

# Awake!

SEPTEMBER 2010



## Loneliness

How Can You Cope?

# Awake!

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# Loneliness

## How Can You Cope? 3-9

What factors contribute to loneliness?

What can you do to prevent feeling alone?

How have others successfully overcome this troubling emotion?



# Loneliness

## in a World of Mass Connection

**C**ELL-PHONE calls, text messages, e-mails, online social networks, chat rooms—there has never been a time when the means of communicating were so numerous and easy to come by. Yet, in this world of mass connection, many people—young and old—feel very lonely. Why?

In their book *Loneliness—Human Nature and the Need for Social Connection*, researchers John T. Cacioppo and William Patrick thoroughly address the subject of loneliness. They refer to a study that says that “increased Internet use can increase social isolation as well as depression when it replaces more tangible forms of human contact.”

The hectic pace of life imposed by modern society is hardly conducive to warm human contact. A smile and the affection that can be seen in a person’s eyes cannot generally be conveyed over the phone or through a message on a computer screen.

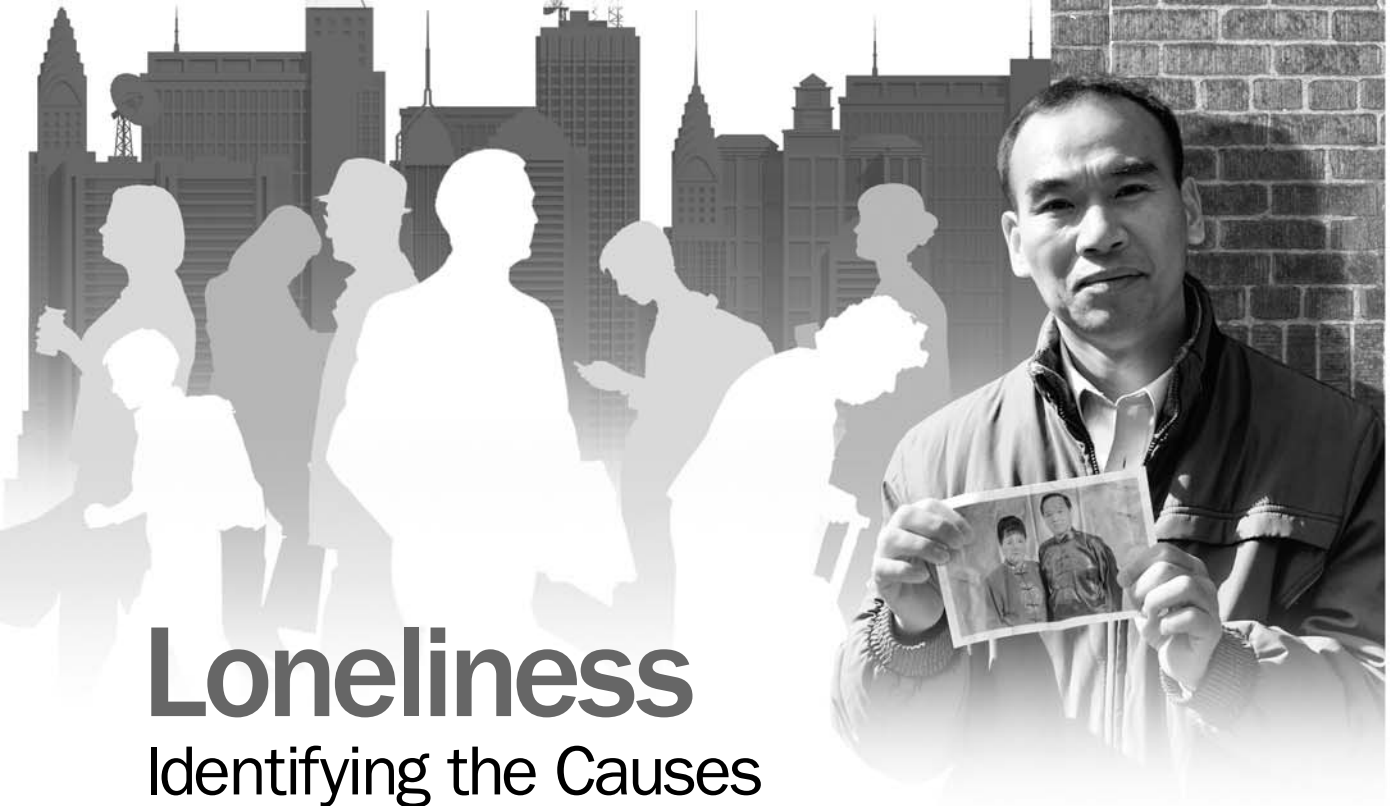
The above can be true in the workplace but even more so within the family circle. In

many homes family members come and go without sharing meals or conversation. Adolescent children have their own computer and live virtually isolated from the rest of the family. Ironically, in spite of their electronic communication gadgets, many youngsters feel lonely.

These days, even the bonds of marriage can be threatened by feelings of loneliness. Lack of communication between marriage partners can bring about a situation in which the two lead parallel lives, moving in lines that seldom meet. A feeling of being alone while living with a marriage mate is one of the most distressing forms of loneliness.

Single parents in particular may have to contend with feelings of loneliness. The world of mass connection, among many other things, can cut off companionship with their children, causing feelings of aloneness to increase. Also, many single people long to have a companion, but their emotional needs remain unfulfilled.

Loneliness has become a social evil that can contribute to alcoholism, overeating, drug abuse, promiscuous sexual behavior, and even suicide. It is therefore important to identify the causes of loneliness. Taking this first step can lead to success in coping with the problem.



# Loneliness

## Identifying the Causes

**L**ONELINESS is not the same as solitude. Rather, according to one dictionary, loneliness “more often suggests isolation accompanied by a longing for company.” The same dictionary explains that solitude can refer to the situation of “one who by wish . . . is cut off from normal contacts.”

So solitude can be desirable under some circumstances. Many often seek it for prayer or meditation, as did Jesus Christ. (Matthew 14:13; Luke 4:42; 5:16; 6:12) Loneliness, on the other hand, is a painful feeling. What can cause feelings of loneliness?

### ● Isolation in Crowded Cities

In big cities thousands—even millions—of people live in close proximity. Yet, paradoxically, this cramming of people together engenders widespread loneliness. The hustle and bustle of city life can prevent many from really getting to know their neighbors. Hence, city dwellers end up living among strangers. The all-too-common distrust of strangers and the desire to protect one’s privacy may indeed play a big role in the incidence of loneliness in big cities.

## Awake!®

**THIS JOURNAL IS PUBLISHED** for the enlightenment of the entire family. It shows how to cope with today’s problems. It reports the news, tells about people in many lands, examines religion and science. But it does more. It probes beneath the surface and points to the real meaning behind current events, yet it always stays politically neutral and does not exalt one race above another. Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator’s promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things.

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## ● Inhuman Work Methods

The way many large business concerns and industries are managed has led their employees at all levels to feel lonely and inadequate. Workers often experience unrelenting pressure and stress.

Moreover, within large companies, the systematic relocation of staff creates feelings of insecurity, isolation, and loneliness among workers. Commenting on a spate of suicides

**“The language barrier, the lack of friends, and the cold climate all contributed to making me feel very lonely”**

among the personnel of some French corporations, the *International Herald Tribune* said that many French workers feel “pushed beyond their limits by the pace of economic change.”

## ● Cold Communication

In Japan, Professor Tetsuro Saito said: “Communication ability is bound to decline as cell phones and other devices are now getting between people.” In Australia, *The Sunday Telegraph* reported: “Technology is . . . causing people to become more insular. People . . . e-mail or text one another rather than talk.”

Describing a reason for her feelings of loneliness, 21-year-old Rachel, who lives

in France, complained: “I find that people make less of an effort to see you, as they believe that texting, e-mailing, and chatting online is enough. But it only makes me feel more lonely.”

## ● A Changed Environment

The economic crisis has caused widespread mobility, obliging people to relocate in order to keep their jobs or find work. Change of residence wrenches people away from their neighbors, their friends, their school, and sometimes their family. Those who are thus uprooted feel like a plant that has been transplanted but has left its roots behind.

Francis remembers the day he arrived in France from Ghana. He explains, “The language barrier, the lack of friends, and the cold climate all contributed to making me feel very lonely.”

Recalling her arrival in England as an immigrant, Behjat confides: “I found it difficult to adjust to the local culture. I had acquaintances but no real friends or family members with whom I could discuss matters and really express my feelings.”

## ● Loss of a Loved One

The death of a marriage mate leaves a huge void in the life of the surviving mate. This can be especially true of a person who has nursed his or her spouse over a long period. Feelings of total emptiness often occur.

Fernande, a widow who lives in Paris, explains, “What is hardest for me is no longer

**Languages:** Afrikaans, Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Armenian, Bislama, Bulgarian, Cebuano, Chichewa, Chinese (Simplified), Chinese (Traditional)\* (audio Mandarin only), Chitonga, Cibemba, Croatian, Czech,\* Danish,\* Dutch,\* English,\* Estonian, Ewe, Fijian, Finnish,\* French,\* Georgian, German,\* Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Hiligaynon, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Igbo, Iloko, Indonesian, Italian,\* Japanese,\* Kannada, Kinyarwanda, Kirghiz, Kirundi, Korean,\* Latvian, Lingala, Lithuanian, Luvale, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,\* Polish,\* Portuguese,\* Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,\* Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Silozi, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,\* Swahili, Swedish,\* Tagalog, Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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being able to confide in my best friend—my husband.” Anny states that she misses her husband “particularly when having important decisions to make concerning health problems or other matters.”

### ● Divorce, Separation, Unwanted Singleness

A divorce or separation often leaves in its wake feelings of loneliness and failure. Children commonly suffer the most, much more than was previously realized. Some experts believe that children of divorce are more liable to become lonely adults.

Those who are unmarried because they cannot find a suitable marriage mate commonly experience periods of loneliness. Such feelings may be intensified when others make tactless remarks, such as, “Wouldn’t you be happier married?”

Single parents too experience loneliness. Parenthood involves not only joys but also problems, and single parents have to solve these without a partner to consult.

### ● Old Age and Youthful Inexperience

The elderly may often feel lonely, even if they are not neglected by family members. Relatives or friends may be able to visit occasionally, but what about the other times—perhaps the days or weeks when no one visits?

At the other end of the age scale, young people commonly suffer loneliness. Many become addicted to solitary recreation—to watching TV, playing video games, and spending countless hours alone in front of their computer.

Is it possible to find a solution to this increasing trend? How can one cope with loneliness?

## How You Can Find Solutions

**I**F YOU suffer from loneliness, it might be helpful to ask yourself: ‘Are there things that I can do to improve matters? Could it be that I need to make some changes in my life? If so, what are they?’ The following questions may help you to make a personal analysis and find satisfying solutions.

### **Do I Need a Change of Outlook?**

Loneliness can happen to anyone. But this negative emotion becomes a real problem only when it persists. If it does, it may be a warning signal that something has gone wrong with your outlook on life. The problem could stem from the way you act in the company of others. Some people may inadvertently

create, as it were, a barbed-wire fence around themselves, discouraging people from offering their friendship. Sometimes all that is needed is a change in outlook.

Consider Sabine’s experience when she immigrated to England. “It takes time,” she said, “for trust to develop between new friends, so that you can relax and be confident in each other’s company. Why not ask others about their upbringing or background? I was told: ‘No culture is the right culture. Take the best out of all of them.’” Yes, as Sabine was encouraged to do, you may want to find qualities in the culture of others that will be beneficial for you to imitate.



***Make friends with people who are not of your own age group***

### **Do I Shy Away From Others?**

You might ask yourself: ‘Do I have a tendency to stay away from others? Would they be more friendly if I was friendlier with them?’ If you feel this may be the case, make an effort to be more outgoing. Roselise, a 30-year-old who moved from Guadeloupe to England, said, “Those who feel lonely have the tendency to isolate themselves.” So she advised: “Look for others who seem to be lonely too. Take the initiative and speak with them. Sometimes it only takes a question to begin a lasting friendship.”

It takes time and effort, though, to develop a close friendship. Learning to listen is a good way to start. By listening effectively, you will be in a better position to talk about things the other person finds interesting. Remember, fellow-feeling engenders friendship!

### **Is Negative Thinking My Problem?**

A low opinion of yourself can be a barrier to striking up friendships. Ask yourself, ‘Do I have an inordinate tendency to think negatively of myself?’ Abigaïl, a 15-year-old from

Ghana, admits: “Sometimes I had negative thoughts that made me feel lonely. I felt unloved and worthless.” You can be sure that if you reach out to others and help them in some way, they will not consider you worthless. They may reciprocate by offering you their friendship. So why not make the first move?

Positive thinking will also help you to make friends with those who are not of your own age group. A friendly relationship with a person somewhat older or younger than you are can be rewarding. A major factor in young Abigaïl’s overcoming her loneliness was her reaching out to older ones. She explained, “I benefited from their experience in life.”

### **Do I Isolate Myself?**

Many lonely ones find a measure of relief by watching TV or playing video games for long periods of time or by spending hours at their computer. But when they turn off these gadgets, they are as lonely as before. Elsa, a 21-year-old from Paris, admits, “Television and video games can become like a drug that



## HOW I RELIEVE MY LONELINESS

**Anny, widow:** “I try to control my thinking and to see the positive side of my situation.”

**Carmen, single:** “I have learned not to be ‘addicted’ to the past but to move forward and start new relationships.”

**Fernande, widow:** “If you put forth effort to help others, you forget your own troubles.”

**Jean-Pierre, single:** “I regularly take long walks, during which I open up my heart to God in prayer.”

**Bernard, widower:** “I keep in touch with my friends by telephone, not to recall sad memories, but for the pleasure of keeping in contact.”

**David, single:** “Although by nature I enjoy solitude, I have made a point of opening up to others.”

**Lorennna, single:** “I take the initiative to approach people and befriend them.”

**Abigail, age 15:** “I spend time with adult friends and benefit from their experience.”

**Cherry, single:** “I found that if you tell people that you are lonely, they make more of an effort to be friendly with you.”

affects a person to the point where he no longer wants to make friends.”

A downside of TV viewing is that it provides no interaction, exchange of thoughts, or opportunities to make friends. Video games are much the same—they take people into an imaginary world that disappears the moment they quit playing. Aimlessly surfing the Internet can provide escape from reality, but it can also expose you to immoral material or to people who hide their identity. The Internet is not a good place to find or cultivate genuine friendships.

### Seeking a Marriage Mate?

Some single ones may pursue marriage simply to cure their loneliness. True, a kind and loving mate can bring tremendous joy to your life, but be careful not to rush into such an important decision as marriage.

Marriage is not necessarily the solution to the problem of loneliness. Married couples with communication problems are said to be “among the loneliest people in the world.” Unfortunately, there are more people in that situation than one may think. So if you wish to get married someday, why not address your problem of loneliness *before* you become romantically attached to someone? By adjusting your attitude and habits and by taking the initiative in making friends while you are still single, you may very well be establishing a solid foundation for a happy marriage.

### You Can Cope With Loneliness

There may be no immediate solution to your loneliness. But you can successfully cope by following the Golden Rule, which Jesus articulated. He said: “All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them.” (Matthew 7: 12) So if you want others to be friendly to you, be friendly to them. If you want others to open up to you, open up to them. Others may not reciprocate immediately, but in time some will. Even if they don’t, you will be happier because you tried.



Jesus stated another profound truth that may help you cope with loneliness: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.” (Acts 20:35) If you give of your time to help others—a child with his homework or an elderly person with shopping or keeping his or her house or garden neat—you will feel happier and perhaps begin a genuine friendship.

### Finding the Best of Friends

There are other practical ways to cope with loneliness. Get out and about. Go for a walk in the park or in the countryside, if possible. When alone at home, fill your time with creative things, such as sewing, doing odd jobs or repairs, or reading. One person wrote, “No distress has ever come upon me that an hour’s reading has not dispelled.” Many have found solace especially when reading Bible psalms.

Experts have observed that association with people of like religious faith can help one to overcome loneliness and can be beneficial to health as well. Where can you find people who strive to follow the Golden Rule? In a book on religious movements, an impartial observer wrote: “In their own congregational life [Jehovah’s] Witnesses form a genuine community of trust and acceptance.”

Jesus provided what might be called the hallmark of true Christianity when he told his disciples: “By this all will know that you are my disciples, *if you have love among yourselves.*” (John 13:35) This love—first for God and then for fellow worshippers—is what particularly identifies those who are practicing the true religion.—Matthew 22:37-39.

Forming a friendship with God is the very best way to cope with loneliness. With him as your friend, you need never feel alone!—Romans 8:38, 39; Hebrews 13:5, 6.

## STEPS TO OVERCOMING LONELINESS

- Develop a positive outlook
- Limit isolated recreation, such as TV viewing
- Seek friends who share your values, including people not your own age
- Above all, seek God’s friendship



## What Does It Mean to Turn the Other Cheek?

**I**N HIS celebrated Sermon on the Mount, Jesus Christ said: “Do not resist him that is wicked; but whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him.”—Matthew 5:39.

What did he mean? Was he urging Christians to become passive victims? Are Christians expected to suffer in silence and refuse to seek legal protection?

### What Jesus Meant

To understand what Jesus meant, we must consider the context of his statement, as well as his audience. Jesus prefaced his counsel quoted above with what his listeners already knew from the Holy Scriptures. He noted: “You heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye and tooth for tooth.’”—Matthew 5:38.

The passages Jesus referred to are found at Exodus 21:24 and Leviticus 24:20. It is noteworthy that in harmony with God’s Law, the “eye for eye” retribution mentioned in those scriptures was properly administered only after an offender had stood trial before the priests and judges who weighed the circumstances and the degree of deliberateness of the offense.—Deuteronomy 19:15-21.

In time the Jews distorted the application of this law. A 19th-century commentary on the Bible by Adam Clarke states: “It seems that the Jews had made this law [eye for eye, tooth for tooth] a ground for authorising private resentments, and all the excesses committed by a vindictive spirit. Revenge was often carried to the utmost extremity, and more evil returned than what had been received.” The Scriptures, however, did not authorize personal vendettas.





Jesus' teaching in his Sermon on the Mount regarding 'turning the other cheek' reflects the true spirit of God's Law to Israel. Jesus did not mean that if his followers are struck on one side of the face, they should stagger to their feet and offer the other side as a target. In Bible times, as is often true today, a slap was not intended to injure physically but was an insult intended to provoke a reaction, a confrontation.

Evidently, then, Jesus meant that if one person tried to goad another into a confrontation with a literal slap—or with stinging sarcasm—the person slapped should avoid retaliating. Instead, he should attempt to avoid what could become a vicious circle of rendering evil for evil.—Romans 12:17.

Jesus' words were very similar to those of King Solomon: "Do not say: 'Just as he did to me, so I am going to do to him. I shall repay to each one according to his acting.'" (Proverbs 24:29) A follower of Jesus would turn the other cheek in the sense of not allowing others to force him, as it were, into a "showdown."—Galatians 5:26, footnote.

### **What About Self-Defense?**

Turning the other cheek does not mean that a Christian would not defend himself against violent assailants. Jesus was not saying that we should never defend ourselves but, rather, that we should never strike offensively, that we should not allow ourselves to be provoked to take revenge. While it is wise to retreat whenever possible in order to avoid a fight, it is proper to take steps to protect ourselves and to seek the help of the police if we are a victim of a crime.

Jesus' early followers appropriately applied the same principle when defending their legal rights. For instance, the apostle Paul took advantage of the legal system of his time to protect his right to carry out Jesus' commission for his followers to preach. (Matthew 28:19, 20) During a preaching tour in the city of Philippi, Paul and his fellow missionary, Silas,

were arrested by the civil authorities and accused of breaking the law.

The two were then publicly flogged and thrown into prison without even a trial. When he had the opportunity, Paul invoked his rights as a Roman citizen. Upon learning of Paul's status as such, the authorities became fearful of the consequences and begged Paul and Silas to leave without causing trouble. So Paul set a precedent by 'defending and legally establishing the good news.'—Acts 16:19-24, 35-40; Philippians 1:7.

Like Paul, Jehovah's Witnesses have repeatedly been compelled to engage in legal battles in courts of law in order to preserve their Christian activity. This has been true even in lands that normally tout the religious freedoms their citizens enjoy. In matters regarding crime and personal safety too, Jehovah's Witnesses are not expected to turn the other cheek—taking abuse without defending themselves. They take legal steps to defend themselves.

Thus, as Christians, the Witnesses rightly take steps to establish certain legal rights, although they know that such measures often bring limited results. Hence, like Jesus, they leave these matters ultimately in God's hands, confident that He will act with full knowledge of the facts and that any retribution from Him will reflect perfect justice. (Matthew 26:51-53; Jude 9) True Christians remember that vengeance belongs to Jehovah.—Romans 12:17-19.

### **HAVE YOU WONDERED?**

- What actions should be avoided by Christians?—**Romans 12:17.**
- Does the Bible prohibit resorting to legal means to defend oneself?—**Philippians 1:7.**
- What confidence did Jesus have in his Father?—**Matthew 26:51-53.**



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# I Entered the Best Race of My Life

AS TOLD BY KARL-ERIK BERGMAN

Running fast gave me a wonderful feeling. I had natural ability, so sprinting became the focal point of my life.

Published in Aamulehti 8/21/1979

**I**N 1972, at the age of 17, I joined a sports club. Soon I realized how much work I had ahead of me if I was to become an elite athlete. Natural talent is not enough to become a champion sprinter. But I was ready to work.

When I was 22, I made the national team of Finland. The next year I had the best average time for the 100-meter sprint of any athlete in Finland. Injuries to my Achilles tendon and hamstrings, however, kept me from reaching my potential. But my enthusiasm for running was such that I turned to coaching promising athletes. In 1982, I made plans to move to California in the United States to study at a university and, in that more favorable climate, pursue a career in sports. I even purchased a plane ticket.

## What Changed My Life

One evening shortly before my scheduled trip to California, my doorbell rang. I opened the door to find two women who were Jehovah's Witnesses. They were very calm and

poised, qualities one wants to see in an athlete. I invited them in, and we sat down to talk. After an enlightening discussion, they left me a book entitled *You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*.<sup>\*</sup> I began reading it. When I was about halfway through, I realized that what it said was the truth. The women returned, and I asked them how I could become one of Jehovah's Witnesses. They answered that I would need a Bible study.

I not only accepted a personal Bible study but also began attending meetings with the Witnesses at the Kingdom Hall in Vantaa, where I was living. I found that what was taught was based on the Bible. In fact, the Bible truths that I was learning gradually began to change my views of what is really important in life. So I went to the travel agency and cashed in my airline ticket. I used part of the money to purchase a suit to wear to meetings and a briefcase for carrying my Bible and Bible literature. I was baptized as one of

<sup>\*</sup> Published by Jehovah's Witnesses but now out of print.



Jehovah's Witnesses at a convention in Helsinki in 1983.

### Other Athletes Join Me

As I learned Bible truths, I eagerly shared them with my friends. Their immediate reaction was disbelief. In fact, rumors soon began circulating that I had lost my mind. One after another, my friends started to avoid me. After my baptism, I would meet fellow athletes at the track, since I exercised regularly to stay in shape. Our discussions helped them to see that although I had changed, I had not lost my mind.

A number of these athletes, in time, came to appreciate that what I said was reasonable and worth considering. They noted that my foul language and aggressive personality had disappeared. A few were willing to learn more about the Bible. I enjoyed showing others that the Bible compares a Christian's life to an athletic event. We are in *the race for the prize of everlasting life*.—2 Timothy 2:5; 4:7, 8.

The truth is, real meaning and happiness in life lies, not in winning athletic events, but in doing what pleases our Creator. My discussions with other athletes caused some to re-examine their goals, and several came to embrace the Bible truths that reshaped my life. Happily, a number of them have shown the same zeal in serving God as they did in athletics.

One was Yvonne, a gifted 800-meter runner. She was the fastest female runner in Scandinavia at that distance and held Finland's national record. She successfully represented Finland in European athletic events. As a result of our discussions, Yvonne began to see the futility of reaching out for fame in today's world. She learned, as the Bible teaches, that this world is passing away, which will make way for a new one of God's making.—1 John 2:17.

Soon Yvonne accepted a Bible study. At the time, she was being courted by Jouko,

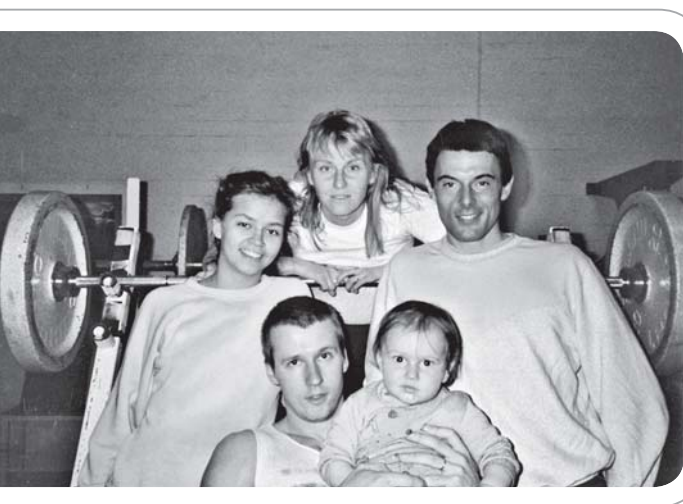
who was a talented member of Finland's national track team. He had, in fact, represented Finland in European and world championship athletic events. In time, Yvonne and Jouko moved to the United States to continue their athletic careers.

While there, Yvonne continued to study the Bible, and Jouko joined in. He did so to find a weak link and bring Yvonne back to her senses. But little by little, Bible truths sank into Jouko's heart too. Yvonne and Jouko married and later dedicated their lives to God, symbolizing this by water baptism. Today both of them are pioneers, full-time ministers of Jehovah's Witnesses.

I was also able to start a Bible study with Barbro, who was a Finnish champion in the women's 400-meters. She had recently represented Finland in European athletic events. Barbro and her husband, Jarmo, who had been a pole-vaulter, then moved to Sweden. There Barbro continued her Bible study, and Jarmo joined in. Both of them had been looking for a purpose in life, and after learning Bible truths, they were both baptized in Sweden. In time, Jarmo became a physiotherapist, and as a couple, they have been zealous in the ministry. Jarmo serves as an elder in the Christian congregation.

Then there was Heidi, also a gifted runner, who had just entered her teens. As her coach, I noticed that she had an interest in spiritual things. So one day I spoke to her about the Bible's teachings regarding God's Kingdom and the blessings that it will bring to the earth. I asked, "Do you believe that we can realize these promised blessings?"—Psalm 37:11, 29; Matthew 6:9, 10.

"Yes," she responded. She wanted to study the Bible. So I arranged for a Christian sister to study with her. After a few years, Heidi also symbolized her dedication to God by water baptism. In time, she grew up to be a beautiful spiritual woman and became my wife. She has been an excellent companion, keeping



***In the mid-1980's, Heidi and me with Yvonne above and Jouko and their daughter below***

alive her determination to serve God—a determination that if directed toward sports would have taken her a long way toward becoming an elite athlete.

My younger brother Peter, who was also involved in sports, at first reacted very negatively when I began to study the Bible. Then I gave him a copy of the *Live Forever* book. Later he came to me and said: “I have started to read this book, but I do not understand everything. Can you help me?” I arranged for another Witness to study with him, and after four months of study, he was baptized. Later he married, and his wife serves as a pioneer.

### **The Race Goes On**

Even before I was baptized, I had set my mind on becoming a missionary. Shortly after baptism, I began serving as a pioneer. I understood that if you are in the race for life, you have to put forth your best effort. My wife, Heidi, and I applied to Gilead, the missionary school of Jehovah’s Witnesses located in New York, and in 1994 we were accepted. After our graduation we were assigned to serve in Latvia, where Russian is commonly spoken.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had left people disillusioned. The Bible had been discredited and even banned, but we found that many were interested in what it had to say. Learning Russian was one of the toughest challenges I have ever faced. But after six years of missionary service in Latvia, I was appointed to visit and encourage congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses as a traveling overseer. This is the work I continue to do, accompanied by my faithful wife.

Over the years, I have been able to train many to progress in the race for life, “the real life” in God’s new world. (1 Timothy 6:19) Coaching athletes to reach their maximum requires understanding them. The coach has to help them develop their strengths and minimize their weaknesses. He needs to inspire them to carry on and reach their fullest potential.

It has surprised me to see how much a Christian has in common with an athlete, as the apostle Paul emphasized in his first letter to the Corinthians. A successful athlete stays focused on his physical training and does not simply fantasize about winning. He sets realistic goals for himself and systematically works on realizing them. If he loses sight of the focal point and stops pushing forward, it brings to nothing all the hard work he has already done. A true Christian must likewise keep focused.

A successful athlete also sticks to a regimen, remaining disciplined when it comes to his diet. It is similar with a true Christian. He doesn’t feed on immoral teachings, partaking of “the table of demons,” as the apostle Paul put it. Instead, he feeds on rich spiritual food provided by God in his Word, the Bible. (1 Corinthians 10:21) Moreover, when difficulties arise, a successful athlete stays positive. He admits his mistakes and makes corrections. “The way I am running is not uncertainly,” Paul wrote. “But I pummel my body,” he said, so as not to be disqualified. —1 Corinthians 9:24-27.



***With Heidi in the ministry today***

My wife and I still enjoy keeping in good physical shape by regularly working out in a gym. Yet, we do not allow this to hinder us from serving Jehovah, who created humans so wonderfully. (Psalm 139:14) Together we are focused on reaching the prize of “the real life”—the one “to come” in God’s new world.—1 Timothy 4:8.

After describing the “cloud of witnesses” of pre-Christian times, the apostle Paul urged: “Let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us.” (Hebrews 12:1) There is nothing more worthwhile to do than run that race. This is because its successful completion will bring all runners everlasting blessings.—2 Timothy 4: 7, 8.

***At the 2009 convention of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Helsinki. Yvonne and Jouko on our left and Jarmo and Barbro on our right***





# Yurts

## Mobile Homes of Central Asia

**W**HAT is soft and round and keeps you warm in winter but cool in summer? For nomadic peoples in parts of Central Asia, the answer is, A yurt! From the steppes of Mongolia and Kazakhstan to the mountains and valleys of Kyrgyzstan, these traditional dwellings were once a common sight.

A yurt is a round, tentlike structure that has decorative reed mats lining its walls. Its outer layers are sheets of felt made from sheep's wool. Yurts are lightweight and easy to assemble, yet sturdy and comfortable during hot summers and cold winters. The Kirghiz call the yurt a gray house; the Kazakhs, a felt house; and the Mongolians, a *ger*, meaning "home."

Yurts may be grayish-brown or bright white, depending on the color of the wool used. Kirghiz and Kazakh yurts are often decorated with local designs of wool dyed in bright colors that depict a ram's horn. In the

past, beautiful blankets and felt floor coverings were a reflection of a family's wealth and prestige.

A key piece of the yurt is the center ring, or wheel, to which all the roof poles connect. This sturdy, heavy ring gives stability to the structure. A felt flap that covers the ring can be thrown back to provide ventilation, or it can be closed during inclement weather. On clear nights families can throw back the felt flap and gaze up at the starry heavens through the opening in the roof.

### Ideal for Nomadic Life

A nomadic way of life is still followed in certain rural parts of such countries as Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Mongolia. In her book *Yurts—Living in the Round*, Becky Kemery tells how camels are still used to move yurts in Mongolia: "The frame is loaded onto one camel with equal loads on each side. The roof wheel is loaded last; it fits neatly over the hump. The felts are loaded onto a second camel. Where camels are not available, the herders use yak or horses to haul yurts on carts, or the yurts may be driven to their new destination in a Russian truck."

Mongolian yurts have straight poles and flatter roofs than others. They help the structures to weather the strong winds and strikes of lightning on the open plains. The yurts in Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan have a steep-







*Yurts set up along famous Lake Issyk Kul in Kyrgyzstan*

er, more rounded appearance. Usually, the entrance of a yurt is positioned to face the sun, allowing sunlight to enter. Inside, brightly decorated felt rugs and blankets are folded and stacked on wooden chests opposite the entrance. Customarily, an important guest or the family's eldest male sits in front of this colorful arrangement.

The side of the yurt to the right of the entrance is designated for women. All the instruments for cooking, cleaning, sewing, and feltmaking are kept here. The other side is for men. Saddles, riding whips, and other equipment for hunting and taking care of animals are found there.

### **The Yurt Survives Political Changes**

The lifestyle of the nomad took a dramatic turn after the Communist Revolution in 1917. Throughout Central Asia the Russians built schools, hospitals, and roads, introducing a more settled way of life.

Over time, many native peoples abandoned their nomadic lifestyle to live in villages and towns. Still, yurts are at times used during summer months by shepherds caring for sheep, cows, and horses on large collective ranches.

"As a teenager," recalls Maksat, a Kirghiz man now in his late 30's, "I helped my father care for the herd in his charge. By July, when the snow had melted and the passes were open, we drove our animals to the high mountain pastures.

"There we set up our yurt beside a mountain stream, where we had ample water for cooking and washing. We stayed there until the weather turned cold in early October." So the yurt still has a place in modern societies.

### **The Modern-Day Yurt**

In places such as Kyrgyzstan, it is common to see yurts along the road. They are used as stores or cafés, where visitors can enjoy local cuisine. Guests can also get the feel of traditional Kirghiz living by staying overnight in a yurt in the mountains of Kyrgyzstan or alongside pristine Lake Issyk Kul.

Yurts also play a role in some traditional Central Asian funeral customs. Maksat explains, "In Kyrgyzstan the deceased is placed inside the yurt, where family and friends can come to mourn the loss of their loved one."

In recent times the yurt has made an appearance in Western lands. Some people have promoted the yurt as practical and less intrusive on the environment. Most modern yurts, though, are quite different from those built in earlier times. High-tech materials are used in their construction, and they are often built to be more permanent structures.

While the origin of the yurt cannot be determined with certainty, the value of this structure is without question. The yurt remains rooted in the nomadic spirit of the people of Central Asia and is an enduring testimony to the ingenuity of resilient and adaptable people.



# From a Tiny Acorn to a Mighty Oak

***The oak can live more than a thousand years and reach 130 feet in height and more than 40 feet in girth***

● A tiny acorn, resembling a miniature egg in an eggcup, loses its hold on the tree and drops to the ground. Buried by a scurrying squirrel and then forgotten, the seed sprouts. In time, it becomes a majestic oak, the mightiest of Britain's native forest trees.

Celebrated in history and myth, the oak can live more than a thousand years. Some reach 130 feet in height! Old oaks are remarkable for their massive trunks and spreading boughs. While Britain has two native species of oak trees, worldwide there are about 450 varieties. What identifies them all is their seed, the tiny acorn.

The oak tree hosts a greater variety of wildlife than any other British tree. This includes large numbers of insect species. Many caterpil-

lars love to feast on the oak's tender summer leaves. But the tree defends itself. Maturing leaves develop unappetizing tannins.

Every part of the tree is inhabited. The vast array of insect life attracts a multitude of birds and spiders. Beetles bore away under the thick, fissured bark. Owls and colonies of bats lodge inside hollow trunks. Small animals such as mice, voles, rabbits, badgers, and foxes find shelter among the roots.

The oak has its own disposal agents. Each year a quarter of a million leaves fall from a full-grown tree. Fungi and bacteria decompose the leaf litter and recycle nutrients back into the soil. Some years, a tree will produce 50,000 acorns. Most are gathered or eaten by birds and animals. Mites and beetles dispose of dead wood, and fungi feed on the bark.

Oak timber is exceptionally strong and durable. It has long been a favorite for building houses and making fine furniture. It is ideal for making barrels in which to age beer and wine. And sturdy sailing ships built of oak helped the British Navy to dominate the seas for many years.

Oak timber is still valued. And the tree, an integral part of the British landscape, is justly admired for its strength, dependability, and endurance. From a tiny acorn grows a mighty oak—yet another marvel of creation!



## “It May Well Be Just a Song”

● Juliana was a dear elderly Christian in the Philippines who had developed Alzheimer’s disease. She no longer recognized even her own children. Nevertheless, I would go to see Juliana whenever I was in the area.

Juliana was bedridden and would just stare out the window. It was hard to be with her, as she no longer remembered me. She looked at me with big eyes, but there was no life or spark of recognition in them. “Do you still think about Jehovah?” I asked. I told her an experience and asked some more questions, but there was no indication that she understood. Then I started to sing a song. What happened next was so heartwarming!

Juliana turned her head, looked at me, and started to sing with me! Soon, I had to give up because I did not know all the words in the local Tagalog language by heart. But Juliana kept singing. She remembered all three stanzas. Quickly, I asked the person with me if she would borrow a songbook from a Witness who lived nearby. She returned with it right away. I didn’t know the number of the song but happened to open up to the right page. This time we sang the whole song together! When I asked Juliana if she remembered any other

songs, she started to sing an old Filipino love song.

“No, Juliana,” I said, “not a song from the radio but from the Kingdom Hall.”\* Then I began to sing another song from our songbook, and she joined right in with me. Her eyes were shining. Gone was the blank stare, and her smile reached from ear to ear.

By this time neighbors had run out to see where the singing was coming from. They stood at the window watching and listening to us. It was wonderful to see how the music touched Juliana’s heart! It had caused her to remember the words of the song.

I learned from this experience that you never know what will penetrate the darkness and reach those who are for the most part unable to understand or communicate. *It may well be just a song.*

Not long after the above occurred, Juliana died. I was reminded of the experience when listening to the stirring new recorded music released by Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2009. You may want to inquire of them locally as to how you might obtain these beautiful, moving recordings.

\* The name of the meeting places of Jehovah’s Witnesses.



## YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

# How can I stop being so sad?



“When everyone else falls apart, I’m there to fix their problems and make them feel better. But then—and this is the part that few people see—I go home to my room and cry.”  
—Kellie.\*

“When I’m down, I isolate myself. If I get invited somewhere, I come up with an excuse not to go. I do a good job at hiding my sadness from my family. They think I’m fine.”  
—Rick.

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

**H**AVE your thoughts ever been similar to those of Kellie or Rick? If so, don’t hastily conclude that there’s something wrong with you. The fact is, everyone gets sad now and then. Even faithful men and women of the Bible did.

In some cases, you may know why you are sad; in other cases, you may not. “You don’t have to be in a horrible situation to feel sad,” says 19-year-old Anna. “It can come on at any time, even if your life is trouble free. It’s weird, but it happens!”

Regardless of the cause—or even if there doesn’t seem to be one—what can you do when sadness holds you in its grip?

**Tip #1: Talk about it.** The Bible says: “A true companion is loving all the time, and is a brother that is born for when there is distress.”—Proverbs 17:17.

*Kellie:* “The relief I feel after talking to someone is amazing. Finally, someone knows what I’m going through. They can lower the rope and pull me out of the pit—saved at last!”

Suggestion: Below, write the name of a “true companion” in whom you could confide when sadness overwhelms you.

.....  
**Tip #2: Write about it.** When sadness clouds your outlook on life, you might want



to try putting your thoughts on paper. In his inspired psalms, David sometimes expressed deep sadness. (Psalm 6:6) Writing about such feelings can help you to “safeguard practical wisdom and thinking ability.”—Proverbs 3:21.

**Heather:** “Writing helps me to organize the mental clutter that accumulates from sadness. When you can express your feelings and sort them out, the sadness is less overwhelming.”

**Suggestion:** Some choose to keep a journal. If you do, what might you put in it? When you’re sad, describe how you feel and what you think may be at the root of your sadness. A month later, read what you wrote. Have your feelings on the matter changed? If so, write down what helped you.

**Tip #3: Pray about it.** The Bible says that if you pray about your concerns, ‘the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your heart and your mental powers.’—Philippians 4:7.

**Esther:** “I was trying to figure out why I felt so down, and I couldn’t. I asked Jehovah to help me to be happy. I was sick of being sad when I had no reason to be. I finally broke the cycle. Never underestimate the power of prayer!”

**Suggestion:** Use Psalm 139:23, 24 as a pattern for your own prayer to Jehovah. Pour out your heart, and ask him to help you identify the root of your sadness.

In addition to the suggestions above, you have a valuable resource in God’s Word. (Psalm 119:105) Filling your mind with upbuilding thoughts that can be gleaned from Bible accounts can have a positive effect on

## WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY

“Sadness usually comes on when I’m focusing too much on myself. So any time I can help others, that makes my focus shift and then I am able to regain my happiness.”



**Drenelle**

“When I keep up a good exercise routine, my bad moods come less often because I start to feel good about myself. And exercise uses up my energy so that when I’m done, I can’t be bothered with feeling bad anymore!”



**Rebekah**

your thoughts, feelings, and actions. (Psalm 1:1-3) Stimulating, exciting accounts are contained in the Bible book of Acts. Further suggestions for upbuilding Bible reading can be found by considering the nine “Role Model” pages in *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 2, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Among the Bible accounts considered on these pages are those of Joseph, Hezekiah, Lydia, and David. On page 227, you will even see how the apostle Paul successfully dealt with negative feelings that he sometimes felt because of his imperfections.

1. In the temple. 2. The widow gave God all she could. 3. God promises to care for us if we put his interests first. 4. No. They considered John to be unlettered and ordinary. 5. He was inspired to write parts of the Bible, including the book of Revelation.

But what if despite your efforts feelings of sadness just won't go away?

### **When Sadness Won't Go Away**

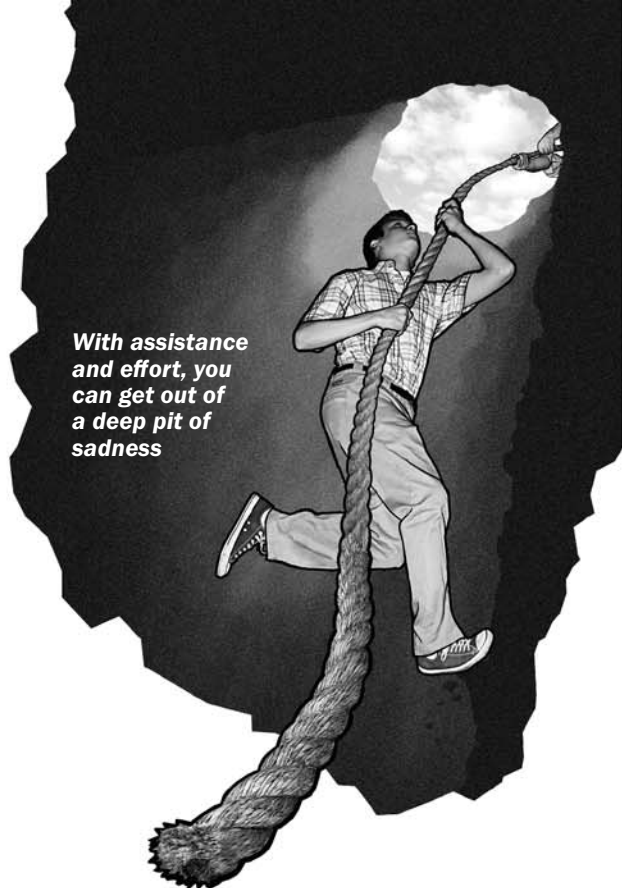
"On some mornings," says Ryan, "I feel that it would be easier just to stay in bed and avoid having to get up and face another pointless day." Ryan suffers from clinical depression, and he's not alone. Studies suggest that about 1 in 4 youths suffers from some type of depression before reaching adulthood.

How can you find out if you suffer from depression? Some symptoms include a pronounced change in mood and behavior, social isolation, diminished interest in almost all activities, a notable change in eating habits and sleeping patterns, and intense feelings of worthlessness or unwarranted guilt.

Of course, nearly everyone has one or more of those symptoms at some time or another. But if symptoms persist for more than a couple of weeks, why not talk to your parents about getting a checkup? A physician may be able to help determine if your sadness has a medical cause.\*

If you do suffer from clinical depression, there is nothing to be ashamed of. With treatment, many sufferers have begun to feel better—perhaps the best they have felt in a long

\* When sadness is prolonged, some youths think about ending their life. If you have entertained such thoughts, talk to a trusted adult without delay.—See *Awake!* of May 2008, pages 26-28.



*With assistance  
and effort, you  
can get out of  
a deep pit of  
sadness*

time! Consequently, whether your sadness is caused by depression or not, remember the comforting words of Psalm 34:18: "Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves."

More articles from the "Young People Ask" series can be found at the Web site [www.watchtower.org/ype](http://www.watchtower.org/ype)

### **TO THINK ABOUT**

#### ● **Are there benefits to shedding tears?**

"I've never been one who cries very easily, but it has become a necessity in times of sadness. Having a good cry is like hitting a reset button. I start thinking rationally and I can see the future—with happiness on the horizon."—Leanne.

#### ● **How can others help you cope with sadness?**

"When I'm sad, I need to avoid isolating myself. Yes, I may need to be alone to process my thoughts and maybe have a good cry. But after that, I know I need to be around people to get my mind off whatever was making me sad."—Christine.

## WAS IT DESIGNED?

# The Digging Skill of the Razor Clam

*This prototype of a "smart" anchor mimics the burrowing technique of the razor clam*



● Although it appears to lack sufficient strength to dig through sand, the razor clam burrows into hard-packed ground so quickly that it has been called “the Ferrari of underwater diggers.” Researchers were intrigued. “We knew they were doing something tricky,” says Anette Hosoi, an associate professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. What is the razor clam’s secret?

**Consider:** The razor clam wiggles its foot down into the sand, creating a small pocket that quickly fills with water and sand. The clam then moves its body up and down while opening and closing its shell. This results in a watery mixture that the clam can easily dig through. The razor clam can dig some 28 inches at a speed of 0.4 inch per second. Once dug in, the clam is hard to pull out. In fact, considering its anchoring force and the amount of energy it uses to embed itself, the clam is ten times more efficient than the best anchors made by man.

Engineers have been inspired by the razor clam in designing what they call the first “smart” anchor. “It opens and closes, and moves up and down, like a real clam,” says Hosoi. Such a strong, energy-efficient anchor could be useful on underwater research vessels, floating oil rigs, and digging devices that destroy mines.

**What do you think?** Did the razor clam’s digging skill come about by chance? Or was it designed?

Razor clams: © Philippe Clement/naturepl.com;  
“smart” anchor: Courtesy of Donna Coveney,  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology



# THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE'S “King of the Jungle”



**W**HAT is it? The jaguar, the largest cat in the Americas. Where might you find it? In jungles, swamps, forests, deserts, and scrublands of Central and South America. Unlike most cats, this one is at home not only on the ground or in the trees but even in the water.

Try to picture yourself standing next to a full-grown male jaguar. It may be up to six feet long, not including the tail, and weigh 260 pounds or more. Being a solitary creature, the jaguar meets with others of its species only to mate. A male is ready for this by the age of three or four, while a female may have her first litter by age two. Her litter of usually two cubs is born after developing in the womb for three to four months. Some jaguars are known to live more than 20 years in captivity.

Regarding the mystery and elusiveness of these large cats, one biologist noted: “Jaguars are so hard to find! I can be standing right next to one, . . . and still I may never see it.” The cat’s tawny golden coat splashed with black rosettes, which enclose smaller spots, helps it hide and then disappear into the shadows without being seen.

## A Lone, Silent Hunter

An experienced hunter, the jaguar feeds on about 85 species of animals, including

tapirs, deer, and monkeys. Because it is at home in the water, the jaguar also catches fish and turtles with ease. Observers once saw a jaguar kill a full-grown horse, drag it some 250 feet on dry ground, and then pull it across a river.

This clever cat often waits for its prey while perched silently in a tree. As an unsuspecting herd of peccaries—fast, piglike creatures—pass below, the jaguar pounces. With one powerful bite, it kills one and quickly springs back into the tree. It waits there for the herd to pass and then recovers its kill.

Yet, the jaguar is the least likely of the big cats to attack a human, and it has never been listed as a man-eater. In fact, humans are a much greater threat to the jaguar than the jaguar is to them.

## Why So Few

Jaguars once roamed from the southern United States to near the tip of South America. Today, they have disappeared from nearly half their range of a hundred years ago. Until the mid-1970’s, hunters killed thousands of jaguars every year for their pelts. In 1968



alone, over 13,500 of these were exported from the Americas. In 2002, it was estimated that fewer than 50,000 jaguars remained. Now perhaps only about 15,000 are left that are not in zoos.

A Wildlife Conservation Society study reports that nearly 40 percent of the jaguar's traditional homeland has been destroyed by deforestation. In Mexico alone, habitat equivalent to the size of a football field reportedly disappears every minute. This forces the jaguar to prey on livestock in order to survive.

#### **Efforts to Preserve**

Some 200 countries support regulations of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species

that make it illegal to hunt jaguars for commercial purposes. National park preserves have been created to protect their natural habitat. In 1986 the Cockscomb Basin Wildlife Sanctuary in Belize became the world's first jaguar preserve. Additionally, Mexico has set aside more than 370,000 acres of tropical forest within the Calakmul Biosphere Reserve on the Yucatán Peninsula to protect the jaguar.

How successful such human efforts will be to preserve this "king of the jungle" remains to be seen. Yet, we can be comforted in knowing that our loving Creator will soon "bring to ruin those ruining the earth" and that in time peace will exist between mankind and the animals, as God intended.—Revelation 11:18; Isaiah 11:6-9.



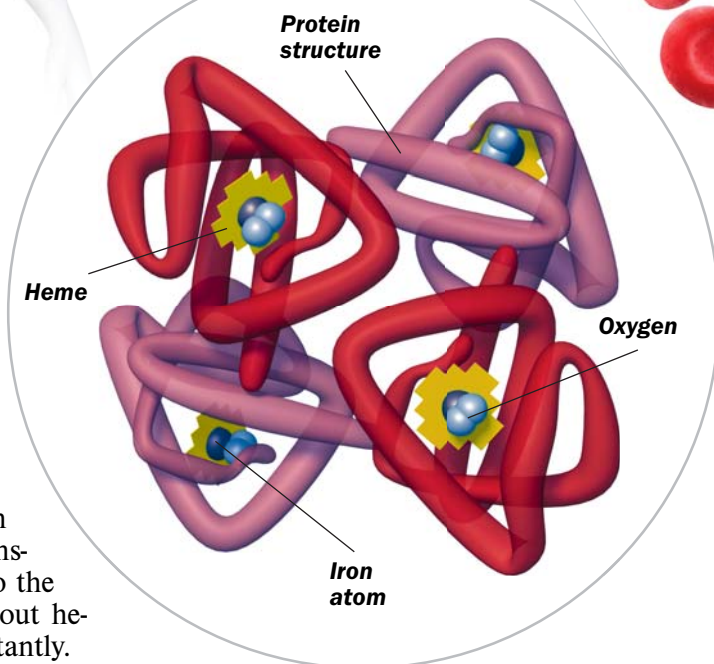
# The Amazing Hemoglobin Molecule

## A Miracle of Design

*"Breathing seems so simple, yet it appears as if this elementary manifestation of life owes its existence to the interplay of many kinds of atoms in a giant molecule of vast complexity."*

—Max F. Perutz, a sharer of the Nobel Prize in 1962 for his studies of the hemoglobin molecule.

**B**REATHING—what could be more natural? Most of us rarely give it a thought. Breathing, however, could not keep us alive if it were not for the human hemoglobin molecule, a complex molecular masterpiece designed by our Creator. The hemoglobin that is inside each of our 30 trillion red blood cells transports the oxygen from the lungs to the tissues throughout the body. Without hemoglobin, we would die almost instantly.



***In the oxygen-rich environment of the lungs, an oxygen molecule will bind to the hemoglobin***

***After the first oxygen molecule binds, a slight change in the shape of hemoglobin allows three more oxygen molecules to bind rapidly***

***Hemoglobin transports the oxygen molecules away from the lungs and then releases them where they are needed in the body***

How do hemoglobin molecules manage to pick up tiny oxygen molecules at the right time, hold them safely until the right time, and release them at the right time? Several amazing feats of molecular engineering are required.

### **Tiny Molecular "Taxis"**

You might think of each hemoglobin molecule in a cell as a tiny four-door taxi, with room for exactly four "passengers." This molecular taxi does not require a driver, since it is riding inside a red blood cell, which could be described as a traveling container full of these hemoglobin molecules.

The journey for a hemoglobin molecule begins when red blood cells arrive at the alveoli of the lungs—the "airport." As we inhale air into our lungs, the huge crowds of tiny recently arrived oxygen molecules start looking for a ride in a taxi. These molecules quickly diffuse into red blood cells, the "containers." At this point, the doors of the hemoglobin taxis within each cell are closed. However, it does not take long before a determined oxygen molecule in the bustling crowd squeezes in and takes a seat in a hemoglobin taxi.

Now something very interesting happens. Inside the red cell, the hemoglobin molecule begins to change its shape. All four "doors" of the hemoglobin taxi begin to open automatically as the first passengers get in, which allows the remaining passengers to hop aboard more easily. This process, called cooperativity, is so efficient that in the time it takes to draw a single breath, 95 percent of the "seats" in all the taxis in a red blood cell are taken. Together the more than one quarter of a billion hemoglobin molecules in a single red blood cell can carry about a billion oxygen molecules! Soon the red blood cell containing all these taxis is off to deliver its precious supply of oxygen to body tissues that need it. But, you might wonder, 'What keeps oxygen atoms inside the cell from getting out prematurely?'

The answer is that inside each hemoglobin molecule, oxygen molecules attach to waiting atoms of iron. You have probably seen what happens when oxygen and iron get together in the presence of water. The result is usually iron oxide, rust. When iron rusts, the oxygen is locked up permanently in a crystal. So how does the hemoglobin molecule manage to combine and uncombine iron and oxygen in the watery environment of the red blood cell without producing rust?

### **Taking a Closer Look**

To answer that question, let us take a closer look at the hemoglobin molecule. It is made up of some 10,000 atoms of hydrogen, carbon, nitrogen, sulfur, and oxygen that are carefully assembled around just 4 atoms of iron. Why do four iron atoms need so much support?

First, the four iron atoms are electrically charged and must be carefully controlled. Charged atoms, which are called ions, can do a lot of damage inside cells if they get loose. So each of the four iron ions is secured in the middle of a protective rigid plate.\* Next, the four plates are carefully fitted into the hemoglobin molecule in such a way that oxygen molecules can get to the iron ions but water molecules cannot get to them. Without water, rust crystals are unable to form.

By itself the iron in the hemoglobin molecule cannot bind and unbind oxygen. Yet, without the four charged iron atoms, the rest of the hemoglobin molecule would be useless. Only when these iron ions are perfectly fitted into the hemoglobin molecule can the transport of oxygen through the bloodstream occur.

### **Releasing the Oxygen**

As a red blood cell leaves the arteries and moves into the tiny capillaries deep in the

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\* This plate is a separate molecule called heme. It is not made of protein but is incorporated into the protein structure of hemoglobin.



body tissues, the environment around the red blood cell changes. Now the environment is warmer than in the lungs, and there is less oxygen and more acidity from the carbon dioxide surrounding the cell. These signals tell the hemoglobin molecules, or taxis, inside the cell that it is time to release their precious passengers, oxygen.

When the oxygen molecules get out of the hemoglobin molecule, it changes its shape once more. The change is just enough to “close the doors” and leave the oxygen outside, where it is most needed. Having the doors shut also prevents the hemoglobin from transporting any stray oxygen on the

way back to the lungs. Instead, it readily picks up carbon dioxide for the return trip.

Soon the deoxygenated red blood cells are back in the lungs, where the hemoglobin molecules will release the carbon dioxide and be recharged with life-sustaining oxygen—a process that is repeated many thousands of times during a red blood cell’s life span of about 120 days.

Clearly, hemoglobin is no ordinary molecule. It is, as stated at the beginning of this article, “a giant molecule of vast complexity.” Surely, we are awed and thankful to our Creator for the brilliant and meticulous micro-engineering that makes life possible!

## TAKE GOOD CARE OF YOUR HEMOGLOBIN!

“Iron poor blood,” an expression common in some places, is really hemoglobin-poor blood. Without the four essential iron atoms in a hemoglobin molecule, the other 10,000 atoms in the molecule are useless. So, it is important to get enough iron by eating a healthful diet. Some good sources of iron are listed in the accompanying chart.

Besides consuming foods rich in iron, we should heed the following advice: 1. Get regular and appropriate exercise. 2. Do not smoke. 3. Avoid secondhand smoke. Why are cigarette and other forms of tobacco smoke so dangerous?

It is because such smoke is loaded with carbon monoxide, the same poison emitted as exhaust by automobiles. Carbon monoxide is the cause of accidental deaths and is also a means by which some people commit suicide. Carbon monoxide binds to iron atoms in hemoglobin over 200 times more readily than oxygen does. So cigarette smoke quickly affects a person adversely by crowding out his intake of oxygen.

THE FOOD	PORTION SIZE	IRON (mg)
Blackstrap molasses	1 tablespoon	5.0
Raw tofu	1/2 cup	4.0
Lentils	1/2 cup	3.3
Beef chuck	3 ounces	3.2
Dried peaches	5 halves	2.6
Kidney beans	1/2 cup	2.6
Wheat germ	1 ounce (1/4 cup)	2.6
Chickpeas	1/2 cup	2.4
Broccoli	1 medium stalk	2.1
Dark meat turkey	3 ounces	2.0
Spinach	1 cup raw	0.8



### Individualistic but Depressed

According to researchers, Britain is “the most individualistic society in the world, valuing the self over the group,” reports London’s *Daily Telegraph*. Another study found that Britons suffer some of the highest levels of depression and anxiety. Some experts believe that there is a connection. Studies compared societies such as those found in the Western world with those of China and Taiwan. In the latter, the greater value given to social harmony over individuality seemed to protect people from poor mental health. In the West, “selfish society . . . is making us depressed,” states the *Telegraph*.

### Same-Sex Marriage in the Church of Sweden

In October 2009, the Lutheran Church of Sweden approved church weddings for homosexuals. The decision followed the Swedish parliament’s adoption of a gender-neutral marriage law just a few months earlier. “This means that the Church of Sweden is one of the first of the major churches in the world to deviate from the traditional view of marriage as a union between a man and a woman,” says the newspaper *Dagens Nyheter*.

**According to one survey, some 10.3 percent of sexually active Brazilian men** aged 15 to 64 have had sex with at least one person met online within the past 12 months.—BRAZILIAN MINISTRY OF HEALTH.

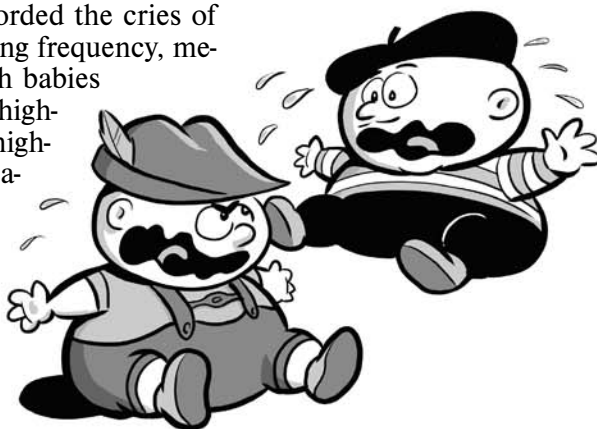
**The Arctic Ocean has long been covered by vast sheets of ice** up to 260 feet thick. Now such “multiyear ice . . . has effectively vanished, a startling development that will make it easier to open up polar shipping routes.”—REUTERS NEWS SERVICE, CANADA.

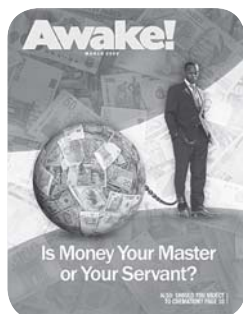
**Moscow and the Vatican have announced** the establishment of full diplomatic relations between them.  
—RIA NOVOSTI, RUSSIA.

**Kilimanjaro, Africa’s highest mountain, “lost 26 percent** of its ice cover between 2000 and 2007.”  
—DAILY NATION, KENYA.

### In What Language Do Babies Cry?

From as early as the second day of life, babies cry to the tune of their mother tongue, according to researchers from Würzburg University, in Germany. The researchers recorded the cries of 30 French and 30 German newborns, analyzing frequency, melodic patterns, and pitch. The cries of French babies often began on a lower pitch and then moved higher, while those of German babies often began higher and then became lower. In both cases, the babies were mimicking melody patterns typical of the languages of their parents. Hence, it is believed that language development starts in the womb and that a baby’s language starts with its earliest cries.





**Blessings Greater Than Riches** (March 2009) The article quoted Kostas, who said: “God does not want us to live a life of opulence.” I thought Jehovah put no limit on how much or how little a servant could possess as long as He is put first. Is it wrong to live a life of opulence, while faithfully serving Jehovah?

*J. D., United States*

*“Awake!” responds: The Bible does not condemn wealth. In fact, many of God’s servants in the past were wealthy. (Genesis 25:5; 26:12-16; Job 1:1-3) However, those who are rich do well to keep in mind that a ‘showy display of one’s means of life does not originate with the Father but originates with the world.’ (1 John 2:16) Moreover, the apostle Paul said: “The*

*love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things.” He noted that by sacrificing spiritual concerns out of a desire to be rich, “some have been led astray from the faith and have stabbed themselves all over with many pains.” (1 Timothy 6:10) Of course, God’s Word does not show that those who are wealthy ought to feel guilty because they have more than others. Christians are encouraged “to be liberal, ready to share,” no matter how little or how much they may have materially.—1 Timothy 6:18.*

### **A Silent Voice That Can Be Heard**

(October 2008) I was really encouraged by this article about Hillary, who has Rett syndrome. My five-year-old grandchild is unable to see, hear, walk, talk, or sit. I have come to hope that when I sing, read, talk, and stroke or massage him, something is happening in his brain. I cried when I read the words of Hillary’s mother: “Even though I can’t hear what she says, Jehovah can.” It helped me realize that although my grandchild can’t say words, Jehovah can hear the voice of his heart.

*M. A., Japan*

My daughter is 43 years old, yet this is the first article I have read that throws real light on her condition and the reasons for her disability. My heart goes out to Hillary and her mother and sister. Although we live thousands of miles apart, I can well relate to them, and I appreciate their example of faith, love, and endurance.

*T. Y., Ghana*

### **Abortion—Not a Trouble-Free Solution**

(June 2009) Thank you for your series of articles on the subject of abortion. When I was in my 20’s, I chose to have an abortion, an act I have regretted profoundly. If I did not know the truth now, I would feel hopeless. I am so thankful that I have a hope and know of Jehovah’s forgiveness.

*Name withheld, United States*

### **Young People Ask . . . How Can I Cope With the Death of a Parent?** (August 2009)

I am only 22, and my father’s death was so quick and unexpected that it completely devastated me. As the article brought out, I will miss being able to share the most important moments of my life with him. After three years, I am still finding it hard to rebuild my life. In spite of this, the article gave me much comfort. The suggestions given to help cope, even though they were difficult to put into practice, turned out to be effective. Thank you for the excellent work that you are doing.

*N. P., France*





## WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE APOSTLE JOHN?



**4. Did the religious leaders view John as a scholar and orator?**

CLUE: Read Acts 4:13.

**5. What outstanding privilege was John given?**

CLUE: Read Revelation 1:1-3.

**FOR DISCUSSION:**  
How many Bible books did John write? How can you imitate John?

● Answers on page 21

## Was It a Good Decision?

Read Mark 12:41-44. Now look at the picture, and write your answers on the lines below.

**1. Where were the treasury chests located?**

CLUE: Read Mark 12:35; 13:1.

**2. Although the widow donated only a small amount, why was Jesus impressed?** CLUE: Read Mark 12:28-30.

**3. Why can you be sure that the widow did not suffer, even though she gave "her whole living"?** CLUE: Read Matthew 6:25, 31-33.

### FOR DISCUSSION:

Do you think that this widow made a good decision? Why do you answer that way? What will happen if you form the habit of giving generously?

CLUE: Read Luke 6:38; Acts 20:35.



## CHILDREN'S PICTURE SEARCH

Can you find these pictures in this issue? In your own words, describe what is happening in each picture.

## FROM THIS ISSUE

Answer these questions, and provide the missing Bible verse(s).

**PAGE 9** There is more happiness in doing what? Acts 20:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 9** Disciples of Jesus are identified by what? John 13:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 21** What can the peace of God do? Philippians 4:\_\_\_\_\_

**PAGE 22** To whom is Jehovah near? Psalm 34:\_\_\_\_\_

# A Positive Difference That Teachers Notice



● Irena, an 8th-grade student, lives in Kurtovo Konare, a village in Bulgaria. Her mother gave her teacher the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work* at a parent-teacher meeting.

Sometime afterward, the teacher, holding the book, called Irena up before the class. “Today you will conduct the class,” she told Irena. “I have selected a chapter for you to read, and I want you to describe how your family applies the suggestions in it.” The chapter she chose was “Why Should I ‘Honor My Father and My Mother’?”

On Irena’s way up to the front, some of her classmates remarked that her parents were different. The teacher interrupted them and said: “Do you know why their family is different? It is because they are studying the Bible. I have taught her brothers, and never

in my career as a teacher have I seen such respect and exemplary upbringing.”

The teacher then asked Irena to read. After she read a paragraph that explained that God granted parents the right to set rules, the teacher asked: “Irena, how does that work in your family? Do you view as law everything your parents tell you?”

“Each of us may have our own opinion,” Irena explained, “but the Bible says that children should respect their parents and submit to them, and we do. Still, we are allowed to discuss matters together, and each of us has the chance to express our opinion.” When the class was over, everyone was satisfied.

You may request a copy of this book by filling in the accompanying coupon and mailing it to the address provided or to an appropriate address on page 5 of this magazine.

☐ Without obligation, I request a copy of the book shown here.

Indicate which language.

☐ Please contact me concerning a free home Bible study.

Questions  
Young People Ask  
Answers That Work



Name .....

Address .....

.....

City ..... State ..... ZIP Code .....

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