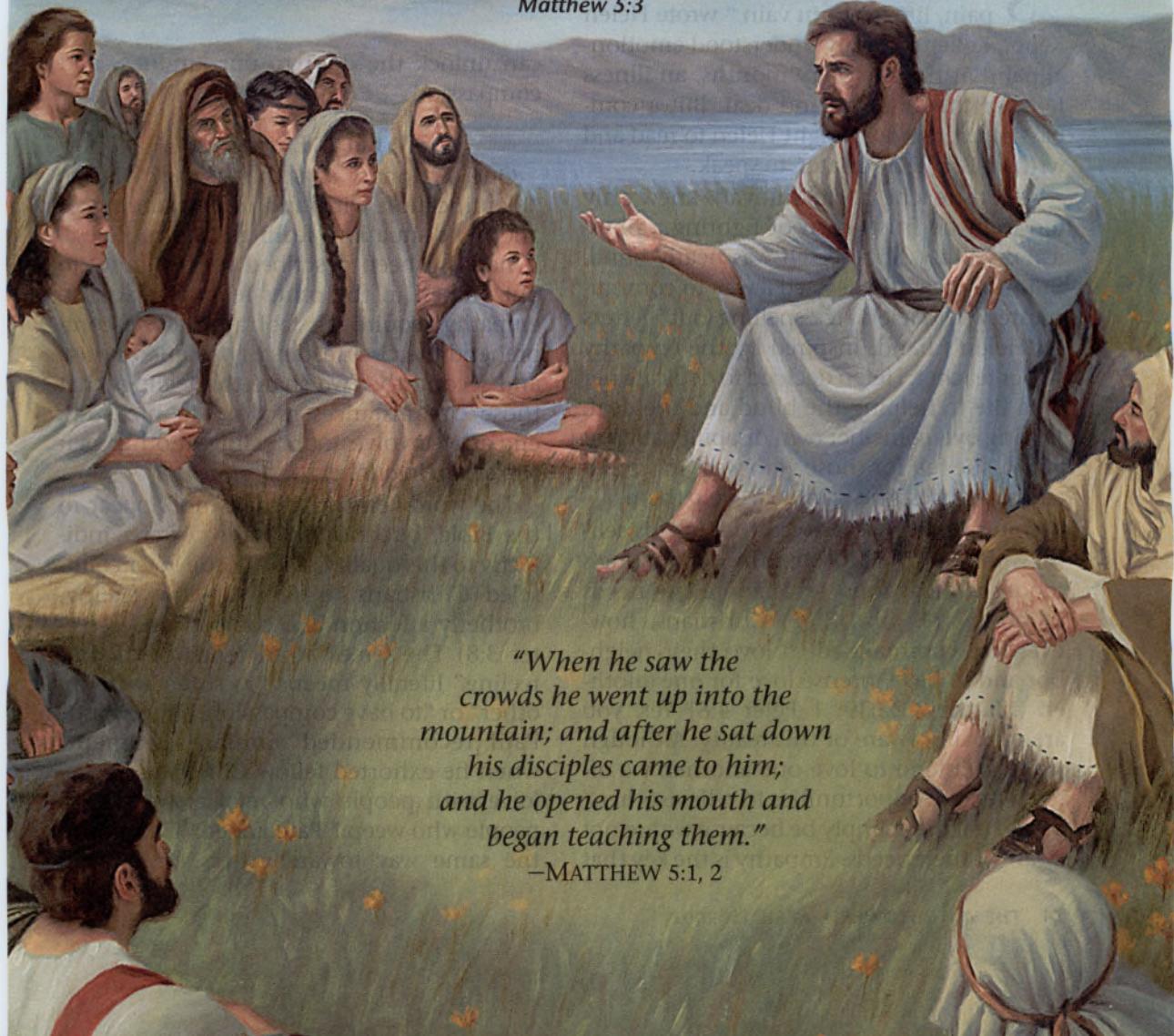
Matthew 5:27, 28



Matthew 5:24



Matthew 5:3



Empathy

Key to Kindness and Compassion

SO LONG as you can sweeten another's pain, life is not in vain," wrote Helen Keller. Keller certainly understood emotional pain. At the age of 19 months, an illness left her totally blind and deaf. But a compassionate teacher taught Helen to read and write in Braille and, later, to speak.

Keller's teacher, Ann Sullivan, knew only too well the frustration of fighting a physical disability. She herself was nearly blind. But Ann patiently devised a way to communicate with Helen by "spelling out" letters on Helen's hand. Inspired by the empathy of her teacher, Helen decided to dedicate her own life to helping the blind and the deaf. Having overcome her own disability at great effort, she felt for those who were in similar circumstances. She wanted to help them.

You have likely observed that in this selfish world, it is easy to 'shut the door of one's tender compassions' and ignore the needs of others. (1 John 3:17) Christians, however, are commanded to love their neighbor and to have intense love for one another. (Matthew 22:39; 1 Peter 4:8) Yet, you are probably aware of this reality: Although we fully intend to love one another, we often overlook opportunities to relieve others' pain. That may simply be because we are not aware of their needs. Empathy is the key that



can unlock the door to our kindness and compassion.

What Is Empathy?

One dictionary says that empathy is the "identification with and understanding of another's situation, feelings, and motives." It has also been described as the ability to put oneself in the other fellow's place. So empathy requires first of all that we comprehend the circumstances of someone else and second that we share the feelings that those circumstances provoke in him. Yes, empathy involves our feeling another person's pain in *our* heart.

The word "empathy" does not appear in the Bible, but the Scriptures do refer indirectly to this quality. The apostle Peter counseled Christians to show 'fellow feeling, brotherly affection and compassion.' (1 Peter 3:8) The Greek word rendered "fellow feeling" literally means "to suffer with another" or "to have compassion." The apostle Paul recommended similar sentiments when he exhorted fellow Christians to "rejoice with people who rejoice; weep with people who weep." Paul added: "Be minded the same way toward others as to your-

selves." (Romans 12:15, 16) And do you not agree that it would be practically impossible to love our neighbor as ourselves if we did not put ourselves in his place?

Most everyone has a degree of natural empathy. Who has not been moved when seeing heartrending images of starving children or distraught refugees? What loving mother can ignore the sobbing of her child? But not all suffering is readily discernible. How difficult it is to comprehend the feelings of someone who is experiencing depression, a concealed physical impediment, or even an eating disorder—if we have never had such problems ourselves! Nevertheless, the Scriptures show that we can and should develop fellow feeling toward those whose circumstances we do not share.

Scriptural Examples of Empathy

Jehovah is our prime example of empathy. Although perfect himself, he does not expect us to be perfect, "for he himself well knows the formation of us, remembering that we are dust." (Psalm 103:14; Romans 5:12) Moreover, since he is aware of our limitations, 'he does not allow us to be tempted beyond what we can bear.' (1 Corinthians 10:13) By means of his servants and his spirit, he helps us find the way out.—Jeremiah 25:4, 5; Acts 5:32.

Jehovah feels personally the pain his people suffer. He told the Jews who had returned from Babylon: "He that is touching you is touching my eyeball." (Zechariah 2:8) Keenly aware of God's empathy, Bible writer David said to him: "Do put my tears in your skin bottle. Are they not in your book?" (Psalm 56:8) How comforting to know that Jehovah remembers—as if they were written in a book—the tears his faithful servants shed as they struggle to keep their integrity!

Like his heavenly Father, Jesus Christ is sensitive to the feelings of others. When he

healed a deaf man, he took him aside, likely so that his miraculous recovery would not unduly embarrass or startle him. (Mark 7:32-35) On another occasion, Jesus observed a widow about to bury her only son. He immediately sensed the pain she was suffering, approached the funeral procession, and resurrected the young man.—Luke 7:11-16.

After his resurrection, when Jesus appeared to Saul on the road to Damascus, he let Saul know how his vicious persecution of the disciples affected him. "I am Jesus,



Empathy involves observing carefully the needs of others with a view to helping them

whom you are persecuting," he told him. (Acts 9:3-5) Jesus personally felt the pain suffered by his disciples, like a mother who feels the pain of her sick child. Likewise, as our heavenly High Priest, Jesus 'sympathizes with our weaknesses,' or according to Rotherham's version, he has "fellow-feeling with our weaknesses."—Hebrews 4:15.

The apostle Paul learned to be sensitive to the suffering and feelings of others. "Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled,

and I am not incensed?" he asked. (2 Corinthians 11:29) When an angel miraculously freed Paul and Silas of their bonds in a Philippian jail, Paul's first thought was to advise the jailer that nobody had escaped. He empathetically sensed that the jailer might commit suicide. Paul knew that according to Roman custom, a jailer would be severely punished if a prisoner escaped—especially if he had been instructed to guard him securely. (Acts 16:24-28) Paul's life-saving act of kindness impressed the jailer, and he and his household took steps to become Christians. —Acts 16:30-34.

How to Cultivate Empathy

The Scriptures repeatedly encourage us to imitate our heavenly Father and his Son, Jesus Christ, so empathy is a quality we need to develop. How can we do this? There are three main ways by which we can sharpen our sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others: by listening, by observing, and by imagining.

Listen. By listening carefully we learn what problems others face. And the better we listen, the more likely they are to open up their hearts and reveal their feelings. "I can talk to an elder if I feel confident that he will listen to me," explains Miriam. "I want to know that he really understands my problem. My confidence in him grows when he asks me searching questions that show that he has listened carefully to what I have told him."

Observe. Not everyone will openly tell us how they feel or what they are going through. A keen observer, however, will no-



Will we learn to show the empathy that a loving mother naturally feels toward her child?

tice when a fellow Christian seems depressed, when a teenager becomes uncommunicative, or when a zealous minister loses his enthusiasm. This ability to sense a problem in its early stages is vital for parents. "Somehow, my mother knows how I feel before I talk to her," observes Marie, "so it is easy for me to talk frankly to her about my problems."

Use your imagination. The most powerful way to stimulate empathy is to ask yourself: 'If I were in this situation, how would I feel? How would I respond? What would I need?' Job's three false comforters proved incapable of putting themselves in his position.

Hence, they condemned him for imaginary sins that they assumed he must have committed.

Imperfect humans often find it easier to judge mistakes than to understand feelings. However, if we try hard to imagine the distress of someone afflicted, it will help us to sympathize rather than condemn. "I give much better counsel when I listen carefully and try to understand the whole situation before beginning to offer suggestions," commented Juan, an experienced elder.

The publications distributed by Jehovah's Witnesses have helped many in this regard. The *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines have discussed problems as complex as depression and child abuse. This timely information helps readers to be more sensitive to the feelings of those who suffer in such ways. Likewise, the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* has helped many parents to relate to their children's problems.

Empathy Helps in Christian Activities

Few of us could disregard the plight of a starving child if we had food available to share with him. If we have empathy, we will also discern a person's *spiritual* condition. The Bible relates about Jesus: "On seeing the crowds he felt pity for them, because they were skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd." (Matthew 9:36) Millions today are in a similar spiritual condition, and they need help.

As in Jesus' day, we may have to overcome prejudice or ingrained tradition to reach the hearts of some people. The empathetic minister endeavors to find common ground or to speak about subjects that are on the minds of people in order to make his message more appealing. (Acts 17:22, 23; 1 Corinthians 9:20-23) Acts of kindness motivated by empathy can also make our listeners more receptive to the Kingdom message, as was true in the case of the Philippian jailer.

Empathy is invaluable in helping us overlook the failings of others within the congregation. If we endeavor to understand the feelings of a brother who has offended us, we will doubtless find it much easier to forgive him. Possibly we would have reacted in the same way had we been in the same situation and had we had his background. Jehovah's empathy moves him to 'remember that we are dust,' so should not our empathy motivate us to make allowances for the imperfections of others and to 'forgive them freely'?—Psalm 103:14; Colossians 3:13.

If we have to give counsel, we will probably do so in a much kinder way if we comprehend the feelings and sensitivities of the one who has erred. The empathetic Christian elder reminds himself: 'I too could have made this mistake. I could be in his situation.' Paul thus recommends: "Try to re-

adjust such a man in a spirit of mildness, as you each keep an eye on yourself, for fear you also may be tempted."—Galatians 6:1.

Empathy can also impel us to offer practical help if it lies within our power to do so, even though a fellow Christian may be reluctant to ask for it. The apostle John writes: "Whoever has this world's means for supporting life and beholds his brother having need and yet shuts the door of his tender compassions upon him, in what way does the love of God remain in him? . . . Let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth."—1 John 3:17, 18.

In order to love "in deed and truth," we first need to see our brother's particular needs. Do we observe carefully the needs of others with a view to helping them? That is what empathy is all about.

Cultivate Fellow Feeling

We may not naturally be very empathetic, yet we can cultivate this fellow feeling. If we listen more attentively, observe more keenly, and imagine ourselves in the situation of another more frequently, our empathy will grow. We will as a result feel impelled to show more love, kindness, and compassion to our children, to other Christians, and to our neighbors.

Never allow selfishness to smother your empathy. "None of you should think only of his own affairs," Paul wrote, "but consider other people's interests also." (Philippians 2:4, *Phillips*) Our everlasting future depends on the empathy of Jehovah and of his High Priest, Jesus Christ. Thus, we have a moral obligation to cultivate this quality. Our empathy will empower us to become better ministers and better parents. Above all, empathy will help us to discover that "there is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving."—Acts 20:35.

TWO PASTORS Who Appreciated RUSSELL'S WRITINGS

IN 1891, Charles Taze Russell, who did outstanding work among true Christian worshipers of Jehovah, visited Europe for the first time. According to some reports, during a stopover in Pinerolo, Italy, Russell met Professor Daniele Rivoire, a former pastor of a religious group called the Waldenses.* Although Rivoire remained closely associated with the Waldenses after he left the ministry, he kept an open mind and read many publications that C. T. Russell wrote.

In 1903, Rivoire translated Russell's book *The Divine Plan of the Ages* into Italian and had it printed at his own expense. This was well before an official Italian edition was published. In the book's foreword, Rivoire wrote: "We place this first Italian edition under the Lord's protection. May he bless it so that, in spite of its imperfections, it may contribute to magnify his most holy name and encourage his Italian-speaking children to greater devotion. May the hearts of all those who, by reading this book, appreciate the depth of riches, wisdom, and knowledge of God's plan and love, be grateful to God himself, by whose grace publication of this work has been made possible."

* Named after Pierre Vaudès, or Peter Waldo, a 12th-century merchant of Lyons, France. Waldo was excommunicated from the Catholic Church for his beliefs. For additional information on the Waldenses, see the article "The Waldenses—From Heresy to Protestantism" in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 2002.



Professor
Daniele Rivoire

Rivoire also began translating Zion's *Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence* into Italian. This magazine, an early form of *The Watchtower*, appeared as a quarterly edition in 1903. Even though Professor Rivoire never became a Bible Student, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then called, he showed much interest in spreading the Bible's message as explained in the publications of the Bible Students.

"It Seemed as Though Scales Fell From My Eyes"

Another Waldensian pastor who esteemed Russell's publications was Giuseppe Banchetti. Giuseppe's father, who had converted from Catholicism, gave him a Waldensian education. In 1894, Giuseppe became a pastor and ministered to various Waldensian communities in Apulia and Abruzzi and on the islands of Elba and Sicily.

The authorized Italian edition of Russell's *Divine Plan of the Ages* was published in 1905. Banchetti wrote an enthusiastic review of the book. It appeared in the Protestant periodical *La Rivista Cristiana*. "For us," wrote Banchetti, Russell's book "is the most illuminated and sure guide that any Christian may find to undertake a profitable and blessed study of Holy Scripture . . . As soon as I read it, it seemed as though scales fell from my eyes, that the way to God was straighter and easier. Even apparent contradictions for the most

part disappeared. Doctrines once difficult appeared simple and perfectly acceptable. Things hitherto incomprehensible became clear. The admirable plan of the world's salvation in Christ appeared before me with such awesome simplicity as to induce me to exclaim with the Apostle: O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!"—Romans 11:33.

As observed in 1925 by Remigio Cuminetti, Banchetti showed "much sympathy" for the work of the Bible Students and was "fully convinced" of the doctrines as explained by them. In his own way, Banchetti also sought to make such doctrines known.

It is evident from Banchetti's writings that, like Jehovah's Witnesses, he believed that there would be an earthly resurrection, as taught in the Scriptures. He also agreed with the Bible Students when he explained that the year in which Jesus died had been fixed and revealed by God in Daniel's prophecy of the 70 weeks. (Daniel 9:24-27) More than once, and in open disagreement with the teachings of his church, he held that the Memorial of Jesus Christ's death should be observed just one time each year, "the exact day on which the anniversary falls." (Luke 22:19, 20) He rejected Darwin's theory of evolution, and he affirmed that true Christians should not engage in secular war.—Isaiah 2:4.

On one occasion, Banchetti was discussing Russell's writings with a man named J. Campbell Wall. In answer to Wall's criticisms, Banchetti said: "I am certain that if you read Russell's six volumes, you would experience a vigorous and deep joy, and you

would thank me with emotion. I do not parade doctrine; but I read those books eleven years ago, and I thank God every day for putting before me such light and such consolation by means of a work that is entirely and solidly founded on the Holy Scriptures."

"Listen, Listen, Listen"

It is significant that these two Waldensian pastors—Daniele Rivoire and Giuseppe Banchetti—expressed appreciation for the way Russell explained the Bible.

Banchetti wrote: "I say that none of us Evangelicals, not even our pastors or theology professors, nobody knows everything. Nay, we have many, many other things to learn. . . . [We should] . . . stay and listen, not thinking we know it all, and not rejecting what is offered for our examination. Rather, listen, listen, listen."

Every year, thousands listen to the Kingdom message as brought to their homes by Jehovah's Witnesses. Open-minded people everywhere who thirst for Bible truths are responding to Jesus' invitation: "Come be my follower."

—Mark 10:17-21; Revelation 22:17.



Giuseppe Banchetti

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE

How Disabilities Will End

Meeting Divine Requirements
Magnifies Jehovah

Who Will Survive the Day of Jehovah?

Do You Remember?

Have you appreciated reading the recent issues of *The Watchtower*?

Well, see if you can answer the following questions:

- **What personal program involving the Sermon on the Mount might you employ to alleviate stress?**

Each day, you could read one of Jesus' basic teachings set out in that sermon or elsewhere in the Gospels. By meditating on that teaching and seeking to apply it personally, you will likely find increased happiness and decreased stress.—12/15, pages 12-14.

- **What are three good reasons for congregation elders to train ministerial servants to handle additional responsibilities?**

Because of the growth in the number of Jehovah's Witnesses, additional responsible men are needed to help newly baptized ones to progress. Age or health problems now limit what some longtime elders can do. And some capable elders are carrying responsibilities that extend beyond the local congregation, so they may not be able to do as much in their congregation as formerly.—1/1, page 29.

- **How do people trust in gods that are not real?**

Many worship the gods of their religion, but these may simply be lifeless gods that can no more save than could Baal in Elijah's day. (1 Kings 18:26, 29; Psalm 135:15-17) Others venerate entertainment personalities or sports figures, who cannot provide any real hope for the future. In contrast, Jehovah actually exists and fulfills his purposes.—1/15, pages 3-5.

- **What can we learn from Cain's reaction to God's warning?**

God has given us free will, and we can choose to do what is right rather than turn away from doing good, which is how Cain reacted. The Bible account also shows that Jehovah does execute his judgments upon the unrepentant.—1/15, pages 22-3.

- **Why is cleanliness especially important now?**

With shifting social patterns, many spend less time cleaning their home than used to be common. Ignoring cleanliness as to food and water could present health dangers. In addition to physical cleanliness, the Bible highlights giving attention to spiritual, moral, and mental cleanliness.—2/1, pages 3-6.

- **Concerning pre-Christian witnesses, Paul said that they would "not be made perfect apart from us." How so? (Hebrews 11:40)**

During the coming Millennium, Christ and his

anointed brothers in heaven, serving as kings and priests, will dispense the benefits of the ransom to resurrected ones. Such faithful ones as those noted in Hebrews chapter 11 will thus "be made perfect."—2/1, page 23.

- **What was Paul's point when he told the Hebrews: "You have never yet resisted as far as blood"? (Hebrews 12:4)**

He meant resisting to the point of dying. There were historical examples of ones who had been faithful until death. Though the Hebrews to whom Paul wrote had not been tested to that point, they needed to progress to maturity, building up their faith to endure whatever might come.—2/15, page 29.

- **Why is it best to avoid saying that Jehovah tempers his justice with mercy?**

In some languages, "temper" can mean to moderate or restrain. Jehovah is a God of both justice and mercy, and in his displaying those qualities, the two work harmoniously. (Exodus 34:6, 7; Deuteronomy 32:4; Psalm 116:5; 145:9) Jehovah's justice does not need to be softened or tempered by mercy.—3/1, page 30.

- **Is it proper for a Christian to have the body of a dead loved one embalmed?**

Embalming is a means of preserving a corpse. Some ancients followed the practice for religious reasons. That would not be so of true worshipers. (Ecclesiastes 9:5; Acts 24:15) Embalming would merely delay the inevitable, a body returning to dust. (Genesis 3:19) But there would be no need for concern if the law required embalming, some family members desired it, or it was needed because some must travel a long distance to a funeral.—3/15, pages 29-31.

- **What Bible examples teach us that God welcomes people of all nations?**

Jehovah sent the prophet Jonah to warn the Ninevites, and God urged Jonah to accept their repentance. By word and example, Jesus encouraged showing love toward Samaritans. Both the apostle Peter and the apostle Paul had a role in bringing the good news to non-Jews. From such examples, we can see the need for trying to help people of all backgrounds.—4/1, pages 21-4.

Questions From Readers

Is it proper to approach God in prayer without saying something like "in Jesus' name"?

The Bible shows that Christians desiring to approach Jehovah in prayer ought to do so in Jesus' name. Jesus told his disciples: "No one comes to the Father except through me." He added: "Whatever it is that you ask in my name, I will do this, in order that the Father may be glorified in connection with the Son. If you ask anything in my name, I will do it." —John 14:6, 13, 14.

Referring to Jesus' unique position, the *Cyclopedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* says: "The object of prayer is God alone, through Jesus Christ as the Mediator. All supplications, therefore, to saints or angels are not only useless, but blasphemous. All worship of the creature, however exalted that creature is, is idolatry, and is strictly prohibited in the sacred law of God."

What if someone, after a very rewarding experience, says, "Thank you Jehovah" without adding "in Jesus' name"? Would this be improper? Not necessarily. Suppose a Christian meets a sudden danger and cries out: "Help me, Jehovah!" God would hardly refuse to help because his servant did not say "in Jesus' name."

It should be noted, however, that simply speaking out loud even to God does not in itself constitute a prayer. For example, after he was judged by Jehovah for killing his brother Abel, Cain said: "My punishment for error is too great to carry. Here you are actually driving me this day from off the surface of the ground, and from your face I shall be concealed; and I must become a wanderer and fugitive on the earth, and it is certain that anyone finding me will kill me." (Genesis 4:13, 14) Though Cain addressed his comments to Jehovah, his emotional outburst was a complaint about the bitter fruitage of sin.



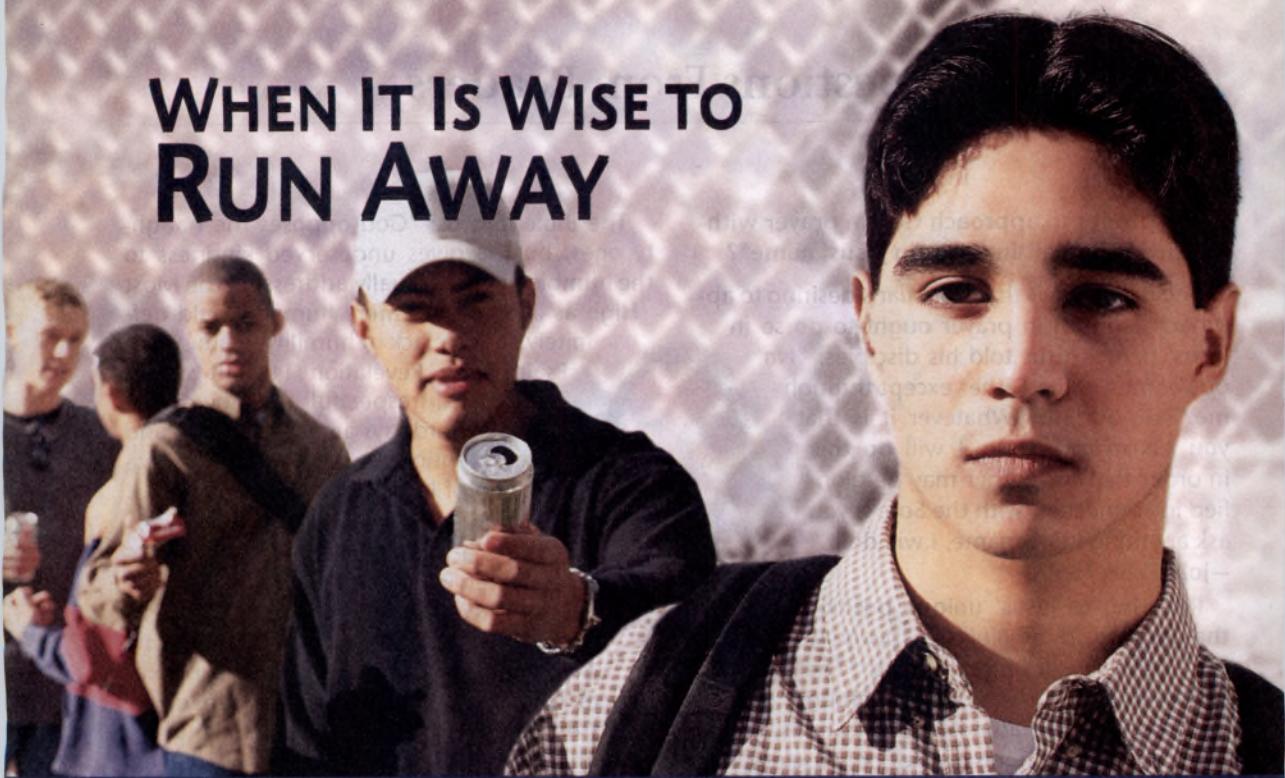
The Bible tells us: "God opposes the haughty ones, but he gives undeserved kindness to the humble ones." Casually addressing the Most High as if he were a mere human would definitely show a lack of humility. (James 4:6; Psalm 47:2; Revelation 14:7) It would also be disrespectful to know what God's Word says about Jesus' role and yet intentionally pray without recognition of Jesus Christ.—Luke 1:32, 33.

This is not to say that Jehovah expects a particular style or set formula when we pray. A key factor is a person's heart condition. (1 Samuel 16:7)

In the first century C.E., a Roman army officer named Cornelius "made supplication to God continually." Cornelius, an uncircumcised Gentile, was not dedicated to Jehovah. Though it is unlikely that he offered his prayers in Jesus' name, they "ascended as a remembrance before God." Why? Because "the examiner of hearts," saw that Cornelius was "a devout man and one fearing God." (Acts 10:2, 4; Proverbs 17:3) Upon gaining knowledge of "Jesus who was from Nazareth," Cornelius received holy spirit and became a baptized disciple of Jesus.—Acts 10:30-48.

In the final analysis, it is not for humans to decide which prayers God hears. If a Christian on occasion made an utterance to God and overlooked using such an expression as "in Jesus' name," there would be no need for him to burden himself with guilt. Jehovah is fully aware of our limitations and wants to help us. (Psalm 103:12-14) We can rest assured that if we exercise faith in "the Son of God . . . , no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us." (1 John 5:13, 14) Especially when representing others in public prayer, however, true Christians acknowledge the Scripturally outlined role that Jesus occupies in Jehovah's purpose. And they obediently endeavor to honor Jesus by directing prayers to God through him.

WHEN IT IS WISE TO RUN AWAY



TODAY'S world is often marked by a spirit of bravado and confrontation or by temptation. A person who flees from a situation is generally regarded as weak or cowardly. He may even become subject to ridicule.

However, the Bible makes it plain that there are times when running away is both wise and courageous. Bearing that out, before sending his disciples out into the ministry, Jesus Christ told them: "When they persecute you in one city, flee to another." (Matthew 10:23) Yes, Jesus' disciples were to try to escape from their persecutors. They were not to carry on anything like a crusade, trying to convert others by force. They bore a message of peace. (Matthew 10:11-14; Acts 10:34-37) So rather than allowing tempers to flare, Christians were to flee, to put distance between themselves and

the source of provocation. In this way, they maintained a good conscience as well as their precious relationship with Jehovah.—2 Corinthians 4:1, 2.

A contrasting example is found in the Bible book of Proverbs. It tells of a young man who, instead of fleeing in the face of temptation, went after a prostitute "like a bull that comes even to the slaughter." The result? Calamity because of succumbing to the temptation that involved his very soul.—Proverbs 7:5-8, 21-23.

What if you should face a temptation to commit sexual immorality or confront some other potential danger? According to God's Word, the appropriate action may well be to flee, to distance yourself from the scene immediately.—Proverbs 4:14, 15; 1 Corinthians 6:18; 2 Timothy 2:22.