

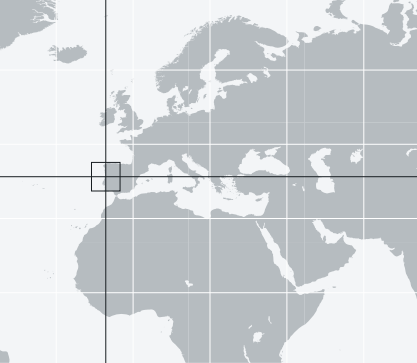
DECEMBER 2016

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



STUDY ARTICLES FOR:
JANUARY 30–FEBRUARY 26, 2017



COVER IMAGE:
PORTUGAL

Many tourists come to the city of Aveiro in northern Portugal to see the interesting salt evaporation ponds. Local Witnesses make sure to offer the good news to those who sell the locally produced salt

PUBLISHERS
48,840

BIBLE STUDIES
28,687

MEMORIAL ATTENDANCE
(2015)
91,472

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This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations.

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Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

The Watchtower (ISSN 0043-1087) Issue 18 December 2016 is published monthly with an additional issue published in January, March, May, July, September, and November by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, NY, and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Watchtower, 1000 Red Mills Road, Wallkill, NY 12589-3299. © 2016 Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. Printed in Canada.

December 2016
Vol. 137, No. 18 ENGLISH



Becoming “All Things to People of All Sorts”

AS TOLD BY
DENTON HOPKINSON

“If you get baptized, I will leave you!” My father threatened my mother with those words in 1941. Despite his threat, she decided to go ahead and get baptized in symbol of her dedication to Jehovah God. Making good on his threat, my father left. I was only eight years old at the time.

MY INTEREST in Bible truth had already been aroused earlier. My mother had obtained Bible publications, and I became engrossed in their contents, particularly the illustrations. My father did not want my mother to talk to me about what she was learning. However, I was curious and asked questions, so she studied with me when my father was out of the house. As a result, I too decided that I wanted to dedicate my life to Jehovah. I was baptized in Blackpool, England, in 1943 at the age of ten.

GETTING STARTED IN SERVING JEHOVAH

From that time on, my mother and I shared regularly in the field service together. To introduce the Bible’s message, we used phonographs. These were rather bulky and weighed about ten pounds (4.5 kg). Just imagine me, a young boy, lugging one of those!

By the time I was 14 years old, I wanted to pioneer. My mother said that I should first speak to the servant to the brethren (now called a circuit overseer). He



suggested that I try to get some kind of skill to support me in the pioneer service. So I did that. After working for two years, I consulted another circuit overseer about pioneering. He said, “Go for it!”

Thus, in April 1949, my mother and I disposed of the furniture in our rented house and moved to Middleton, near Manchester, where we began pioneering. After four months, I selected a brother as my pioneer partner. The branch office suggested that we move to a newly established congregation in Irlam. My mother pioneered with a sister in another congregation.

Although I was only 17 years old, my partner and I were given the responsibility of conducting meetings because there were few qualified brothers in the new congregation. Later, I was invited to transfer to the Buxton Congregation, which had very few publishers and needed help. I have always viewed those early experiences as training for future assignments.

In 1951, I filled out an application to attend the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. However, in December 1952, I was called to report for military service. I sought an exemption on the basis of being a full-time minister, but the court would not acknowledge that I was a minister and



From top to bottom:

Advertising a public lecture with others in Rochester, New York, 1953

Missionary companion Raymond Leach and I traveled 47 days by ship to the Philippines

Delivering a public lecture at a Bicol-language circuit assembly

sentenced me to six months in prison. While there, I received my invitation to the 22nd class of Gilead. So it was that in July 1953, I was on board the ship called *Georgic*, heading toward New York.

Upon arrival, I was able to attend the 1953 New World Society Assembly. I then traveled by train to South Lansing, New York, where the school was located. Fresh out of prison, I had little money. When I got off the train, a shuttle bus was to take me to South Lansing, and I had to borrow the 25-cent fare from a fellow passenger.

A FOREIGN ASSIGNMENT

Gilead School provided wonderful training to help us to “become all things to people of all sorts” in the missionary work. (1 Cor. 9:22) Three of us—Paul Bruun, Raymond Leach, and I—were assigned to the Philippines. We had to wait several months for our visas; then we were on our way by ship via Rotterdam, the Mediterranean Sea, the Suez Canal, the Indian Ocean, Malaysia, and Hong Kong—47 days at sea! We finally reached Manila on November 19, 1954.

Then started the adjustment to a new people, a new land, and even a new language. However, the three of us were initially assigned to a congregation in Quezon City, where many of the residents spoke English. Thus, after six months, we knew only a few words of Tagalog. Our next assignment would help solve that problem.

One day in May 1955 when we arrived home from field service, Brother Leach and I found a pack of letters in our room. We learned that we were being assigned as circuit overseers. I was only 22 years old, but this assignment gave me the opportuni-

ty to “become all things to people of all sorts” in new ways.

For example, I gave my first public talk as a circuit overseer in front of a village store out in the open. I soon learned that it was the custom in the Philippines in those days for a public talk to be really public! As I visited different congregations in the circuit, I delivered talks in public gazebos, at markets, in front of municipal halls, on basketball courts, in parks, and often on city street corners. Once in San Pablo City, a downpour prevented me from giving a talk at a public market, so I suggested to the responsible brothers that it be given in the Kingdom Hall. Afterward, the brothers asked whether this could be reported as a public meeting, since it was not held in a public place!

Accommodations were always in brothers’ homes. Even though the homes were simple, they were always clean. My bed was often a woven mat on a wooden floor. Bathing facilities lacked privacy, so I learned to bathe modestly out in the open. I traveled by jeepney and bus and sometimes by boat when going to other islands. Through all my years of service, I have never owned a car.

Working in the field ministry and visiting congregations helped me to learn Tagalog. I never had a formal language course, but I learned by listening to brothers in the field service and at the meetings. The brothers wanted to help me learn, and I appreciated their patience and honest comments.

As time went by, new assignments prompted me to make more adjustments. In 1956 when Brother Nathan Knorr visited, I was assigned to care for public



relations at the national convention. I had no experience, so others willingly helped me learn. Less than a year later, another national convention was arranged and Brother Frederick Franz from world headquarters visited. While serving as convention overseer, I learned from Brother Franz's willingness to adjust to the people. The local brothers were pleased to see Brother Franz wearing the barong Tagalog, traditional Filipino attire, when giving the public talk.

I needed to make more adjustments when I was assigned as a district overseer. At that time, we showed the film *The Happiness of the New World Society*, almost always outdoors in public places. At times, we were bothered by insects. They were attracted by the projector light and got stuck in the projector. It was quite a job cleaning the projector afterward! It was not easy arranging these showings, yet it was satisfying to see the fine response of the people as they got acquainted with the international aspect of Jehovah's organization.

Catholic priests pressured some local authorities not to give us permits for assemblies. Or they would try to drown out our program by ringing the church bells whenever talks were held near their churches.



From top to bottom:

With Janet on one of the many islands in the Philippines

We make sure that we have a regular share in the ministry

The increase in the number of Witnesses brings us constant joy

We still serve at
the branch office
in Quezon City



Still, the work progressed, and many in those areas are now worshippers of Jehovah.

ASSIGNMENTS THAT CALLED FOR MORE ADJUSTMENTS

In 1959, I received a letter informing me that I had been assigned to serve at the branch office. This resulted in many more learning experiences. In time, I was asked to make zone visits to other countries. On one of these trips, I got acquainted with Janet Dumond, a missionary in Thailand. We corresponded for some time and later married. We have enjoyed 51 years of satisfying service together as a married couple.

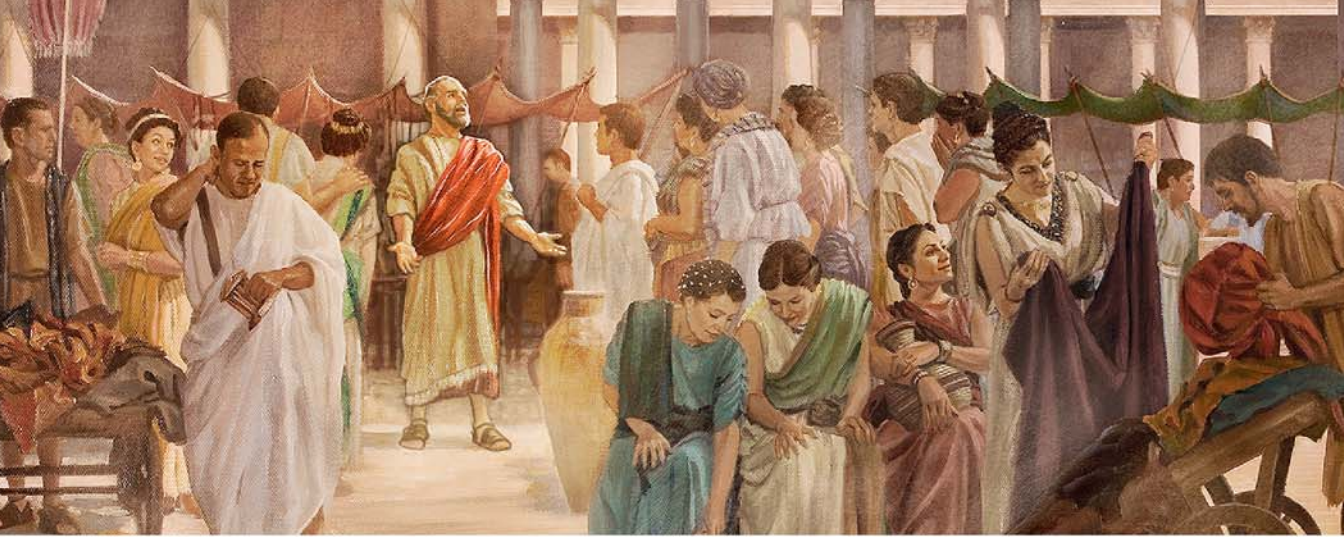
In all, I have had the pleasure of visiting Jehovah's people in 33 countries. How thankful I am that my earlier assignments helped prepare me for the unique challenges of dealing with such a diversity of people! These visits broadened my viewpoint even more and helped me to see

how Jehovah's love embraces people of all kinds.—Acts 10:34, 35.

STILL ADJUSTING

What a delight it has been to serve with our brothers in the Philippines! The number of publishers is now about ten times what it was when I began serving here. Janet and I continue to serve together at the Philippines branch office in Quezon City. Even after more than 60 years in this foreign assignment, I still need to be ready to adjust to what Jehovah asks. Recent organizational changes have required that we remain flexible in our service to God and to our brothers.

We have endeavored to accept whatever we perceived to be Jehovah's will, and this has been a most satisfying way to live. We have also tried to make the necessary adjustments and serve our brothers well. Yes, we are determined, for as long as Jehovah wills, to be "all things to people of all sorts."



By Undeserved Kindness You Were Set Free

“Sin must not be master over you, seeing that you are . . . under undeserved kindness.”—ROM. 6:14.

SONGS: 46, 127

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

Why is God’s provision of the ransom an undeserved kindness?

How is it that we can consider ourselves “dead with reference to sin”?

Why does appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness move us to avoid more than just serious sins?

IMAGINE you wanted to list Bible verses that Jehovah’s Witnesses know well and use often. Would Romans 5:12 be high on your list? Think about how often you have referred to the statement: “Just as through one man sin entered into the world and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because they had all sinned.”

² That verse is repeatedly used in the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach*? As you study this book with your children or others, you will likely read Romans 5:12 when you discuss God’s purpose for the earth, the ransom, and the condition of the dead—chapters 3, 5, and 6. But how often do you think of Romans 5:12 with regard to your own standing before Jehovah, your actions, and your future prospects?

³ All of us, of course, must face the reality that we are sinners. We make mistakes every day. Yet, we are assured that God remembers that we are made of dust, and he is willing to show us mercy. (Ps. 103:13, 14) Jesus included in the model prayer the request to God: “Forgive us our sins.” (Luke 11:

- 1, 2. Why is Romans 5:12 of interest to Jehovah’s Witnesses?
3. We ought to face what fact about sin?

2-4) Hence, we have no reason to dwell on mistakes that God has forgiven. Still, we can benefit from thinking about how he could—and did—forgive us.

FORGIVEN THROUGH UNDESERVED KINDNESS

⁴ We find important information in the chapters surrounding the apostle Paul's words at Romans 5:12, especially in chapter 6. This will help us to understand how Jehovah can forgive us. In chapter 3, we read: "All have sinned . . . , and it is as a free gift that they are being declared righteous by his undeserved kindness through the release by the ransom paid by Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:23, 24) What did Paul mean by saying "undeserved kindness"? He used a Greek word that, according to one reference work, has the sense of "a favour freely done, without claim or expectation of return." It is unearned and unmerited.

⁵ Scholar John Parkhurst noted: "When spoken of God or Christ, it [that Greek word] very often particularly refers to *their free and undeserved favour or kindness in the redemption and salvation of man.*" Thus, the rendering "undeserved kindness" in the *New World Translation* is fitting. But how did God manifest this undeserved kindness? And what does it have to do with your hope and your relationship with him? Let us see.

⁶ Adam was the "one man" through whom sin and death "entered into the world." Thus "by the trespass of the one man death ruled as king." Paul added that "the abundance of

[God's] undeserved kindness" came about "through the one person, Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:12, 15, 17) And that undeserved kindness has resulted in good for all mankind. "Through the obedience of the one person [Jesus] many will be made righteous." Actually, God's undeserved kindness can lead to "everlasting life through Jesus Christ."—Rom. 5:19, 21.

⁷ Jehovah was not obliged to have his Son come to earth to provide the ransom. Moreover, imperfect, sinful humans did not of themselves merit, or deserve, what God and Jesus did in providing a ransom by which forgiveness was possible. So our being forgiven and offered the prospect of living forever is truly a kindness that is undeserved. We should highly value the gift of God's undeserved kindness and let it affect our life daily.

APPRECIATION FOR GOD'S UNDESERVED KINDNESS

⁸ Being imperfect descendants of Adam, we are inclined to err, to do what is bad, to sin. Still, it would be a serious mistake to presume on God's undeserved kindness, such as by thinking: 'Even if I do something wrong—something that God views as sin—I do not have to worry about it. Jehovah will forgive me.' Sadly, some Christians felt that way even while some of the apostles were still alive. (**Read Jude 4.**) We ourselves might never voice such a thought; yet, the seeds of this wrong viewpoint might be in us or they could be planted in us and start to grow.

4, 5. (a) What sheds light on the sense of Romans 5:12? (b) What is the "undeserved kindness" that is mentioned at Romans 3:24?

6. To what extent can individuals benefit from God's undeserved kindness?

7. Why was God's provision of the ransom both kind and undeserved?

8. What mistaken view might some people have of their sins?

⁹ Paul stressed that we must strongly reject the view: ‘Oh, God understands. He will overlook my wrong deeds or actions.’ Why? Because, as Paul writes, Christians have “died with reference to sin.” (**Read Romans 6:1, 2.**) While they were still alive on earth, how could it be said of them that they had “died with reference to sin”?

¹⁰ God applied the ransom to Paul and others of his day. Thus Jehovah forgave their sins, anointed them with holy spirit, and called them to be his spiritual sons. Then they had the heavenly hope. If they proved faithful, they would live and rule with Christ in heaven. But Paul could speak of them while they were still alive and serving God on earth as having “died with reference to sin.” He used the example of Jesus, who died as a human and then was raised up as an immortal spirit in heaven. Death was no longer master over Jesus. It was similar with anointed Christians, who could consider themselves “dead with reference to sin but living with reference to God by Christ Jesus.” (Rom. 6:9, 11) Their way of life was not as it once was. They were no longer obeying the dictates or impulses of their sinful desires. They had died to that previous way of life.

¹¹ What of us? Well, before we became Christians, we often sinned, perhaps not realizing how wrong or bad our actions were in God’s eyes. We were like “slaves to uncleanness and lawlessness.” It could be said that we “were slaves of sin.” (Rom. 6:19, 20) Then we came to know Bible truth, made changes in our

lives, dedicated ourselves to God, and got baptized. Since then, it has been our desire to be “obedient from the heart” to God’s teachings and standards. Even if we might not have spoken of it in those terms, we “were set free from sin” and we “became slaves to righteousness.” (Rom. 6:17, 18) So we too could be said to have “died with reference to sin.”

¹² Now think of yourself in the light of Paul’s words: “Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies so that you should obey their desires.” (Rom. 6:12) We could “let sin continue to rule” by doing whatever our imperfect body moves us to do. Because we can “let” sin rule or refuse to let it rule, the question is, What do we really want at heart? Ask yourself: ‘At times, do I let my imperfect body or mind point me in a bad direction and then go there? Or am I dead with reference to sin? Am I living with reference to God by Christ Jesus?’ It really comes down to how much we appreciate the undeserved kindness God has shown by forgiving us.

A FIGHT THAT YOU CAN WIN

¹³ Jehovah’s people have turned their back on “the fruit that [they] used to produce” before they came to know, love, and serve God. Their past way of life may have included “things of which [they] are now ashamed” and that would have merited death. (Rom. 6:21) Then they changed. That was true of many in Corinth to whom Paul wrote. Some had been idolaters, adulterers, homosexuals, thieves, drunkards, and the like. Yet,

9, 10. How were Paul and others set free from sin and death?

11. In what sense have we who hope to live forever in Paradise “died with reference to sin”?

12. What choice does each of us have to make?

13. What evidence gives us confidence that it is possible to turn our back on sin?

they were “washed clean” and “sanctified.” (1 Cor. 6:9-11) That was likely also true of some in the Roman congregation. Paul was inspired to write to them: “Neither go on presenting your bodies to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, also your bodies to God as weapons of righteousness.” (Rom. 6:13) Paul was sure that they could remain spiritually clean and thus continue to benefit from God’s undeserved kindness.

¹⁴ It is similar today. Some brothers and sisters may at one time have been like those in Corinth. But they too changed. They left their sinful past and were “washed clean.” To whatever extent that may be true in your case, what is your situation before God at this time? Now that God’s undeserved kindness and resulting forgiveness are available, are you determined no longer ‘to present your body to sin’? Will you instead ‘present yourself to God as alive from the dead’?

¹⁵ For us to do that, we must certainly avoid choosing to practice the serious sins that some in Corinth had been guilty of. That is vital if we are to say that we have accepted God’s undeserved kindness and that ‘sin is not master over us.’ However, are we also determined to be “obedient from the heart” by doing our best to avoid sins that some would view as less serious? —Rom. 6:14, 17.

¹⁶ Think of the apostle Paul. We can be

14, 15. What should we ask ourselves about being “obedient from the heart”?

16. How do we know that being a Christian involves more than leaving behind the practice of serious sins?

sure that he was not sharing in the gross wrongs mentioned at 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. Nonetheless, he confessed that he was still guilty of sin. He wrote: “I am fleshly, sold under sin. For I do not understand what I am doing. For I do not practice what I wish, but I do what I hate.” (Rom. 7:14, 15) This shows that there were other things that Paul viewed as sins, and he was fighting against those wrongs too. **(Read Romans 7:21-23.)** May that also be true of us as we strive to be “obedient from the heart.”

¹⁷ Consider, for example, the matter of being honest. Honesty is basic to Christianity. **(Read Proverbs 14:5; Ephesians 4:25.)** Satan is “the father of the lie.” And Ananias and his wife lost their lives because of lying. We do not want to imitate such ones—we avoid lying. (John 8:44; Acts 5:1-11) Is that, though, as far as our honesty goes? Actually, our honesty should reflect our deep appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness.

¹⁸ To lie is to say something untruthful. However, Jehovah wants his people to go beyond not telling outright lies. He urged the ancient Israelites: “You should be holy, because I, Jehovah your God, am holy.” Then he gave examples of being holy. In part, God said: “You must not steal, *you must not deceive*, and you must not deal falsely with one another.” (Lev. 19:2, 11) Sadly, a person who makes it a point never to tell outright lies might still resort to deceiving others, dealing falsely with them.

¹⁹ For instance, a man tells his boss or

17. Why do you want to be honest?

18, 19. How does being honest go beyond simply not telling outright lies?

fellow workers that he cannot be at work the next day or that he must leave early because he has a “medical” appointment. In fact, his “medical” appointment is merely a brief stop at a pharmacy or a quick visit to the doctor’s office to pay a bill. His real reason for not being at work is so that he can get a head start on a trip or so that he can take his family to the beach. There may have been a grain of truth in his mentioning a “medical” appointment, but would you say that he was being honest? Or was he being deceptive? You may know of similar instances of deliberate deception. Perhaps this is done to avoid punishment or to profit at others’ expense. Even if no outright lie is told, what of God’s direction: “You must not deceive”? Think, too, of Romans 6:19, which says: “Present your members as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.”

Are we determined to avoid
both lying and deception?
(See paragraph 19)



²⁰ The point is that our appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness involves more than avoiding adultery, drunkenness, or other sins that some in Corinth had been guilty of. Accepting God’s undeserved kindness means not only avoiding sexual immorality but also fighting any tendency to enjoy lewd entertainment. Presenting our members as slaves to righteousness will not only keep us from drunkenness but also move us to shun drinking to the point of almost being drunk. It may require considerable effort for us to fight against such wrong practices; still, it is a fight that we can win.

²¹ Our goal should be to avoid gross sins as well as wrongs that are not as flagrant. We will not be able to do that perfectly. Nevertheless, we should strive to do so, even as Paul did. He urged his brothers: “Do not let sin continue to rule as king in your mortal bodies so that you should obey their desires.” (Rom. 6:12; 7:18-20) As we fight against sin in all its forms, we show true appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness through Christ.

²² By means of God’s undeserved kindness, our sins have been forgiven and can continue to be forgiven. In appreciation, let us work at overcoming any tendency to give in to what others might consider minor sins. Paul emphasized the reward that then awaits us: “Now that you were set free from sin and became slaves to God, you are producing your fruit in the way of holiness, and the end is everlasting life.”—Rom. 6:22.

20, 21. God’s undeserved kindness should move us to what extent?

22. What awaits those who prove their appreciation for God’s undeserved kindness?



‘Setting Your Mind on the Spirit Means Life and Peace’

“Those who live according to the spirit, [set their minds] on the things of the spirit.” —ROM. 8:5.

IN CONNECTION with the annual commemoration of Jesus’ death, have you read Romans 8:15-17? Probably so. That key passage explains how Christians know that they are anointed—holy spirit bears witness with their spirit. And the opening verse in that chapter refers to “those in union with Christ Jesus.” But does Romans chapter 8 apply only to anointed ones? Or does it also speak to Christians who hope to live on earth?

² Anointed Christians are those principally addressed in that chapter. They receive “the spirit” as ones “waiting for adoption as sons, the release from [their fleshly] bodies.” (Rom. 8:23) Yes, their future is to be sons of God in heaven. That is possible because they became baptized Christians, and God applied the ransom in their behalf, forgave their sins, and declared them righteous as spiritual sons.—Rom. 3:23-26; 4:25; 8:30.

³ However, Romans chapter 8 is also of interest to those who have the earthly hope because God in a sense views

1, 2. Why is Romans chapter 8 of special interest to anointed Christians?

3. Why do we conclude that Romans chapter 8 should be of interest to those with the earthly hope?

SONGS: 45, 36

HOW WOULD YOU ANSWER?

No matter which hope we have, why can we benefit from considering Romans chapter 8?

How might a Christian begin to ‘set his mind on the flesh’?

Setting our minds on the spirit involves our doing what?

them as righteous. We see an indication of that in what Paul wrote earlier in his letter. In chapter 4, he discussed Abraham. That man of faith lived before Jehovah gave the Law to Israel and long before Jesus died for our sins. Still, Jehovah noted Abraham's outstanding faith and counted him as righteous. **(Read Romans 4:20-22.)** Jehovah can in a similar way consider as righteous the faithful Christians today who have the Bible-based hope of living forever on earth. Accordingly, they can benefit from the counsel found in Romans chapter 8 that is given to righteous ones.

⁴ At Romans 8:21, we find a guarantee that the new world will definitely come. This verse promises that “the creation itself will also be set free from enslavement to corruption and have the glorious freedom of the children of God.” The question is whether we will be there, whether we will gain that reward. Do you have confidence that you will? Romans chapter 8 offers advice that will help you to do so.

4. Romans 8:21 should lead us to reflect on what question?

“SETTING THE MIND ON THE FLESH”

⁵ **Read Romans 8:4-13.** Romans chapter 8 speaks of those who walk “according to the *flesh*” in contrast with those who walk “according to the *spirit*.” Some might imagine that this is a contrast between those who are not in the truth and those who are, between those who are not Christians and those who are. However, Paul was writing to “those who are in Rome as God’s beloved ones, *called to be holy ones*.” (Rom. 1:7) Thus, Paul was contrasting Christians who walked according to the flesh with Christians who walked according to the spirit. What was the contrast?

⁶ Consider first the term “flesh.” To what was Paul referring? The Bible uses “flesh” in different ways. At times, it applies to the actual flesh of our physical body. (Rom. 2:28; 1 Cor. 15:39, 50) It can also signify kinship. Jesus was “from the offspring of David according

5. At Romans 8:4-13, what serious matter did Paul address?

6, 7. (a) What are some ways in which the term “flesh” is used in the Bible? (b) At Romans 8:4-13, in what sense did Paul use “flesh”?



to the flesh,” and Paul saw the Jews as “relatives according to the flesh.” —Rom. 1:3; 9:3.

⁷ However, what Paul wrote in chapter 7 gives us a clue as to the “flesh” spoken of at Romans 8:4-13. He linked “living according to the flesh” with “the sinful passions” that were then “at work in [their] bodies.” (Rom. 7:5) This sheds light on the meaning of the expression “those who live according to the flesh,” who Paul said, “set their minds on the things of the flesh.” He was referring to people who are ruled by or focused on their desires and leanings as imperfect humans. In the main, these are ones who follow their cravings, impulses, and passions, whether sexual or otherwise.

⁸ But you may wonder why Paul would stress to anointed Christians the danger of living “according to the flesh.” And could a similar danger today threaten Christians, whom God has accepted as his friends and views as righteous? Sadly, any Christian could begin to walk ac-

8. Why was it appropriate to warn even anointed Christians about walking “according to the flesh”?

cording to the sinful flesh. For example, Paul wrote that some among the brothers in Rome were slaves “of their own appetites,” which could have been sexual appetite or appetite for food, drink, or other things. Some of them were ‘seducing unsuspecting ones.’ (Rom. 16:17, 18; Phil. 3:18, 19; Jude 4, 8, 12) Recall, too, that for a time, a brother in Corinth was “living with his father’s wife.” (1 Cor. 5:1) It is understandable, then, why God used Paul to warn Christians about “setting the mind on the flesh.” —Rom. 8:5, 6.

⁹ That warning is equally valid now. After serving God for years, a Christian could begin to set his or her mind on the things of the flesh. That does not refer to a Christian who occasionally thinks about food, employment, recreation, or even romance. Those are aspects of life for the average servant of God. Jesus enjoyed food, and he fed others. He saw the need for refreshment. And Paul wrote about the proper place for passion or intimacy within marriage.

9. To what does Paul’s warning at Romans 8:6 not apply?



Do your conversations
show that your mind
is set on the spirit
or on the flesh?

(See paragraphs 10, 11)

¹⁰ What, then, was Paul saying about “*setting the mind on the flesh*”? The Greek word that Paul used means “to set one’s mind or heart upon something, to employ one’s faculty for thoughtful planning, w[ith] the emphasis upon the underlying disposition or attitude.” Those who live according to the flesh allow their life course to be determined basically by their sinful human nature. One scholar says about that word at Romans 8:5: “They set their minds on—are most deeply interested in, constantly talk about, engage and glory in—the things pertaining to the flesh.”

¹¹ It was fitting for Christians in Rome to analyze what their focus in life really was. Could it be that their lives were dominated by or centered on “things of the flesh”? And it is fitting for us to consider the same about our lives. What is of greatest interest to us, and to what does our speech gravitate? What do we really pursue day in and day out? Some may find that they are focusing on trying different types of wine, decorating the home, finding new clothing styles, making investments, planning vacation trips, and the like. Such matters are not bad in themselves; they can be normal aspects of life. For example, Jesus once made wine, and Paul told Timothy to take “a little wine.” (1 Tim. 5:23; John 2:3-11) But did Jesus and Paul “constantly talk about, engage and glory in” wine? Was it their passion, what they ‘constantly talked’ about? No. What about us? What is our key interest in life?

10. At Romans 8:5, 6, the expression “set their minds on” implies what?

11. What sort of things might we include when asking ourselves, ‘What is my key interest?’

¹² Self-examination is important. Why? Paul wrote: “Setting the mind on the flesh *means death*.” (Rom. 8:6) That is serious—spiritual death now and physical death in the future. Still, Paul did not mean that if someone began to ‘set the mind on the flesh’ his end unavoidably would be death. Change is possible. Think of the immoral man in Corinth who went after “the flesh” and had to be disfellowshipped. Yet, he could and did change. He ceased to walk after the flesh and returned to a straight path.—2 Cor. 2:6-8.

¹³ If it was possible for that person to change, it is possible for a Christian today to change, especially one who has not gone after the flesh as far as the man in Corinth had. Certainly, Paul’s warning about the possible final outcome for someone who ‘sets his or her mind on the flesh’ should be a stimulus to Christians to make any needed changes!

“SETTING THE MIND ON THE SPIRIT”

¹⁴ After the apostle warned us against “setting the mind on the flesh,” he offered this positive assurance: “Setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace.” What a result or reward that is—life and peace! How can we gain that reward?

¹⁵ “Setting the mind on the spirit” does not imply that a person has to live with his head in the clouds, so to speak. He does not need to think and talk of nothing other than the Bible or his love for God and his hope for the future. Let us recall that Paul and others in the first

12, 13. Why is what we set our mind on a serious issue?

14, 15. (a) What alternative is there to “setting the mind on the flesh”? (b) What is not meant by “setting the mind on the spirit”?

century who pleased God were living rather normal lives in many respects. They consumed food and drink. Many married and enjoyed family life, working to support themselves.—Mark 6:3; 1 Thess. 2:9.

¹⁶ However, those servants of God did not allow such normal aspects of life to become the center of their lives. After showing that Paul worked as a tentmaker, the record reveals what his life was centered on: He regularly gave attention to the Christian preaching and teaching work. (**Read Acts 18:2-4; 20:20, 21, 34, 35.**) And those were the activities that he recommended to his brothers and sisters in Rome. Yes, Paul's life centered on spiritual provisions and activities. The Romans needed to imitate him, and so do we.—Rom. 15:15, 16.

¹⁷ What is the outcome if we maintain a spiritual focus? Romans 8:6 answers clearly: "Setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace." That implies letting our mind be influenced by and dominated by holy spirit and being in harmony with God and his thoughts. We can trust that by making "the spirit" the real center of our existence, we will have a satisfying, meaningful life now. And the lasting result is everlasting life, be that in heaven or on earth.

¹⁸ Let us reflect on the assurance that "setting the mind on the spirit means . . . peace." Many people struggle to find peace of mind. While they desperately search for inner peace, we already enjoy

it. One aspect of having such peace is that we strive to be at peace with those in our family and those in the congregation. We have the good sense to realize that both we and our brothers and sisters are imperfect. Because of this, problems may occasionally arise, and if that happens, we have been taught to follow Jesus' advice: "Make your peace with your brother." (Matt. 5:24) This is made easier when we recall that the other brother or sister is also serving "the God who gives peace."—Rom. 15:33; 16:20.

¹⁹ And there is another peace that is of incalculable value. By our "setting the mind on the spirit," we enjoy peace with our Maker. Isaiah recorded words that applied in his day but have an even greater fulfillment now: "You [Jehovah] will safeguard those who fully lean on you; you will give them continuous peace, because it is in you that they trust."—Isa. 26:3; **read Romans 5:1.**

²⁰ Accordingly, whether we are spirit anointed or we hope to live permanently in a paradise on earth, we can be thankful for the inspired counsel in Romans chapter 8. How grateful we can be for the encouragement not to let "the flesh" become the principal thing in our life! Instead, we see the wisdom of living in line with the inspired assurance: "Setting the mind on the spirit means life and peace." The reward of doing so will be everlasting, for Paul wrote: "The wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord."—Rom. 6:23.

16. Though sharing in many normal aspects of life, on what was Paul focused?

17. If we 'set our mind on the spirit,' what sort of life can we have?

18. In what way does peace result from "setting the mind on the spirit"?

19. Depending on what we set our mind on, what special peace can we enjoy?

20. Why are you thankful for the counsel in Romans chapter 8?

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

What type of sin was Jesus speaking of in the counsel outlined at Matthew 18:15-17?

He was speaking of matters that can be settled between those directly involved. But the sin is serious enough to merit disfellowshipping if the matter is not settled. For example, the sin might be slander, or it might involve fraud.—*w16.05*, p. 7.

What can you do to make Bible reading more beneficial?

You can do the following: Read with an open mind, seeking lessons that you can apply; ask yourself such questions as ‘How can I use this to help others?’; and use available tools to do research on the material you just read.—*w16.05*, pp. 24-26.

Is it wrong for a Christian to grieve even while believing in the resurrection?

Faith in the resurrection does not eliminate the deep loss a Christian may feel. Abraham mourned the death of Sarah. (Gen. 23:2) In time, the grief will soften.—*wp16.3*, p. 4.

Whom do the man with the secretary’s inkhorn, mentioned in Ezekiel chapter 9, and the six men with weapons symbolize?

We understand them to picture heavenly forces that were

involved in the destruction of Jerusalem and that will be involved in bringing destruction at Armageddon. In the modern-day fulfillment, the man with the inkhorn represents Jesus Christ, who marks those who will survive.—*w16.06*, pp. 16-17.

The Bible survived what sorts of threats?

It survived (1) the threat of decay of the materials used to write on, such as papyrus and parchment; (2) opposition by political and religious leaders who tried to destroy it; and (3) attempts by some to alter its message.—*wp16.4*, pp. 4-7.

What are ways in which a Christian might simplify his life?

Identify your actual needs, and eliminate unnecessary expenses. Prepare a realistic budget. Dispose of things you do not use, and pay off debts. Cut back on your employment, and plan how to expand your ministry.—*w16.07*, p. 10.

The Bible identifies what as more valuable than gold or silver?

Job 28:12, 15 shows that divine wisdom is better than gold or silver. As you seek it, strive to remain humble and strong in faith.—*w16.08*, pp. 18-19.

Is it proper for a brother today to have a beard?

In some cultures, a neat beard may be acceptable and may not detract from the Kingdom message. Still, some brothers might decide not to have a beard. (1 Cor. 8:9) In other cultures and localities, beards are not considered acceptable for Christian ministers.—*w16.09*, p. 21.

Why can we trust the Bible record of David versus Goliath?

The height given for Goliath is just six inches (15 cm) taller than that of the tallest man documented in modern times. David was a real person, as confirmed by an ancient inscription that mentions the house of David and by what Jesus said. The recorded geographic details match known facts.—*wp16.5*, p. 13.

How do knowledge, understanding, and wisdom differ?

A person who has knowledge takes in information, or facts. Someone who has understanding can see how one fact relates to another. But a person who has wisdom is able to combine knowledge with understanding and use them well.—*w16.10*, p. 18.



Throw All Your Anxiety on Jehovah

“Throw all your anxiety on [Jehovah], because he cares for you.”

—1 PET. 5:7.

WE LIVE in very stressful times. Satan the Devil is bitterly angry and “walks about like a roaring lion, seeking to devour someone.” (1 Pet. 5:8; Rev. 12:17) Therefore, it is not surprising that at times even we, God’s servants, experience some feelings of anxiety. After all, on occasion, God-fearing servants of Jehovah in the past, such as King David, had “anxious concern.” (Ps. 13:2) Recall, too, that the apostle Paul experienced “anxiety for all the congregations.” (2 Cor. 11:28) But what can we do when we are overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety?

² Our loving heavenly Father came to the aid of his servants in the past, and today he makes it possible for us to gain considerable relief from distress or anxiety. The Bible urges us: “Throw all your anxiety [“cares; worries,” ftn.] on him, because he cares for you.” (1 Pet. 5:7) How, though, can you do that? Let us consider four ways that you can do so—by means of heartfelt prayer, by reading God’s Word and meditating on

1, 2. (a) Why should we not be surprised when we experience some anxiety? (See opening picture.) (b) What will we consider in this article?

SONGS: 38, 7

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How can God’s Word relieve our anxiety?

How can you experience “the peace of God”?

How can the congregation help you to reduce anxiety?

it, by tapping into Jehovah's holy spirit, and by sharing your feelings with a trusted confidant. As we examine these four ways, see if you can identify practical steps that you want to take.

"THROW YOUR BURDEN ON JEHOVAH"

³ A first step we can take is to approach Jehovah in earnest prayer. When you are confronted by situations that cause uneasiness, apprehension, or anxiety, pour out your heart to your loving heavenly Father. The psalmist David begged Jehovah: "Listen to my prayer, O God." Then in the same psalm, he said: "Throw your burden on Jehovah, and he will sustain you." (Ps. 55:1, 22) After you have done all you can to solve a problem, heartfelt prayer will certainly accomplish more than worry. But how can prayer help you to avoid becoming overwhelmed by disquieting thoughts and anguish?—Ps. 94: 18, 19, *ftn.*

⁴ **Read Philippians 4:6, 7.** Jehovah can respond to our earnest, heartfelt, and persistent supplications. How? By giving us inner calm that can free our mind and heart of disturbing emotions. Many can testify to this, based on their own experience. In place of anxiety, a distressing sense of foreboding, God helped them to gain a profound sense of peace and tranquillity that actually surpassed human understanding. That can be your experience too. Thus "the peace of God" can triumph over any challenge you may face. You can fully trust Jehovah's compassionate promise: "Do not be anxious, for I am your God. I will

fortify you, yes, I will help you."—Isa. 41:10.

INNER PEACE FROM GOD'S WORD

⁵ A second way to gain inner peace is by reading Bible texts and meditating on them. Why is this important? The Bible contains practical spiritual guidance that can help you to avoid, reduce, or deal with anxiety. Do not overlook the fact that God's Word is helpful and refreshing because it contains the Creator's own words of wisdom. As you reflect on God's thoughts—day or night—and consider how best to use the Bible's practical guidance, you will be greatly strengthened. Jehovah specifically linked reading his Word with being "courageous and strong" and not being "struck with terror or fear."—Josh. 1:7-9.

⁶ In God's Word, we find Jesus' soothing sayings. His words and teachings were a source of refreshment to his listeners. Multitudes were drawn to him because he calmed troubled hearts, strengthened the weak, and consoled the depressed. (**Read Matthew 11:28-30.**) He showed loving consideration for others' spiritual, emotional, and physical needs. (Mark 6:30-32) Jesus' promise of support still applies. It can prove to be as true for you as it was for the apostles traveling with Jesus. You do not have to be in Jesus' physical presence to benefit. As heavenly King, Jesus continues to have and show empathy. Thus, when you are anxious, he can mercifully 'come to your aid' and 'help you at the right time.' Yes, Jesus can help you to cope with distress, and he can fill your

3. How can you "throw your burden on Jehovah" by means of prayer?

4. When we are anxious, why is prayer so important?

5. How can God's Word bring us inner peace?

6. Jesus' words can have what positive effect on you?

heart with hope and courage.—Heb. 2: 17, 18; 4:16.

GODLY QUALITIES PRODUCED BY GOD'S SPIRIT

⁷ Jesus promised that our Father in heaven will not fail to give holy spirit to those asking Him. (Luke 11:10-13) This puts at your disposal a third, powerful means to alleviate anxiety—the fruitage of the spirit. These positive qualities that are produced by God's active force reflect the very personality of the almighty God. (**Read Galatians 5:22, 23**; Col. 3: 10) As you cultivate the fruitage of that spirit, your relationship with others will improve. Thus, you will find that many situations that could otherwise cause anxiety do not arise. Reflect briefly on how the fruitage of the spirit will help you.

⁸ *“Love, joy, peace.”* When you strive to deal respectfully with people, you will likely find that you are better able to deal with your own negative emotions. How is that so? Well, as you show brotherly love, tender affection, and honor, you will avoid situations that could cause anxiety.—Rom. 12:10.

⁹ *“Patience, kindness, goodness.”* You promote peaceful relationships by heeding the admonition: “Become kind to one another, tenderly compassionate, freely forgiving one another.” (Eph. 4: 32) In so doing, you prevent situations from developing that could otherwise cause anxiety. Also, you can deal more effectively with situations that arise because of human imperfection.

7. How will you benefit as God responds when you ask for holy spirit?

8-12. How can the fruitage of God's holy spirit help you to deal with or avoid stressful situations?

¹⁰ *“Faith.”* Today, our anxiety is often related to concern over money and material possessions. (Prov. 18:11) Accordingly, strong faith in Jehovah's loving care can help you to cope with or avoid such anxiety. How is that? You can avoid much anxiety by heeding the apostle Paul's inspired counsel to be “content with the present things.” Paul adds: “For [God] has said: ‘I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.’ So that we may be of good courage and say: ‘Jehovah is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?’”—Heb. 13:5, 6.

¹¹ *“Mildness, self-control.”* Think how practical and effective it is for you to display those qualities. Thus, you will likely avoid actions that could cause anxiety for you personally, and you will benefit by avoiding “malicious bitterness, anger, wrath, screaming, and abusive speech.”—Eph. 4:31.

¹² Admittedly, you will need humility to yield to “the mighty hand of God” and to “throw all your anxiety on him.” (1 Pet. 5:6, 7) But as you cultivate humility, you will be on a path that results in God's favor and support. (Mic. 6:8) By maintaining a realistic estimate of your physical, mental, and emotional abilities, you will be less likely to become overwhelmed by anxiety, for you will be relying on God.

“NEVER BE ANXIOUS”

¹³ At **Matthew 6:34 (read)**, we find Jesus' profound advice: “Never be anxious.” It may, however, seem difficult to follow that advice. What did Jesus mean when he said: “Never be anxious”? Obviously, he could not have meant that

13. What did Jesus mean when he said: “Never be anxious”?



Some Practical Ways to Reduce Anxiety

Set appropriate priorities.

PHILIPPIANS 1:10, 11



Have realistic expectations.

ECCLESIASTES 7:16



Make room in your schedule for some quiet time each day.

MATTHEW 14:23

a servant of God would not at some point in life experience anxiety; we have already noted the words of David and of Paul on this matter. But Jesus was helping his disciples to realize that *undue*, or *extreme*, anxiety does not solve problems. Each day has its own challenges, so Christians do not need to add anxious thoughts about the past or the future to the concerns of the present. How can you apply Jesus' advice and experience relief from debilitating anxiety?

¹⁴ Some anxiety may be caused by a person's past actions or failings. He may be plagued with guilt about something he did in the past, even many years ago. At times, King David felt that his 'errors loomed over his head.' He admitted: "My anguished heart makes me groan aloud." (Ps. 38:3, 4, 8, 18) In that situation, what was the wise thing for David to do? What did he do? He trusted in Jehovah's mercy and forgiveness. With conviction he said: "Happy is the one whose transgression is pardoned."

—**Read Psalm 32:1-3, 5.**

¹⁵ At other times, you may become anxious about the present. For instance, when David wrote Psalm 55, he feared

14. How can you deal with anxiety about your past?

15. (a) Why should you not be anxious about the present? (b) What practical steps can you take to reduce anxiety? (See the box "Some Practical Ways to Reduce Anxiety.")

for his life. (Ps. 55:2-5) Nevertheless, he did not allow anxiety to destroy his confidence in Jehovah. David made his problems a subject of fervent prayer, but he also understood the value of taking practical steps to deal with the cause of the anxiety. (2 Sam. 15:30-34) Learn a lesson from David. Instead of allowing anxiety to overwhelm you, take what steps you can to deal with the situation and then confidently leave matters in Jehovah's hands.

¹⁶ Unwarranted anxiety often results if a Christian agonizes over possible future problems. However, you need not be consumed by anxiety, or worry, over events that you do not know anything about. Why not? Because things often do not turn out to be as bad as we feared they might be. Moreover, there is no situation beyond the control of the God on whom you can throw all your anxiety. His very name is understood to mean "He Causes to Become." (Ex. 3:14) The profound meaning of the divine name assures us that God is fully capable of seeing to it that his purposes in behalf of his servants are carried out. You can be certain that God can reward his faithful ones and help them deal with anxiety about the past, the present, and the future.

16. How can the meaning of God's name strengthen your faith?



Enjoy Jehovah's creation.

PSALM 104:24, 25



Keep a sense of humor.

PROVERBS 17:22



Get regular exercise.

1 TIMOTHY 4:8



Get sufficient sleep.

ECCLESIASTES 4:6

HEARTFELT COMMUNICATION

¹⁷ A fourth way to help you cope with anxiety is good communication, sharing your feelings with a trusted confidant. A marriage mate, a close friend, or a congregation elder may be able to help you to put your anxiety into perspective. “Anxiety in a man’s heart weighs it down, but a good word cheers it up.” (Prov. 12:25) Frank and honest communication can do much to help you to understand and deal with your concerns. The Bible tells us: “Plans fail when there is no consultation, but there is accomplishment through many advisers.”—Prov. 15:22.

¹⁸ Jehovah also helps Christians to deal with anxieties by means of weekly congregation meetings. There you can associate with fellow believers who are concerned about you and who want to encourage one another. (Heb. 10:24, 25) Such “an interchange of encouragement” will help to replenish your spiritual resources and make it easier for you to deal with any anxiety.—Rom. 1:12.

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD —YOUR GREATEST STRENGTH

¹⁹ Consider how a congregation elder in Canada learned the value of throwing his anxiety on Jehovah. He has a high-

stress job as a schoolteacher and counselor, and he also has had to deal with an anxiety disorder. How has this brother coped? “Above all,” he explains, “I find that working hard to fortify my relationship with Jehovah gives me the greatest strength to cope with emotional difficulties. The support of true friends and spiritual brothers is vital in times of distress. I am open and honest with my wife about my feelings. Fellow elders and our circuit overseer were invaluable in helping me put things into perspective. I also sought medical help, made changes in the way I managed my time, and set aside time to relax and exercise. Gradually, I began to feel more in control. When there are things that I cannot control, I leave matters in Jehovah’s hands.”

²⁰ In summary, we have noted the value of throwing our anxiety on God by means of heartfelt prayer and by reading his Word and meditating on it. We also considered the value of cultivating the fruitage of his spirit, sharing our feelings with a trusted confidant, and drawing strength from upbuilding Christian association. The next article will discuss how Jehovah further sustains us by providing us with the hope of a reward.—Heb. 11:6.

17, 18. How can good communication help you to cope with anxiety?

19. Why can you be confident that your relationship with God will strengthen you?

20. (a) How can we throw our anxiety on God? (b) What will we discuss in the following article?



Jehovah Rewards Those Who Earnestly Seek Him

“Whoever approaches God must believe that he is and that he becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him.”—HEB. 11:6.

SONGS: 136, 139

CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

How can we be sure that Jehovah rewards his servants?

How did Jehovah bless his servants in the past?

What rewards do we receive from Jehovah?

WE LOVE Jehovah “because he first loved us.” (1 John 4:19) As one expression of his tender love, Jehovah has taken the initiative to bless his loyal servants. The more we love our God, the stronger our faith becomes, not only that he exists, but that he unfailingly rewards those whom he loves.—**Read Hebrews 11:6.**

² Being a rewarder is an integral part of who Jehovah is and what he does. Our faith is not complete unless we are firmly convinced that God will reward those who earnestly seek him, for “faith is the assured expectation of what is hoped for.” (Heb. 11:1) Yes, faith involves the certain expectation of God’s promised blessings. How, though, does the hope of a reward benefit us? How has Jehovah rewarded his servants, both in the past and in the present? Let us see.

JEHOVAH PROMISES TO BLESS HIS SERVANTS

³ Jehovah God has obligated himself to reward his faithful servants, so he invites us to reach out for his blessing. We

1, 2. (a) How are love and faith connected? (b) What questions will we consider?

3. What promise is found at Malachi 3:10?

read: “‘Test me out, please, . . .’ Jehovah of armies says, ‘to see whether I will not open to you the floodgates of the heavens and pour out on you a blessing until there is nothing lacking.’” (Mal. 3:10) We show our deep appreciation and gratitude when we accept Jehovah’s generous offer.

⁴ Jesus assured his disciples that if they would put the Kingdom first, God would support them. **(Read Matthew 6: 33.)** The certainty of Jesus’ promise was based on Jehovah’s perfect record of trustworthiness. Jesus knew that God’s promises never fail. (Isa. 55:11) We, in turn, can be certain that if we manifest heartfelt faith in Jehovah, he

will keep his promise: “I will never leave you, and I will never abandon you.” (Heb. 13:5) We can link that inspired statement with what Jesus said about seeking first the Kingdom and God’s righteousness.

⁵ The apostle Peter once asked Jesus: “We have left all things and followed you; what, then, will there be for us?” (Matt. 19:27) Instead of rebuking Peter for asking that question, Jesus told his disciples that they would be rewarded for their sacrifices. The faithful apostles and others will rule with him in heaven. But even now there are rewards. Jesus said: “Everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother

4. Why can we have confidence in Jesus’ assurance recorded at Matthew 6:33?

5. Why is Jesus’ reply to Peter faith-strengthening?

Jesus showed that his disciples would be rewarded for their sacrifices
(See paragraph 5)



or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit everlasting life.” (Matt. 19:29) His disciples would gain blessings far in excess of any personal sacrifices they might make. Are not spiritual fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, and children much more valuable than anything we have renounced or given up for the sake of the Kingdom?

“AN ANCHOR FOR THE SOUL”

⁶ By promising his worshippers a reward, Jehovah helps to sustain them during tests of integrity. Besides enjoying rich spiritual blessings now, Jehovah God’s faithful servants eagerly look forward to even greater blessings in the future. (1 Tim. 4:8) Yes, our being firmly convinced that Jehovah “becomes the rewarder of those earnestly seeking him” will help us to stand firm in the faith. —Heb. 11:6.

⁷ In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said: “Rejoice and be overjoyed, since your reward is great in the heavens, for in that way they persecuted the prophets prior to you.” (Matt. 5:12) Aside from those who will receive a reward in heaven, the prospect of everlasting life on a paradise earth is indeed reason to “rejoice and be overjoyed.” (Ps. 37:11; Luke 18:30) Whether heavenly or earthly, our hope can serve as “an anchor for the soul, both sure and firm.” (Heb. 6:17-20) Just as an anchor keeps a ship steady during a storm, the sure hope of a reward can help us to maintain our emotional, mental, and spiritual stability. It can help us to have the strength to endure hardships.

6. Why does Jehovah promise his worshippers a reward?

7. How does hope serve as an anchor?

⁸ Our Bible-based hope has the power to reduce present anxiety. God’s promises act like spiritual balm that soothes our anxious heart. How comforting it is for us to ‘throw our burden on Jehovah,’ knowing that ‘he will sustain us!’ (Ps. 55:22) We can have full confidence that God can do “more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.” (Eph. 3:20) Imagine that—not just abundantly and not superabundantly but “more than superabundantly”!

⁹ To receive the reward, we need to exercise full faith in Jehovah and be obedient to his directions. Moses told the nation of Israel: “Jehovah will surely bless you in the land that Jehovah your God is giving you to possess as an inheritance, but only if you strictly obey the voice of Jehovah your God and carefully observe all this commandment that I am giving you today. For Jehovah your God will bless you just as he has promised you.” (Deut. 15:4-6) Do you have full confidence that Jehovah will bless you if you continue to serve him faithfully? You certainly have good reason for such confidence.

JEHOVAH WAS THEIR REWARDER

¹⁰ The Bible was recorded for our benefit. It contains many accounts of how God did indeed reward faithful servants. (Rom. 15:4) Joseph was an outstanding example. As a result of a conspiracy by his brothers and the later treachery of his master’s wife, he found himself in an Egyptian prison. Was he cut off from his God? Not at all! “Jehovah continued

8. How does hope have the power to reduce anxiety?

9. How sure can we be of Jehovah’s blessing?

10, 11. How did Jehovah reward Joseph?

with Joseph and kept showing loyal love to him . . . Jehovah was with Joseph and Jehovah made whatever he did successful.” (Gen. 39:21-23) Joseph, through those trialsome times, waited patiently on his God.

¹¹ Years later, Pharaoh released Joseph from prison and made this humble slave second ruler in Egypt. (Gen. 41:1, 37-43) When his wife bore him two sons, “Joseph named the firstborn Manasseh, for he said, ‘God has made me forget all my trouble and all the house of my father.’ And he named the second one Ephraim, for he said, ‘God has made me fruitful in the land of my affliction.’” (Gen. 41:51, 52) Because Joseph remained loyal to God, he was rewarded with blessings that resulted in the preservation of life both for the Israelites and for the Egyptians. The point is, Joseph recognized that it was Jehovah who had rewarded him and blessed him.—Gen. 45:5-9.

¹² Jesus Christ likewise remained obedient to God through various tests of his faith, and he was rewarded. What helped him to cope? God’s Word explains: “For the joy that was set before him he endured a torture stake, despising shame.” (Heb. 12:2) Jesus certainly found joy in being able to sanctify God’s name. Furthermore, he was rewarded with his Father’s approval and many wonderful privileges. The Bible reports that he “has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.” And elsewhere we read: “God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name.”—Phil. 2:9.

12. How did Jesus remain faithful when under trial?

JEHOVAH DOES NOT FORGET WHAT WE DO

¹³ We can be sure that Jehovah appreciates every effort that we make to serve him. He understands any insecurities or self-doubts that we may have. He shows us compassion if financial burdens weigh us down or our health or emotions tend to limit our sacred service. And we can have full confidence in Jehovah’s tender regard for what his servants do to stay faithful to him.—**Read Hebrews 6: 10, 11.**

¹⁴ Bear in mind, too, that we can approach the “Hearer of prayer” with the confidence that he will give attention to our concerns. (Ps. 65:2) “The Father of tender mercies and the God of all comfort” will unstintingly give us the emotional and spiritual support that we need, perhaps doing so by means of our fellow worshippers. (2 Cor. 1:3) It touches Jehovah’s heart when we show compassion toward others. “The one showing favor to the lowly is lending to Jehovah, and He will repay him for what he does.” (Prov. 19:17; Matt. 6:3, 4) Hence, when we unselfishly help those who are in difficulty, Jehovah views our good deed as a loan made to Him. And he promises to reward that kindness.

REWARDS NOW AND FOREVER

¹⁵ Spirit-anointed Christians are sustained by the prospect of receiving “the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will give . . . as a reward in that day.” (2 Tim. 4:7, 8) You will, however, not be shortchanged if

13, 14. How does Jehovah feel about what we do for him?

15. What rewards do you look forward to? (See opening picture.)

God has given you a different prospect. Millions of Jesus' "other sheep" eagerly anticipate the future reward of everlasting life on a paradise earth. There "they will find exquisite delight in the abundance of peace."—John 10:16; Ps. 37:11.

¹⁶ At times, we may feel that we are accomplishing little, or we might wonder whether Jehovah is pleased with our efforts. We may even doubt that we qualify to receive any kind of reward. Let us never forget, though, that "God is greater than our hearts and knows all things." **(Read 1 John 3:19, 20.)** He rewards every expression of sacred service that springs from a heart motivated by faith and love, no matter how insignificant it might seem to the giver of the sacrifice.—Mark 12:41-44.

¹⁷ Even in these dark last days of Satan's wicked system of things, Jehovah is blessing his people. He makes sure that true worshippers flourish in their spiritual estate, which is unprecedented in its spiritual abundance. (Isa. 54:13) As Jesus promised, Jehovah rewards us *now* by letting us be part of a loving family of spiritual brothers and sisters, a family that is international in scope. (Mark 10:29, 30) Furthermore, those who earnestly seek God are rewarded with the incomparable blessings of peace of mind, contentment, and happiness.—Phil. 4:4-7.

¹⁸ Jehovah's servants around the world can testify to the wonderful rewards they receive from him. For example, Bianca from Germany says: "I can-

not thank Jehovah enough for helping me with my worries and for being at my side each day. The world out there is chaotic and bleak. But as I work closely with Jehovah, I feel secure in his arms. Whenever I make personal sacrifices for him, he gives me back a hundredfold in blessings."

¹⁹ Or consider 70-year-old Paula in Canada who is severely restricted by spina bifida. "Reduced mobility does not necessarily mean a reduced ministry," she says. "I take advantage of different forms of service, such as telephone and informal witnessing. For my own encouragement, I keep a notebook with scriptures and thoughts from our publications that I can consult from time to time. I call it 'My Survival Notebook.' Discouragement is temporary if we focus on Jehovah's promises. Jehovah is always there to help us, regardless of our circumstances." Your situation may be quite different from that of Bianca or of Paula. Yet, you can likely think of ways in which Jehovah has rewarded you and those around you. How good it is to reflect on how Jehovah is rewarding you at this time and how he will reward you in the future!

²⁰ Never forget that your heartfelt prayers and freeness of speech with God "will be richly rewarded." You can be certain that "after you have done the will of God, you [will] receive the fulfillment of the promise." (Heb. 10:35, 36) So let us now continue to strengthen our faith and to work whole-souled as to Jehovah. We can do this, knowing that it is from Jehovah that we will receive the due reward.—**Read Colossians 3:23, 24.**

16. What comfort do we find at 1 John 3:19, 20?

17. What are some of the rewards that we enjoy now?

18, 19. How do Jehovah's servants feel about the rewards they receive?

20. What can we look forward to if we continue to serve Jehovah whole-souled?



A Mild Temper

The Way of Wisdom

Toñi, a professional caregiver, rang the doorbell, and a middle-aged woman answered. The woman insulted Toñi and berated her for not arriving earlier to care for the woman's elderly mother. Toñi was not late for work. Yet, she calmly apologized to the woman for the misunderstanding.

ON THE following visit, the woman lashed out at Toñi again. How did she react? "It was a very difficult situation," she admitted. "Her verbal abuse was unjustified." Nonetheless, Toñi apologized again and told the woman that she understood the suffering she was experiencing.

Had you been Toñi, how do you think you would have reacted? Would you have tried to display a mild temper? Would it have been a struggle for you to control your temper? Undeniably, it may

not be easy to maintain composure in situations such as the one described above. When we are under stress or provocation, it is a real challenge to remain mild-tempered.

The Bible, however, encourages Christians to be mild-tempered. In fact, God's Word associates that disposition with wisdom. "Who is wise and understanding among you?" asks James. "Let him by his fine conduct demonstrate works performed with a mildness that comes from wisdom." (Jas. 3:13) In what way is

a mild temper evidence of the wisdom from above? And what can help us to cultivate this godly trait?

THE WISDOM OF A MILD-TEMPERED SPIRIT

A mild temper can defuse tension.

“A mild answer turns away rage, but a harsh word stirs up anger.”—Prov. 15:1.

An angry reaction can make an unpleasant situation worse because it adds fuel to the fire. (Prov. 26:21) In contrast, a mild-tempered reply often has a calming effect. It can even soften the attitude of a person who is hostile.

Toñi saw that occur. Noting Toñi’s mild-tempered response, the woman gave way to tears. She explained that she was beset by personal and family problems. Toñi gave a fine witness, and a Bible study was started—all as a result of her calm and peaceable demeanor.

A mild temper can make us happy.

“Happy are the mild-tempered, since they will inherit the earth.”—Matt. 5:5.

Why are mild-tempered ones happy? By clothing themselves with mildness, many individuals who were once aggressive are now happy. Their life has improved, and they know that a wonderful future awaits them. (Col. 3:12) Adolfo, a circuit overseer in Spain, recalls what his life was like before he came into the truth.

“My life was going nowhere,” says Adolfo. “My temper always used to get the better of me, so much so that even some of my friends feared my arrogant,

violent reactions. Finally came a turning point. In a brawl, I received six stab wounds and almost bled to death.”

Now, however, by word and example, Adolfo teaches others to be mild-tempered. Many are drawn to his warm and pleasant personality. Adolfo says he is happy for the changes he has been able to make. And he is grateful to Jehovah for helping him to cultivate a mild temper.

A mild temper makes Jehovah happy.

“Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, so that I can make a reply to him who taunts me.”—Prov. 27:11.

Jehovah is, in effect, being taunted by his archenemy, the Devil. God has every reason to be wrathful over such deliberate insults, yet the Bible describes Jehovah as being “slow to anger.” (Ex. 34:6) When we strive to imitate God’s slowness to anger and his mildness, we follow a course of wisdom that pleases Jehovah greatly.—Eph. 5:1.

The present world is often a hostile environment. We may run into people who are “boastful, haughty, blasphemers, . . . slanderers, without self-control, fierce.” (2 Tim. 3:2, 3) Still, that should not prevent a Christian from cultivating a mild spirit. God’s Word reminds us that “the wisdom from above is . . . peaceable, reasonable.” (Jas. 3:17) By displaying a peaceable and reasonable spirit, we give evidence that we have acquired godly wisdom. Such wisdom will move us to respond mildly when provoked and will draw us ever closer to the Source of infinite wisdom, Jehovah.

How to Cultivate a Mild Temper

If someone treats you harshly or unfairly, what can help you to keep your emotions in check and to react in a way that brings joy to Jehovah? Why not meditate on the following valuable principles?

1

SHUN “THE SPIRIT OF THE WORLD.”—1 Cor. 2:12.

Many people equate mildness with weakness. They reason that to be strong, a person has to be assertive and aggressive. Such thinking reflects the spirit of this world—not the wisdom from above. In fact, the Bible makes it clear that a mild temper has great strength. “By long forbearing *and* calmness of spirit a . . . ruler is persuaded, and soft speech breaks down the most bonelike resistance.”—Prov. 25:15, *The Amplified Bible*.

Questions for reflection:

Do I view a mild temper as a sign of strength or of weakness?

Am I endeavoring to avoid “the works of the flesh,” such as fits of anger and strife?
—Gal. 5:19, 20.

2

TAKE TIME TO MEDITATE.

“The heart of the righteous one meditates before answering, but the mouth of the wicked blurts out bad things.” (Prov. 15:28) If we speak in the heat of the moment, we may blurt out words that we will later regret. However, by meditating or thinking before we speak, we will be able to collect our thoughts, respond mildly, and encourage a favorable reaction.

Questions for reflection:

How will a quick temper affect me?

Can I, for the sake of peace, overlook the injustice?
—Prov. 19:11.

3

PRAY OFTEN.

Pray for holy spirit, the most powerful force in the universe. (Luke 11:13) Remember that the fruitage of God’s holy spirit includes mildness and self-control. “Incessant prayer to Jehovah has been an invaluable help to me, particularly when situations have been tense,” recalls Adolfo. Jehovah will likewise answer our fervent pleas for holy spirit if we “persevere in prayer.”
—Rom. 12:12.

Questions for reflection:

Do I regularly pray that Jehovah examine my heart and my motives?

Do I ask him for his holy spirit and the wisdom to act in a way that pleases him?
—Ps. 139:23, 24; Jas. 1:5.

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