

Awake!

A man in a dark blue pinstripe suit, white shirt, and red tie with blue stripes is shown from the chest up. He is holding a large fan of US dollar bills in his right hand, which is partially visible. He is looking down and to the right with a serious expression. The background is a warm, golden-brown color, possibly a wall or door.

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Is It Practical to Be Honest?

**ALSO: INTERNET FRAUD
—ARE YOU AT RISK? PAGE 10**

Awake!

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Dishonesty Everywhere!

Danny* works for a large trading company in Hong Kong. While visiting the factory of a potential supplier, he expressed concern about whether the factory could meet the standards needed to produce his company's products. Later, at dinner, the factory manager gave Danny an envelope. Inside, Danny found a bribe amounting to tens of thousands of dollars in cash—the equivalent of his annual salary.

* Some names in this series have been changed.



● Danny's experience is far from unique. Around the world, the scope and pervasiveness of dishonesty is staggering. For example, court documents show that between 2001 and 2007, a large German industrial firm paid 1.4 billion dollars in bribes to obtain contracts.

Although recent high-profile corporate scandals have led to some reforms, the overall situation appears to be worsening. A 2010 study by Transparency International found that worldwide, "levels of corruption have increased in the past three years."

Why is there so much dishonesty? Is it practical to be honest? If so, how is it possible? Can the Bible help us?



The Pressure to Be Dishonest

“Honesty in business is a relic of the past, and those who try to practice it are doomed to failure.”—Stephen, U.S.A.

DO YOU agree with that grim assessment? Admittedly, dishonesty often brings rewards—at least in the short term. As a result, those who try to be honest are subjected to intense pressure in the following areas.

Personal Temptation. Who would not enjoy having more money or some additional luxuries? When presented with an opportunity for dishonest financial gain, it can be hard to resist.

● “I award contracts on behalf of my company. Offers of bribes are common. The lure of easy money is a strong one.”—Franz, Middle East.

Pressure to Maximize Profits. In recent years, businesses worldwide have struggled with poor economic conditions. They must also cope with rapidly changing technology and increased regional and global competition. Employees may feel that resorting to dishonesty is the only way to meet performance goals set by owners and managers.

● “We thought we had to do it. . . . Otherwise, we’d ruin the company.”—Reinhard Siekaczek, arrested for bribery.—*The New York Times*.

Pressure From Others. Coworkers or customers may at times suggest, or even demand, that you join them in dishonest schemes.

● “A manager of a major client approached me and said that I would lose his business if I didn’t pay him his ‘share of the business’—essentially, a kickback.”—Johan, South Africa.

Culture. In some cultures, it is customary for business transactions to be accompanied by an exchange of gifts. Depending on the size and circumstances of the gift, the boundaries of honest business practices can easily become blurred. In many lands, corrupt officials demand money before performing their duties and willingly accept payment in exchange for special treatment.

● “It is always a challenge to distinguish a tip from a bribe.”—William, Colombia.

Environment. Those who live in severe poverty or in countries where there has been a breakdown in civil order face the greatest pressure of all. In such environments, those who are unwilling to cheat or steal may be viewed as poor providers for their families.

● “Dishonesty is considered normal, necessary, and acceptable as long as you’re not caught.”—Tomasi, Congo Kinshasa.

How Honesty Breaks Down

The pressure to be dishonest has a profound effect. A survey of business managers in Australia reported that 9 out of 10 considered bribery and corruption to be “wrong but

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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Many claim that dishonesty is necessary for success

unavoidable.” Those surveyed said that they would be willing to ignore their morals to win a contract or benefit their company.

Yet, those who engage in dishonesty often see themselves as honest. How do they reconcile their self-image with their behavior? *Journal of Marketing Research* reports: “People behave dishonestly enough to profit but honestly enough to delude themselves of their own integrity.” To ease their internal struggle, people excuse, minimize, or justify dishonesty in a variety of ways.

For example, dishonesty may be described in terms that sound less morally offensive. Lying or cheating becomes “cutting corners” or “being competitive.” A bribe may be described as merely “a favor” or “an expediting fee.”

Others excuse questionable behavior by relaxing their definition of honesty. Tom, who works in the financial industry, observes: “People’s perception of honesty has more to do with what they can get away with legally

than with what is actually the truth.” David, a former business executive, says: “Although dishonesty is frowned upon when exposed, it

“People’s perception of honesty has more to do with what they can get away with legally than with what is actually the truth”

is viewed as acceptable if you can get away with it. People who get away with it are considered smart for their ‘creativity.’”

Many would even claim that dishonesty is necessary for success. A longtime businessman remarks: “A competitive attitude often moves people to say, ‘You have to do whatever it takes to get the job.’” But is that true? Or are those who try to justify dishonesty actually ‘deceiving themselves with false reasoning’? (James 1:22) Consider the practical advantages of honesty presented in the next article.

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Honesty Is Practical

“Bread gained by falsehood is pleasurable to a man, but afterward his mouth will be filled with gravel.”—Proverbs 20:17.

IS IT necessary to resort to dishonest practices to succeed in business? The answer is no. In fact, dishonesty is frequently self-defeating. Why? Because of what has been called “the integrity edge.” Integrity generates trust, an essential ingredient for *long-term* success.

The Value of Trust

Your reputation for honesty affects your success—whether you are aware of it or not. The experience of Franz, who was quoted in

Your reputation for honesty affects your success—whether you are aware of it or not

the preceding article, bears this out. “When I first started working for my employers,” he says, “they subjected my honesty and integrity to a series of tests without my knowledge. As I later came to know, I passed. As a result, I have been entrusted with more responsibility and freedom and the owners have rewarded me for my honesty. I know that there are other people who could do my job better

than I can and who are certainly cleverer than I am. However, I think my job has been secure because of the trust my employers have in me.”

Avoid Unwise Risks

David, a businessman quoted in the preceding article, observes: “As I watched individuals bend the rules to gain a short-term advantage, I thought to myself, ‘Sometimes the invoice is delayed, but it will always arrive.’ In other words, dishonest activity will eventually bring problems in one way or another. We turned down many questionable business opportunities. Many of the companies participating in these activities later disappeared, and some individuals were prosecuted. Our company avoided such tragedies.”

While establishing a cattle ranch in southeast Africa, Ken could have been tempted to bribe officials to expedite imports and help him to avoid paying duty. He says: “Many other ranchers gave in to this common practice. Because we did things honestly, it took ten years to get our ranch running. Was it worth it? Yes! Those paying bribes were continually harassed afterward by corrupt officials wanting additional payments.”

Coping With Economic Challenges

When a struggling business faces potential failure, the pressure to resort to dishonesty is great. However, such circumstances can also reveal the value of an honest reputation.

Consider the example of Bill, whose construction business failed during the downturn in the housing industry in the United States. He relates: “A number of our large customers went out of business owing us hundreds of thousands of dollars. When things began to look hopeless, I approached a competitor to see if they would hire any of us. Within 48 hours of the meeting, they offered to hire me and most of my employees. I was told that my reputation for good service and honesty was well-known.”

All the people whose experiences are related above are Jehovah's Witnesses. Their business standards, like all other aspects of their lives, are based on the Bible. As you can see, rather than hindering their business success, their honesty has brought them practical benefits.

Yet, there will always be situations in which dishonesty appears to offer advantages. Are financial rewards the sole measure of success?



"I was told that my reputation for good service and honesty was well-known."
—Bill, United States

Honesty Brings True Success

"Even when a person has an abundance his life does not result from the things he possesses."—Luke 12:15.

EARNING income is a necessary part of life. We have a responsibility before God to provide for ourselves and our families.—1 Timothy 5:8.

But what if obtaining money and the things it can buy becomes more than just a means of sustaining life? What if it becomes your purpose in life? Those whose primary objective is to gain wealth find it easier to resort to dishonesty to get it. They may not realize until it is too late that dishonesty robs them of true success. Furthermore, as the Bible says, the love of money causes many pains.—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

Consider the following four examples of individuals who define success as more than accumulating wealth.

Self-Respect

"Several years ago I interviewed a prospective client who wanted to purchase a million-

dollar life insurance policy. My commission would have been thousands of dollars. He told me that to gain his business, I would have to give him half of my commission. What he was asking was not only unethical but also illegal, and I told him so.

"I tried to reason with him by asking if he would really want to give his confidential personal and financial information to someone who was dishonest. I restated my position and told him to contact me if he wanted me as his agent. I never heard from him again.

"If I had agreed to his offer, my personal integrity would have been undermined and my self-respect as a Christian shattered. I would have become the slave of the man who manipulated me to participate in a dishonest scheme."—Don, U.S.A.

Peace of Mind

As related in the opening article in this series, Danny was offered a large bribe if he would lie about the capability of a potential supplier's factory. How did he respond?

"I thanked the manager for his hospitality in providing dinner and then returned the

envelope containing the money. He pressed further and said that if his factory passed our evaluation, he would add even more. I refused.

“If I had accepted the money, I would have constantly been in fear of discovery. Later, my boss somehow found out about the incident. I was so happy and relieved that I had done nothing dishonest. Proverbs 15: 27 came to my mind: ‘The one making unjust profit is bringing ostracism upon his own house, but the hater of gifts [or bribes] is the one that will keep living.’”—Danny, Hong Kong.

Family Happiness

“I am self-employed in the construction industry. There are many opportunities to cheat customers or evade paying taxes. But my family and I have benefited from my determination to remain honest.

“Being honest involves one’s entire life, not just time at work or in business. Knowing that your husband or wife will not compromise God’s standards of honesty brings an added level of trust into the family. Your mate feels secure knowing that integrity is not some-

thing you put on and take off when convenient.

“You could own the largest company in the world and not be able to buy relief from family problems. As one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I find that following Bible principles keeps life balanced. I have time to enjoy my family without being marched along to the beat of this world controlled by dollars and greed.”—Durwin, U.S.A.

A Good Relationship With God

“My work includes purchasing supplies for my company. Sales agents sometimes propose that instead of giving my company the full discount allowable, they will give me a percentage of whatever amount my company purchases. But this would be a form of stealing from my company.

“I earn only a modest income, and I could use the additional money. But nothing can compare to having a clean conscience and an approved standing before Jehovah God. So in every transaction, I follow the Bible principle found at Hebrews 13:18: ‘We wish to conduct ourselves honestly in all things.’”—Raquel, Philippines.

If you are honest, you will have peace of mind



Principles of Honest Business

Accepted standards of business ethics vary from place to place. However, Bible principles can be used as a foundation for ethical decision-making. Honest business practices have the following six characteristics:



Truthful

Principle: "Do not be lying to one another."—Colossians 3:9.



Dependable

Principle: "Just let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No."—Matthew 5:37.



Trustworthy

Principle: "Do not reveal the confidential talk of another."—Proverbs 25:9.



Honest

Principle: "You are not to accept a bribe, for the bribe blinds clear-sighted men."—Exodus 23:8.



Fair

Principle: "All things, therefore, that you want men to do to you, you also must likewise do to them."—Matthew 7:12.



Legal

Principle: "Render to all their dues, to him who calls for the tax, the tax."—Romans 13:7.

How to Maintain Your Integrity in Business

● **Determine Your Priorities.** For example, how important to you is gaining wealth compared with maintaining a good standing with God?



● **Decide in Advance.** Anticipate situations that will challenge your honesty, and plan how you will respond.



● **Make Your Position Known.** At the beginning of a new business relationship, tactfully let others know your standards.



● **Seek Support From Others.** When facing a temptation or an ethical dilemma, ask for advice from someone who shares your values.





Internet Fraud

Are You at Risk?

William, a retired teacher in Florida, U.S.A., received an e-mail he thought was from his Internet service provider. The e-mail said that his billing information had been lost. William filled out the attached form and e-mailed it back. Unknown to him, his personal data went to Shiva, a criminal in Queens, New York. The next day, Shiva used William's credit card number to buy a photo ID printer on the Internet. The e-mail William received was one of 100,000 Shiva had sent out. Investigators say that about a hundred people responded and were duped.

A 56-year-old woman in Queensland, Australia, began an online romance with a man she thought was a British engineer. She had paid out \$47,000 before it was discovered that he was a 27-year-old con man in Nigeria.*

SADLY, Internet fraud is common. In their "State of the Net 2010," *Consumer Reports* said: "Internet threats continue at alarmingly high levels, costing consumers billions in damage. The number of virus attacks increased significantly since last year, affecting 40 percent of online U.S. households. Some households reported multiple problems." Before considering how you can protect yourself against such attacks, let us first identify some of the many ways that criminals act.

How Do They Do It?

Many fraudulent contacts on the Internet take place through e-mail. The kind of e-mail William received is called a phishing e-mail. Like baiting fish, such e-mail coaxes the recipient to supply his pass-

* *Awake!* has warned about the dangers of Internet dating. See the issues of April 22, 2005, pages 16-18, and May 22, 2005, pages 12-14.

word, credit card numbers, or bank account information to an authentic-looking but fake Web site. Con men may get your e-mail address by using a computer program called an e-mail extractor.

Some such phishing e-mails can accomplish their aim even if you do not enter data. Your action of opening an e-mail can insert spy software. These programs can record your computer activity. Some of them log keystrokes on your computer in order to steal your passwords and personal information. Others redirect you to a fraudulent site. Is there anything you can do to protect yourself?

What You Can Do

Beware of e-mails that contain suspicious links. Sometimes, a Trojan horse, or Trojan, can provide backdoor access to your computer system, which may allow scammers to have access to your private information. Forums, pornographic sites, Web sites offering software from an unknown source, and social networking sites are also places where con men go to get precious data and plant spy programs to steal information. Also, never respond to e-mails that promise profits that are too good to be true.

Perhaps you have received online messages stating: "Your computer is at risk! Click here to protect your computer!" Or, "Free Screensavers. Click Here." If you click there, you could activate spy software.

If you are looking for a job on the Internet, beware. Scammers use phony online sites to collect "registration fees" and even personal financial data.

Thieves are now smart enough to access remotely the databases of companies or financial institutions and steal data. In January 2007, criminals hacked the computer systems of a department store chain in the United States and gained access to millions of customer records, including credit card information. In Nigeria, criminals got into the databases of several banks and stole 1.5 million personal identification numbers to withdraw money from automated teller machines. There is now a thriving online black market where rogue employees and hackers sell stolen credit card data and even people's full identities.

Phishing e-mail: E-mail that coaxes the recipient to supply his password, credit card numbers, or bank account information to an authentic-looking but fake Web site

Spy software: A program that records your computer activity

Trojan horse: A program designed to breach the security of a computer system while seemingly performing some harmless function



Don't Be a Victim

TO PREVENT BEING VICTIMIZED BY FRAUD, TAKE THE FOLLOWING STEPS:

1 Make sure your computer firewall is always turned on and your operating system, applications, and antivirus software are updated regularly.

2 Regularly back up your files, and store the copies safely.

3 Use common sense. Do not be quick to trust information on the Internet. Proverbs 14:15 says: "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps."

4 Do not be greedy. (Luke 12:15) Beware of "free" offers or Web sites that sell products at extremely low prices. It could be phishing bait.

5 Beware of unsolicited e-mails or instant messages, especially if they contain links or ask for personal information, such as verification of a password.—Proverbs 11:15.

6 Choose passwords that are difficult for others to guess. Change your Internet passwords periodically, and do not use the same password for different accounts.

7 Provide your credit card or banking information only to reputable and secure Web sites.

8 Make sure you type Web addresses accurately, especially for financial institutions. One spelling mistake might redirect you to a fraudulent Web site.

9 Use encrypted connections to transmit sensitive data, such as credit card details, and log off the Web site when you have finished.

10 Review transactions on your credit card and bank statements carefully and frequently. As soon as you spot an unfamiliar transaction, contact the company immediately.

11 Be careful when using unsecured wireless (Wi-Fi) connections, as thieves can steal information and redirect you to fraudulent Web sites.

12 Say no to the question “Remember this password?” Trojan programs can harvest your stored passwords.



The Alpenhorn

Music From a Tree



FOR centuries, some residents of the Swiss Alps have used a unique instrument for communication—the alpenhorn. It may not seem handy—some alpenhorns are twice as tall as the men who play them. Nevertheless, the alpenhorn can be carried by hand. Some versions even separate into pieces that fit into a convenient case. The alpenhorn can be heard for up to six miles (10 km), clear across the high Alpine valleys!



The alpenhorn can be taken apart and carried by hand

Making an Alpenhorn

Traditionally made from mountain spruce, the alpenhorn is right at home in the beautiful Swiss Alps. Natural forces cause spruce trees growing on steep hillsides to develop a curvature at the base.

After selecting a tree, the alpenhorn maker carefully splits it in two and hollows out the halves using special chisels. This step alone may take as long as 80 hours! The craftsman then files and sands the inside of the tree to smooth it. He glues the two halves together, wrapping them tightly with birch rattan. He also attaches a wooden foot, which will support the alpenhorn when it is being played. Finally, after fitting a suitable mouthpiece to the instrument and decorating the bell with a painted or hand-carved design, the craftsman coats the alpenhorn with a weatherproof lacquer.

Traditional Uses

For generations, shepherds and herders have sounded the alpenhorn from high up on the meadow to signal a comforting “all is well” to their families in the valley below. Primarily, though, they used it to call in their cows for milking. Swiss dairymen have long believed that the sweet sound of the alpenhorn helps to keep cows quiet during milking.

In winter, when the cows were back in their stalls in the valley, many herders would take their alpenhorns to town and play them for

donations, which would supplement their income. Historically, the alpenhorn has even been used to call men to war.

How Do You Play It?

At first glance, it may seem that playing the alpenhorn would be easy. After all, it has no holes, keys, or valves to manipulate. The challenge lies in regulating the passage of air into the pipe so that the desired tone will result.

Alpenhorns produce only 12 natural tones. Although not all tunes can be played on the instrument, melodies are written especially for it, and an accomplished player can demonstrate thrilling virtuosity.

Famous composers have included the sound of the alpenhorn in their orchestral scores. For example, Leopold Mozart, the father of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, wrote his “Sinfonia Pastorella” for the orchestra and *corno pastoritio*—a kind of alpenhorn. Brahms mimicked a Swiss alpenhorn tone using flutes and horns, and Beethoven, in his *Pastoral* symphony, imitated the alpenhorn to evoke the atmosphere of pastoral life.

The alpenhorn was first mentioned by name in writing in Switzerland in the year 1527, in an accounts book belonging to St. Urban’s monastery. Now, nearly 500 years later, the gentle voice of the alpenhorn can still be heard rolling over the majestic Alpine meadows of Switzerland.

When You Feel Like Giving Up on Life

EACH year tens of thousands of people in the United States alone attempt to take their own life. The Bible gives a fundamental reason why many are in such a state of despair. It explains that we live in “critical times hard to deal with.” People feel the pressures of life with great intensity. (2 Timothy 3:1; Ecclesiastes 7:7) When a person is overwhelmed by life’s anxieties, he may contemplate suicide as a means to escape pain. What can you do if you have had such thoughts?

You Are Not Alone!

Even though your situation may seem desperate, remember that you are not alone and that sadly nearly *everyone* is coping with some

HELP FROM THE BIBLE

- “Do not be anxious over anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication along with thanksgiving let your petitions be made known to God; and the peace of God that excels all thought will guard your hearts and your mental powers by means of Christ Jesus.”—Philippians 4:6, 7.
- “I inquired of Jehovah, and he answered me, and out of all my frights he delivered me.”—Psalm 34:4.
- “Jehovah is near to those that are broken at heart; and those who are crushed in spirit he saves.”—Psalm 34:18.
- “He is healing the brokenhearted ones, and is binding up their painful spots.”—Psalm 147:3.



type of problem today. The Bible states: “*All creation keeps on groaning together and being in pain together.*” (Romans 8:22) While in the short term it may seem that your problem will never be resolved, things often do improve with the passing of time. In the meantime, what can help?

Share your feelings with a mature, trusted friend. 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) The righteous man Job, described in the Bible, opened up to others during his period of turmoil. When he felt what he referred to as “a loathing toward my life,” he stated: “I will give vent to my concern about myself. I will speak in the bitterness of my soul!” (Job 10:1) Confiding in others can diminish the intensity of your emotions, and it may give you a fresh perspective on the problems you face.*

Pour out your heart to God in prayer. Some have the idea that prayer is just a psychological crutch, but the Bible says otherwise. Psalm 65:2 calls Jehovah God the “Hearer of prayer,” and 1 Peter 5:7 says: “He cares for you.” The Bible repeatedly stresses the importance of relying on God. For example:

“Trust in Jehovah with all your heart and do not lean upon your own understanding. In all your ways take notice of him, and he himself will make your paths straight.”

—PROVERBS 3:5, 6.

“The desire of those fearing [Jehovah] he will perform, and their cry for help he will hear, and he will save them.”—PSALM 145:19.

“This is the confidence that we have toward him, that, no matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us.”

—1 JOHN 5:14.

“Jehovah is far away from the wicked ones, but the prayer of the righteous ones he hears.”—PROVERBS 15:29.

* Some have received help by calling a suicide-prevention center or a mental-health center.

IF YOU HAVE THOUGHTS OF SUICIDE . . .



Share your feelings with a trusted friend



Pour out your heart to God in prayer



Seek medical advice

If you tell God the difficulties you face, he will provide help. For good reason, the Bible encourages you to “trust in him at all times . . . Before him pour out your heart.”—Psalm 62:8.

When More Is Needed

Studies reveal that most people who take their life have a history of depression.* This underscores the fact that medical attention may be necessary. A physician may prescribe

* For more information on depression, see the July 2009 issue of *Awake!* pages 3-9.

medication or recommend dietary adjustments. In some cases, a program of exercise is an effective supplement to treatment. Professional medical care has proved beneficial to many.*

The Bible contains much information that can give you support and hope. For example, at Revelation 21:4, the Bible says regarding Jehovah God: “He will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away.” This is a divine promise, and meditating on it can provide relief.

Jehovah’s Witnesses are sharing this Bible-based hope with millions of people around the world. As a result, many are finding genuine hope in these distressful times. For more information, contact Jehovah’s Witnesses in your area by visiting your local Kingdom Hall, or write to the appropriate address on page 5 of this magazine. You can also visit our Web site www.watchtower.org.

* *Awake!* does not endorse any particular treatment. Each individual should carefully evaluate his options before making a personal decision.



FOR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Family members and close friends are often the first to recognize that a distressed individual is contemplating suicide. Taking action can save that one’s life! Be an empathetic listener. Acknowledge the reality of the difficulties that he or she is undergoing. The Bible says: “Speak consolingly to the depressed souls.” (1 Thessalonians 5:14) Urge the distressed one to get help, and when necessary, follow through to make sure that such help is arranged.

The Woodpecker's Shock-Absorbing Head

● A g-force measuring between 80 and 100 is strong enough to give you a concussion. Yet, the woodpecker sustains a g-force of about 1,200 as it drums its bill against tree bark. How does this bird perform his task, evidently without even getting a headache, much less a concussion?

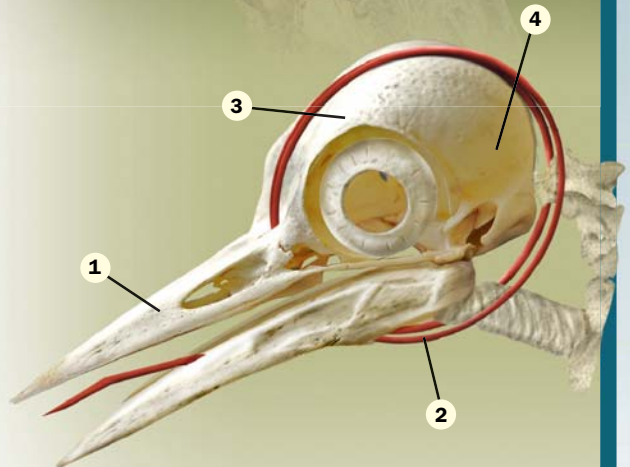
Consider: Researchers have discovered four structures of the woodpecker's head that make it shock-absorbent:

1. A strong yet flexible bill
2. A hyoid—a structure of bone and elastic tissue that wraps around the skull
3. An area of spongy bone in the skull
4. Little space for cerebral-spinal fluid between the skull and the brain

Each of these elements absorbs mechanical shock, allowing the woodpecker to strike a tree at a rate of up to 22 times per second with no injury to the brain.

Inspired by the woodpecker's head, researchers have developed a casing that can withstand a g-force of up to 60,000. Their success may lead to, among other things, better protection for aircraft flight recorders, which currently can withstand a g-force of only about 1,000. Kim Blackburn, an engineer at Cranfield University in the United Kingdom, says that what has been discovered about the woodpecker's head provides "a fascinating example of how nature develops highly advanced structures in combination to solve what at first seems to be an impossible challenge."

What do you think? Did the woodpecker's shock-absorbing head come about by chance? Or was it designed?



Russian Orthodox Priests Can Run for Office

“The Council of Bishops of the Russian Orthodox Church has given approval for its clerics to run for political office in exceptional circumstances to protect the church from schisms and other direct threats,” reports the news agency RIA Novosti. According to a statement by the bishops, such circumstances arise when there is a need “to confront forces, including schismatic ones and those from other confessions, who seek to use electoral power to fight the Orthodox Church.”

New Legal Problems

Practices in reproductive medicine, which were once considered science fiction, are creating new legal dilemmas. “Every year, more babies are born stemming from sperm or embryos that have been stored for months or years,” explains *The Wall Street Journal*. “In some cases, one parent has already died, usually the father.” In the United States, some orphans receive monthly payments from the Social Security system. But the laws of different states vary as to whether such payments ought to be made if the child is conceived after the death of one of the parents. “Technology has gone far beyond where the law ever dreamed it would,” states Minnesota lawyer Sonny Miller.

Pest controllers were amazed when they were called to catch a fox on the 72nd floor of a skyscraper under construction in central London. The animal, which was “living off scraps left by builders,” was released nearby.—*THE TELEGRAPH*, LONDON.

According to 76.3 percent of adults surveyed in Germany, flirting is “totally harmless” and “does not commit those involved to anything.” Almost half of those polled said it was all right for a married person to flirt with a stranger.

—*APOTHEKEN UMSCHAU*, GERMANY.

A nationwide poll shows that 48 percent of Russians believe that **terrorist attacks have become a “fully expected” and “routine part of life.”**

—*KOMMERSANT*, RUSSIA.

“In a brazen attempt reminiscent of a medieval siege,” Mexican smugglers recently tried a novel method to evade border security—a **“hefty catapult”** mounted on a trailer and equipped with powerful elastic, “to hurl drugs north” over the U.S. border fence.—*REUTERS NEWS SERVICE*, U.S.A.

“Two of every five pregnancies” in New York City end in abortion. The proportion has “barely changed in more than a decade.”—*THE NEW YORK TIMES*, U.S.A.



Why did I say that?

This article will help you to explore
WHY you occasionally say the wrong thing
WHAT to do when you slip
HOW to tame your tongue



"I'm usually good at controlling my tongue, but sometimes I slip and afterward wish I could just disappear!"

Chase



"At times I say things that everyone is probably thinking but that shouldn't be said out loud . . . Oops!"

Allie

WHY it happens

Key scripture: "If a person never makes a mistake in what he says, he is perfect." (James 3:2, *Good News Translation*) The point? *No one* has complete control of the tongue. Most can relate to Annette,* who confides: "The speed bump between my brain and my mouth often turns into a launching pad."

True story: *"A friend expressed interest in some clothes I was getting rid of. Without thinking, I said, 'I don't think they'll fit you.' She replied, 'What? Do you think I'm fat?'"—Corrine.*

* Some names in this article have been changed.

To understand why *you* might occasionally lose control of your speech, try the following.

● **Identify your weakness.**

- I tend to speak out of anger
- I tend to speak without thinking
- I tend to speak without listening
- Other

Example: "I have a problem with joking around too much, and sometimes people take what I say the wrong way."—Alexis.

● **Identify with whom you are most likely to slip.**

- A parent — A sibling
- A friend — Other

Example: "It's sad, but the people I love the most are usually the easiest to hurt," says 20-year-old Christine. "I guess it's just because I feel so relaxed with them that I drop my guard."

WHAT to do when you slip



“Once you squeeze toothpaste out, you can’t put it back in the tube. The same is true with our words. Once we say something hurtful, we can’t take it back.”—James.

Key scripture: “Pursue the things making for peace.” (Romans 14:19) One way to follow that advice is to apologize.

True story: *“My mom died when I was ten months old and my dad was never in the picture, so I was raised by my aunt and uncle. One day when I was about 10 or 11, I was feeling really lonely and angry that my mom had died, and I felt like blaming someone. So when my aunt asked me to help her out with something, I began ranting; and by the end of it, the words ‘I hate you’ and ‘You aren’t my real mom’ came out. My aunt had this shocked look on her face. Then she walked into her bedroom and shut the door, and I could hear her crying. I felt awful. She had taken care of me and had done everything for me, and I had treated her like dirt. My uncle talked to me about what had happened, and he showed me scriptures about controlling the tongue. Afterward, I sincerely apologized to my aunt. I had to realize that I was in the wrong.”—Karen.*

Below, write one reason why it might be difficult for you to apologize.

.....
Why might apologizing make you feel better?
.....

Clue: Consider the principles found at Proverbs 11:2 and Matthew 5:23, 24.

Of course, it’s good to *prevent* a situation in the first place so that you won’t *need* to apologize. How can you do that?



Allie—*Before I say something, I ask myself questions like these: ‘Is this going to improve the situation? How is what I say going to affect the person I’m talking to?’ If you have doubts regarding what you’re about to say, you probably shouldn’t say it.*

Chase—*When I want to say something, I try to think about the impact it will have on those around me. I think that as I get older, I’m getting better at controlling my tongue. You definitely learn from experience.*



HOW to tame your tongue

Read the following scriptures, and match each one to a tip.

Proverbs 12:16



1

“Try not to take yourself too seriously; that way you won’t easily be offended in the first place.”
—Danette.

Proverbs 17:14



2

“I go for a walk. It gives me a chance to be alone for a bit and gives me time to cool down.”
—Brielle.

Proverbs 26:20



3

“When I was younger, I used to think that every battle had to be fought, and I made an issue over everything. But I’ve learned that it’s better to let things roll off your back.”—Celia.

Ecclesiastes 7:9



4

“If someone is yelling and you don’t say anything back, the person will eventually get tired of your lack of response. Just be patient. Don’t add fuel to the fire.”—Kerrin.

Philippians 2:3



5

“There are times when I’m annoyed at someone. I’ll have all these thoughts about what I’d like to say to that person. But by waiting, I realize how pointless my words would have been. What I’ve learned is, *don’t react immediately*.”—Charles.

More articles from the “Young People Ask” series can be found at the Web site www.watchtower.org/ype

WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?

Since no one is perfect—as James wrote, “we all stumble many times”—talk to your parents about what struggles they have had with taming the tongue.
—James 3:2.

It Is Not Too Late to Become God's Friend

AS TOLD BY OLAVI J. MATTILA

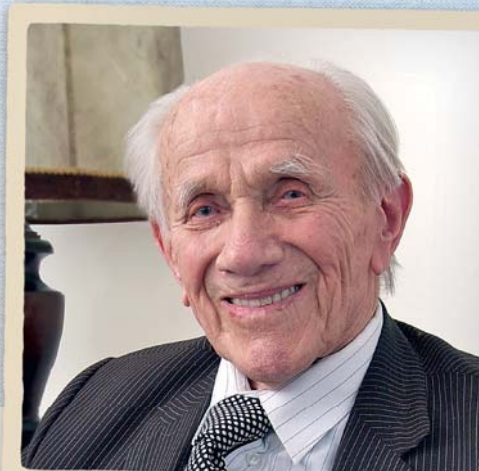
“Have you ever considered the fact that you can obtain accurate knowledge about the Creator?” One of Jehovah’s Witnesses asked me that question, and it made me ponder. At the time, I was over 80 years of age and had come to know many prominent people, even political leaders. However, at that point in my life, could I really get to know God and become his friend?

I WAS born in October 1918 in Hyvinkää, Finland. At an early age, I started to do various farm chores. My family raised cattle, horses, chickens, and geese. I learned to work hard and to take pride in my work.

As I grew up, my parents encouraged me to pursue education. So when I was old enough, I left home to attend college. I also got involved in athletic activities and became acquainted with the chairman of the Finnish Athletic Association, Urho Kekkonen. Little did I know that Mr. Kekkonen would become Finland’s prime minister and later the nation’s president, positions that he held for some 30 years. What is more, I could not have imagined the influence that he would have on my life.

A Life of Prominence and Power

In 1939, hostilities erupted between Finland and the Soviet Union. In November of that year, I was drafted into the armed forces.



At first I served as a trainer in the army reserve and later as a commander of a machine-gun platoon. The battlefield was Karelia, a region on the border between Finland and the Soviet Union. In the summer of 1941, while fighting near the town of Vyborg, I was seriously wounded by shrapnel and taken to a military hospital. My wounds prevented me from fighting again.

In September 1944, I was discharged from the army, and I went back to college. I continued pursuing my athletic activities as well. Three times I became the national champion, twice as a relay runner and once as a hurdle runner. I also obtained university degrees in technology and economics.

In the meantime, Urho Kekkonen had become a powerful figure in politics. In 1952, during his tenure as prime minister, he asked me to work as a diplomat in China. While there, I met several government officials, including Mao Tse-tung, then leader of China. Yet, the most important person I met in China was a lovely young woman, Annikki, who worked at the Finnish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She became my wife in November 1956.

The following year, I was transferred to the Finnish embassy in Argentina. While living in that country, we had our first children, two sons. In January 1960, we returned to Fin-

land. Soon thereafter, we had our third child, a girl.

At the Highest Levels of Government

Though I had never been a member of a political party, in November 1963, President Kekkonen invited me to be his minister of foreign trade. During the following 12 years, I held six cabinet posts, serving twice as a minister of foreign affairs. In those days I firmly believed that the world's problems could be solved by human ingenuity. But soon I became fully aware of man's thirst for power. I witnessed firsthand the harmful effects of distrust and envy.—Ecclesiastes 8:9.

Of course, I also came to see that there are many people who sincerely try to improve things. In the end, however, even the best-intentioned leaders fall short of reaching their goals.

In the summer of 1975, heads of 35 states came to Helsinki to attend the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. At that time, I was the minister of foreign affairs and a close adviser to President Kekkonen. I was given the responsibility of organizing the event, and I met all the national leaders attending the conference.

During those few days, my diplomatic skills were tested to the limit. Just getting

members to agree on a seating order was a challenge! Nevertheless, I felt that the conference, along with a series of follow-up meetings, contributed to improvements in human rights and a more tolerant relationship between the superpowers.

Conscious of My Spiritual Need

In 1983, I retired and moved to France, where my daughter lived. Then tragedy struck. In November 1994, Annikki was diagnosed with breast cancer. That same year, I got caught up in an investment plan that proved to be fraudulent. All my life I had worked very hard to maintain a good name. But this one error in judgment stained my reputation.

I had come across Jehovah's Witnesses throughout my life. While I appreciated their visits and accepted their magazines, I was very busy and had no time for spiritual matters. By the year 2000, however, I was taking care of Annikki, who was still fighting cancer. On a September day in 2002, I received a visit from one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He asked the question mentioned at the beginning of this article. I wondered: 'Is it really possible to learn the truth about God? Is it possible to become his friend?' I dug out my Bible, which had collected quite a layer of dust, and started

Lower left: Ensio Ilmonen/Lehtikuva;
lower right: Esa Pyyssalo/Lehtikuva



◀ **With President Kekkonen and U.S. President Ford during the 1975 Helsinki conference**



With President Kekkonen and Soviet leader Brezhnev

to have regular Scriptural discussions with the Witnesses.

In June 2004, my dear wife died, and I was left alone. My children, of course, were a source of emotional support. But I still had questions about what happens to us when we die. I asked two Lutheran priests about it. Their answer was simply, “Well, these are difficult questions.” I was not satisfied with their reply. I became all the more aware of my spiritual needs.

As I continued studying the Bible with the Witnesses, I grew in the accurate knowledge that I was yearning for. For instance, the Bible explains that death is a state of unconsciousness, like sleep, and that the dead have the prospect of living again as humans on earth. (John 11:25) This gave me hope and consoled me greatly.

Soon I read the entire Bible for myself. One scripture that impressed me was Micah 6:8, which says: “What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?” The wisdom and simplicity

of that maxim attracted me. It also revealed what a loving and just person Jehovah God is.

A Hope for the Future

As I learned the truth about God, my faith and confidence in him grew. A true friendship with my Creator was developing! I was impressed by his words recorded at Isaiah 55:11: “So my word that goes forth from my mouth will prove to be. It will not return to me without results, but it will certainly do that in which I have delighted, and it will have certain success in that for which I have sent it.” Indeed, God has lived up to his promises so far, and he will do so in the future. He will bring to reality the goal that human governments and their many political conferences have failed to achieve. For example, Psalm 46:9 states: “He is making wars to cease to the extremity of the earth.”

I have benefited greatly by attending the meetings of Jehovah’s Witnesses. There I have seen firsthand the genuine Christian love that is the identifying mark of Jesus’ true followers. (John 13:35) This love surpasses nationalism and is unheard of in the world of politics and commerce.

The Most Precious Privilege

I am now over 90 years of age, and I deem it the greatest privilege I have ever had to be one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. My spiritual void has been filled. I have had the privilege of learning the purpose of life and the truth about God.

I am also glad that even at this age, I can have quite an active share in Christian activities. Although I have met many powerful men and carried heavy responsibilities during my life, nothing compares with the privilege of knowing the Creator, Jehovah God, and being his friend. I am very grateful to him, and I want to praise him for this opportunity to become one of his “fellow workers.” (1 Corinthians 3:9) It is not too late to become a friend of the Creator, Jehovah God!



I have an active share in Christian activities



Why I Gave Up a Lucrative Career (June 2010)

I cannot express how grateful I am to you for this article! I am 39 years old and raising three children alone. In the area of Russia where I live, it is very hard to find work. But the example of Martha Teresa Márquez moved me to action. The article said that in order to support herself in the full-time ministry, Martha made tamales at home and sold them on the street. So I decided to follow her example and make small Russian pastries called piroshki. It worked! Now it's our family business. Because of this, my children are learning practical life skills and are becoming more responsible.

G. M., Russia

How to Cope With Stuttering (May 2010)

Thank you for sharing accurate information about stuttering. We are working hard to let those who struggle with stuttering know that there are many effective options for help.

J. F., president of The Stuttering Foundation, United States

Young People Ask . . . How Can I Explain the Bible's View of Homosexuality?

(December 2010) I have been married for ten years, and I have one child. I struggle daily with my "thorn in the flesh." I have homosexual desires. Marriage did not change that. I had truly been in the depths of despair because I couldn't seem to win my fight against my desires. However, after reading this article, I no longer feel like a lost cause. I have been able to accomplish the reachable goal of not acting on those desires.—2 Corinthians 12:7.

Name withheld, United States

I have dealt with homosexual urges from as early as five years of age. I am now 61 years old, and the urges have not subsided. I especially liked the points that stated that even heterosexuals must flee from fornication and that there are "many who are single with little prospect of marriage and many who are married to a disabled partner who is unable to function sexually," yet they are able to live happily without fulfilling their sexual urges. Therefore, those with homosexual inclinations can likewise lead moral lives if they truly want to please God. So I thank you for encouraging those of us who deal with this circumstance.

Name withheld, United States

4. 160,000. 5. C.
Rebekah a nose ring and two bracelets, not a necklace.
a drinking trough, not three barrels. 3. The servant gave
1. There should be 10 camels, not 11. 2. Rebekah filled

ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31

Is Homosexuality Ever Justifiable?

THE practice of homosexuality continues to gain acceptance in many lands. A group in one church in the United States is calling for a reinterpretation of what the Bible says about homosexuality in light of “contemporary wisdom.” A pastor in Brazil who recently entered into a same-sex marriage also encouraged “taking a fresh look at the Bible,” so as to allow for his church’s contemporary view.

On the other hand, those who do not approve of homosexual acts are often tagged as homophobic or prejudiced. What does the Bible really say about homosexuality?

What Does the Bible Say?

The Bible does not promote prejudice against *people*. However, its view of homosexual *acts* is clear.

“You must not lie down with a male the same as you lie down with a woman. It is a detestable thing.”—Leviticus 18:22.

As part of the Mosaic Law, this prohibition was one of many moral laws given specifically to the nation of Israel. Even so, the commandment expresses God’s view of homosexual acts, whether by Jews or non-Jews, when it says: “It is a detestable thing.” The nations around Israel practiced homosexuality, incest, adultery, and other acts prohibited by the Law. Therefore, God viewed those nations as unclean. (Leviticus 18:24, 25) Did the Bible’s viewpoint change during the Christian era? Consider the following scripture:

“God gave them up to disgraceful sexual appetites, for both their females changed the nat-

ural use of themselves into one contrary to nature; and likewise even the males left the natural use of the female and became violently inflamed in their lust toward one another, males with males, working what is obscene.”—Romans 1: 26, 27.

Why does the Bible describe homosexual acts as unnatural and obscene? Because they involve sexual activity that was not intended by our Creator. Homosexual acts cannot produce offspring. The Bible compares homosexual activity to the sexual relations that rebellious angels, who came to be known as demons, had with women before the Deluge of Noah’s day. (Genesis 6:4; 19:4, 5; Jude 6, 7) God views both acts as unnatural.

Factors That Justify Homosexuality?

Some may wonder, ‘Would genetics, environment, or traumatic life experiences, such as sexual abuse, justify one’s giving in to homosexual desires?’ No, they would not. Consider this example: A person may have what some scientists consider to be hereditary tendencies toward alcohol abuse, or he may have been raised in a family where alcohol abuse was commonplace. Certainly, most people would be empathetic toward a person in such circumstances. All the same, by no means would he be encouraged to continue abusing alcohol or to give up his fight against alcohol abuse just because he may have been born with the tendency or he was raised in such an environment.

Likewise, while the Bible does not condemn those who struggle with homosexual



Should God's view of homosexuality be reinterpreted?

tendencies, it in no way condones giving in to those tendencies, whether they are the result of genetics or they stem from some other source. (Romans 7:21-25; 1 Corinthians 9:27) Instead, the Bible offers practical assistance and encouragement to help individuals to win the fight against homosexual practices.

What Is God's Will for People With Homosexual Desires?

The Bible assures us that God's will is that "all sorts of men should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth." (1 Timothy 2:4) Though the Bible disapproves of homosexual acts, it does not encourage hatred of homosexuals.

God's view of homosexuality cannot be watered down. At 1 Corinthians 6:9, 10, the Bible clearly states that "men who lie with men" are included in those who "will not inherit God's kingdom." But verse 11 adds the comforting thought: "And yet that is what some of you *were*. But you have been washed clean, but you have been sanctified, but you have

been declared righteous in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ and with the spirit of our God."

Clearly, those who sincerely desired to worship God on his terms were warmly welcomed into the early Christian congregation. The same is true today for all honesthearted ones who seek God's approval—not by reinterpreting the Bible—but by bringing their lives into harmony with it.

HAVE YOU WONDERED?

- What is the Bible's viewpoint on homosexual acts?—**Romans 1:26, 27.**
- Does the Bible discriminate against people with homosexual desires?—**1 Timothy 2:4.**
- Is it possible to abstain from homosexual acts?—**1 Corinthians 6:9-11.**

What Is Wrong With This Picture?

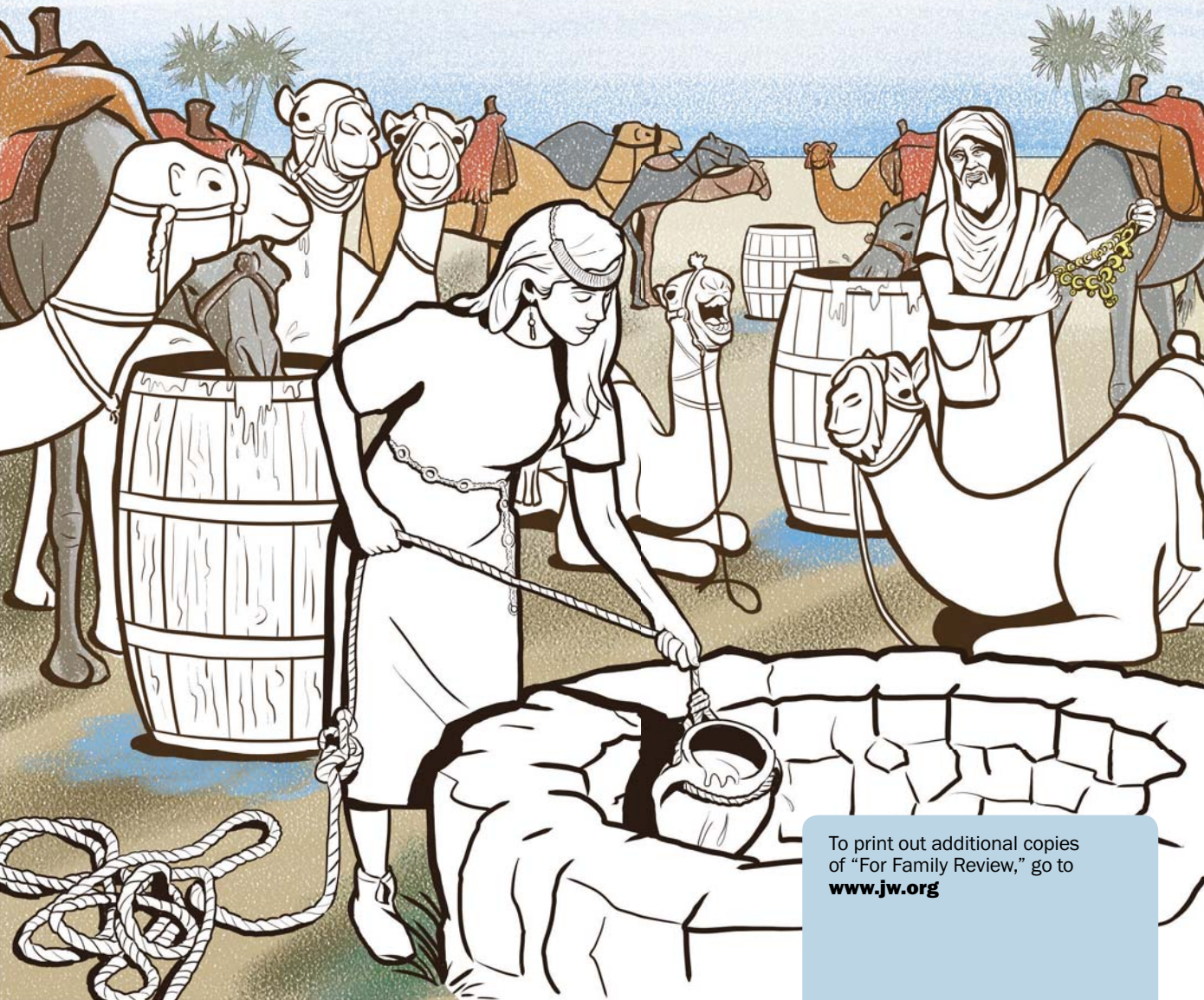
Read Genesis 24:1-4, 10-23. What three features of this drawing are incorrect? Write your answers on the lines below, and complete the picture by coloring it.

1.
2.
3.

● "FOR FAMILY REVIEW" answers on page 27

FOR DISCUSSION: What important qualities did Rebekah display? **CLUE:** Read Proverbs 31: 17, 27, 29-31; 1 Peter 4:9. How can you imitate Rebekah? **CLUE:** Read Proverbs 11:25; Romans 12:11.

FAMILY ACTIVITY: Write down the name of one person you would like to help. Next, make a list of what you could do to help that person. Show your paper to your family. Decide together what you will do for that person and when. After you help that person, meet together with your family and discuss how what you did made you feel.



To print out additional copies of "For Family Review," go to www.jw.org

Collect and Learn

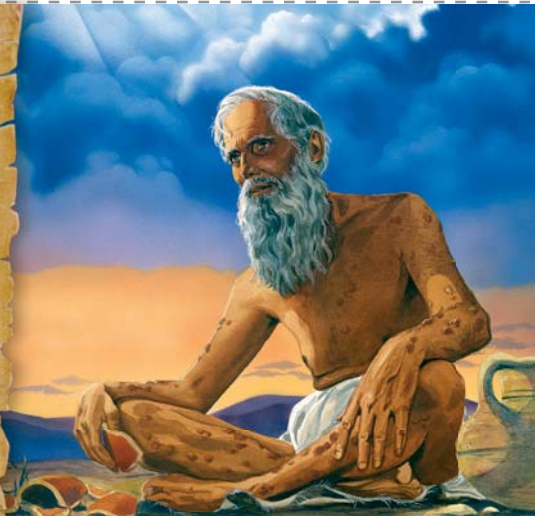
Cut out, fold in half, and save



JOB

BIBLE
CARD

13



QUESTIONS

- A.** Job had a total of ___ sons and ___ daughters.
- B.** What did Satan take from Job?
- C.** Complete Job's statement: "Until I expire I shall not take away . . ."

98 C.E.

Last Bible
book written

1 C.E.

Lived about
1600 B.C.E.

4026 B.C.E.

Adam
created



Lived in Uz

EGYPT

PROMISED
LAND
UZ?

J O B

PROFILE A man "blameless and up-right" in God's eyes. (Job 1:8) Though his wife and others pressured him, Job never turned away from serving God. (Job 1:20-22; 2:9, 10) His perseverance and happy outcome give us the courage to endure our trials loyally.—Job 42:12-17; James 5:11.

ANSWERS

- A.** 14, 6.—Job 1:2; 42:13.
- B.** His livestock, servants, children, and health.—Job 1:13-19; 2:4-7.
- C.** ". . . my integrity from myself!" —Job 27:5.

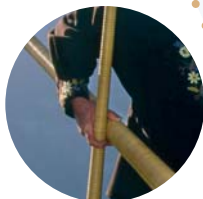
Peoples and Lands

- 4.** My name is Lukas. I am seven years old, and I live in Germany. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Germany? Is it 60,000, 100,000, or 160,000?
- 5.** Which dot shows where I live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Germany.

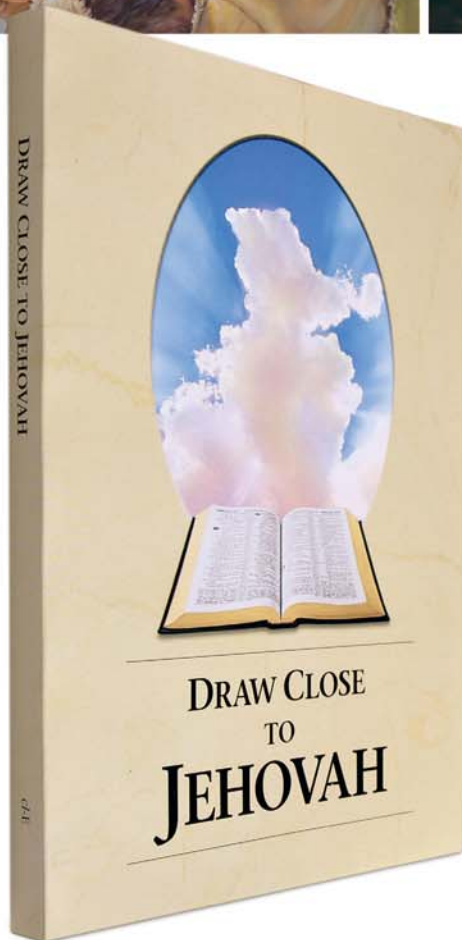


Children's Picture Search

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



Awake! January 2012 31



They Appreciate God's Love

● Jesus taught us to appreciate God's love. He said: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son [Jesus], in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life." (John 3:16) God's love for us and the thrilling prospect made possible by the gift of his Son are emphasized in the book *Draw Close to Jehovah*.

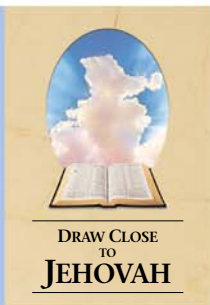
A woman in Florida, U.S.A., wrote: "After reading chapter 5, I could not help but be in awe of Jehovah's love, wisdom, and mighty power. As I meditated on his creations, my heart was filled even more with love for him." A woman from South Dakota, U.S.A., explained: "For over 30 years, I have had a difficult time expressing love (or feeling that I am loved). This book is helping me like no other."

The 320-page book *Draw Close to Jehovah* discusses God's primary attributes of power, justice, wisdom, and love. You can request a copy by filling in the accompanying coupon and mailing it 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.



Name

Address

.....

City

Province/State Postal/ZIP Code