

# Awake!

NOVEMBER 2012



You Can  
Be a Successful  
Single Parent!

# Awake!

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"I am very happy when my two girls cuddle me unexpectedly and say, 'We love you, Mommy.'"—ANNA, A SINGLE MOTHER IN POLAND.



"I often have the satisfaction of seeing my children show their appreciation for the things I do for them. Sometimes they give me little gifts, like a picture they've drawn. This more than repays me for any effort I make."—MASSIMO, A SINGLE FATHER IN ITALY.



"Sometimes when I am emotionally down, one of my sons will put his arms around me, kiss me, and tell me how much he loves me."—YASMIN, A SINGLE MOTHER IN SOUTH AFRICA.

# You Can Succeed!

THESE are just some of the expressions *Awake!* received from dozens of single parents who responded to an international survey. Many of the single parents, mostly mothers, expressed a desire for the support that only a loving mate could provide.\* Nevertheless, their frank expressions also reveal that they have adapted well to their situation.

What has helped these single parents both to adapt and to succeed in their difficult role? In the following articles, we will consider many of their practical and honest expressions, as well as some of the key principles that have helped them along the way. If you are a single parent, we hope that these articles will help you not only to succeed in your demanding role but also to do so with joy and contentment. To be sure, that can be a big challenge in today's rapidly changing and uncertain world.†

The articles will focus on six areas. How single parents can

1. Get more support
2. Communicate more effectively with their children
3. Set sound priorities
4. Set clear boundaries of behavior
5. Establish wholesome values
6. Give God a place in their family

\* Worldwide, by far the majority of single parents are women—a fact that is reflected in this series of articles.

† Many of the principles in this series of articles may also be helpful to families with both parents.



## Seek Out Support

“We have wonderful friends in our local congregation. They are loving and supportive. They feel like real family.”—LIZAAN, A MOTHER OF TWO TEENAGERS.

**The challenge.** “My greatest challenges,” says Alina, who has two young boys, “are tiredness and a constant lack of time.” Alina’s situation is the norm for single moms. That is why many single parents build a support network—a group of people on whom they can call for help without embarrassment.

**Suggestions.** *Look for support from trusted relatives and friends.* Why not make a list of people whom you can call on for help, whether for child care, transportation, home maintenance, or emotional support? And keep the list current. Also see what assistance is available through governmental and nongovernmental agencies.

Renata, who is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, has received much help from fellow Christians. “They are always there to help me,” she says. “When my two nine-year-old girls and I came down with the flu, I could not prepare meals. As soon as the congregation heard about this, someone came every day with food.” Such kindnesses call to mind the words found in the Bible at 1 John 3:18: “Little children, let us love, neither in word nor with the tongue, but in deed and truth.”



**Look for support from trusted relatives and friends**

*Can the noncustodial parent help?* If the other parent, usually the father, has legal access to the children and is responsible and willing to help, why not share some of the load with him? After all, children need to spend time with their dad.\*

*Train your children to help.* When you give your children tasks appropriate to their age, you help both yourself and them. Work teaches children to be responsible, and a good work ethic will be invaluable later in life.

\* Christian parents should apply Bible principles in the best way they can under the circumstances and consider what is in the children’s best interests. Court decisions should be respected.

**Awake!**<sup>®</sup> **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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# 2

## Be a Good Communicator

"I have learned to listen, listen, listen. It does not matter how tired I am."

—MIRANDA, SOUTH AFRICA.

**The challenge.** "My challenge," says Cristina, "is not just being with my daughter but being present mentally and emotionally despite all my other responsibilities and my tiredness."

**Suggestions.** *Create an environment of open communication.* "I try to set the example," says Elizabeth, a mother of five, "and my children open up to me. I also encourage them to communicate with one another and never to go to bed angry with a sibling. What is more, they know that I do not tolerate 'the silent treatment'—their refusing to talk to one another."

*Do not tune your children out.* "When my son was small," writes Lyanne, "he was such a chatterbox that I tuned him out a lot. Then, when he became a teenager, he stopped communicating, and I realized that I had made a huge mistake. I worked really hard—too hard, in fact—to break down the wall. I spoke about this with an elder in my congregation. He advised me to relax and to ease gently into conversations with my son. I took his advice, and slowly things began to improve."

*Be patient.* There is "a time to keep quiet and a time to speak," says Ecclesiastes 3:7. "When my children didn't feel like talking," says Dulce, a mother of three, "I made sure



**Try to be available when your child is ready to talk**

that they knew I was available when they were ready to talk." Yes, instead of forcing communication, warmly and patiently invite it. This is the course the Bible recommends. "A person's thoughts are like water in a deep well, but someone with insight can draw them out." —Proverbs 20:5, *Good News Translation*.

*Be "swift about hearing, slow about speaking."* (James 1:19) Lizaan, quoted in the preceding article, says: "I had to learn to bite my tongue when my children came with a problem. I also had to learn not to be too quick to offer advice but to speak calmly when dealing with upsetting issues." Leasa, a mother of two boys, writes: "I have not always been a model listener. At times, my sons' issues seemed trivial to me, so I had to learn to be more understanding."

**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, Macedonian, Malagasy, Malayalam, Maltese, Myanmar, Norwegian,° Polish,+° Portuguese,+° Punjabi, Rarotongan, Romanian, Russian,+° Samoan, Sepedi, Serbian, Sesotho, Shona, Siloti, Sinhala, Slovak, Slovenian, Spanish,+° Swahili, Swedish,° Tagalog,° Tamil, Thai, Tok Pisin, Tongan, Tsonga, Tswana, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu

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*“Let your utterance be always with graciousness.”* (Colossians 4:6) “In order not to hinder our communication,” says Lyanne, “I have had to make a conscious effort to stay as calm and relaxed as possible, even when serious matters come up.”

If you fail to make a conscious effort to stay calm, you may lose your temper and shout, which can be harmful in more ways

## Can You Help a Single Parent?

Maki, a single mother of two, writes: “Sometimes when I have come home from work so tired that I thought I could not go on, I have found some food and a card at the door. One card said, ‘Welcome home. You must be tired.’ My tears just flowed, and I thanked God.” If you know a single parent who is working hard to care for her children, why not commend her for her efforts and offer to help when you can? For example, every now and then, offer to babysit her children or to take them to school.

Single parents often struggle with loneliness. So why not invite a single-parent family to come for a meal occasionally or on an outing with your family. Single-parent families need an “extended family,” and you may be able to help fill that need. Also, if there is a father in your family, a single mother’s children will benefit from having a good male role model.

Why not list the single parents you know and discuss with your family what you might be able to do to help them?

1. ....
2. ....
3. ....
4. ....
5. ....

\* Since most single parents are women, this series of articles uses mostly feminine pronouns.

than one! (Ephesians 4:31) For example, shouting at a child may stifle communication and foster problem behavior. “A child is like a seashell,” says Heidi, who has a teenage daughter. “If you speak kindly and lovingly, the child will open up. If you shout and belittle him or her, the ‘shell’ closes and communication stops. To remind me of this fact, I have a picture of an open seashell on our refrigerator.”

*Know your children.* “My two sons are quite different,” says Yasmin, quoted earlier. “One is talkative; the other is reserved. With the quiet one, I learned that it’s best not to confront him directly. Instead, I talk to him while we are engaged in something else, such as a board game, or while he is talking about a topic that interests him. In that setting, I tactfully ask how he feels about a matter.”

What if a boy feels awkward talking to his mother about certain personal things, as did Misao’s adolescent son. “You just don’t understand me,” he said. She sought help from a mature, trustworthy male in her congregation. “He has become my son’s mentor, and now my son has a calm heart,” says Misao.

*Do not confuse the role of parent with that of friend.* “I made my teenage daughter my confidant,” says Iwona, a mother of two. “Although I knew it was not right, I fell into that trap and had to correct my mistake.” Although you want to have a warm relationship with your child, remember that you are the parent, the authority figure. When you maintain your dignity and show your maturity and stability, you make it easier for your children to honor you and to heed the Bible’s command: “Children, be obedient to your parents.”—Ephesians 6:1, 2.

*“Love [your] children.”* (Titus 2:4) Children need love as much as they need food and drink! So *regularly* reassure them of your love—in word and deed! They, in turn, will feel not only more secure but also more willing to talk with you *and* obey you.

# 3

## Set Sound Priorities

"I was always tired—thinking about how to balance my job, child rearing, our spiritual routine, household chores, and rest."—YOKO, JAPAN.

**The challenge.** "The greatest challenge," says Miranda, a mother of two boys, "is to be a working mother who is responsible for providing everything—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually—without the help of a marriage mate."

**Suggestions.** *Decide what is truly important to you and your children, and make these things your priorities.*

Stick to your priorities, and learn to manage your time and finances accordingly. To illustrate: Your children's health is important, so use your hard-earned money to buy nutritious food. That's better than spending

Use your hard-earned money to buy nutritious food. That's better than spending your resources on medical bills

your resources on medical bills. Before you shop, prepare a shopping list. This will protect you from wasteful impulse buying. "I like to cook," says Roberto, who lives in the United States with his four children. He adds: "I learned to focus on *needs*—not wants—and not on needs in general, but on what we really needed each day."

Dispose of things you never use—books, clothes, gadgets. As one single mom wrote:



**Have at least one meal together each day**

"Stuff equals stress. The more stuff you have, the more you have to clean, repair, and maintain. The key to simplifying your life is to simplify your stuff."

Train your children to tidy up *every night*. Don't let your home get out of control. Such domestic discipline teaches your children to take responsibility for their room and even for the home. Of course, your good example will add weight to your words.

Although you may be very busy, you *must* spend time with your children—not just brief periods of so-called quality time but as much time as you can give them. Your children need your time and attention.—Deuteronomy 6:7.

Have at least one meal together each day, and make mealtime a pleasant occasion. Says Colette, a mother of three: "We decided that the evening meal, when everyone was at home, would be a time of emotional and spiritual exchange. That meal has been and still is a special occasion in our family life."



# 4

## Set Clear Boundaries

"Raising children alone is not easy—especially when they reach the teenage years and feel the world's pressure to rebel against their parents."—DULCE, SOUTH AFRICA.

**The challenge.** The Bible foretold that in "the last days," children in general would be "disobedient to parents."—2 Timothy 3:1, 2.

**Suggestions.** *Recognize that "children need structure and schedules to thrive."* (*The Single Parent Resource*, by Brook Noel) Child and family psychologist Barry G. Ginsberg states: "Relationships are better and less stressful when boundaries are clear." He added: "The more explicit our boundaries, and the more clearly they are expressed, the easier relationships become." How can you set clear boundaries?

*Be firm, and be true to your word.* (Matthew 5:37) An Australian study revealed that children often misbehave when parents are unable to say no and when they constantly give in to their children. As the Bible says: "A boy [or girl] let on the loose will be causing his mother shame."—Proverbs 29:15.

Do not let feelings of guilt over your situation as a single parent cause you to be a permissive parent. "At times, my first reaction is to feel sorry for my two sons because they are being raised in a home without both parents," says Yasmin, quoted earlier. But as we shall see, she did not let her feelings, which were by no means bad, override her good judgment.

*Be consistent.* "Predictability and consistency in the application of discipline may be important for the prevention of behavioral and emotional difficulties in children," says the



**Be firm, and be true to your word**

*American Journal of Orthopsychiatry.* Yasmin states: "I sat down with my boys, and we discussed discipline. When they do wrong, I try to be consistent. That said, I have learned to listen first and then explain in a calm manner how their action has affected the family. Only then do I carry out the previously determined discipline."

*Be reasonable; do not discipline in anger.* While you need to be firm for what is right, you also need to be flexible when the situation warrants it. "The wisdom from above"—that is, from God—is "reasonable," says James 3:17. Reasonable people do not act rashly or in the heat of anger. Nor do they always go coldly 'by the book.' Instead, they think first, perhaps even praying about a matter, and then they are able to act more calmly and appropriately.

Consistency, firmness, and reasonableness—along with your good example—will enable you to set boundaries that will make your home a true refuge for your children.



# 5

## Establish Good Moral Values

“Earlier in my life, I did not live by Bible standards and found it difficult to train my children. But now it is much easier because I have the Bible to help me.”—ELIZABETH, SOUTH AFRICA.

**The challenge.** Peer pressure at school and the waning morality in the world exert a powerful influence on families. To resist this negative influence, children need wholesome values. Otherwise, it is unlikely that they will become responsible, principled, well-mannered adults.

**Suggestions.** Many single parents, including those quoted in this series of articles, look to the Bible for guidance, recognizing that it contains the unsurpassed wisdom of God. Consider, for example, what the Bible says about the most important principle of all—showing genuine love.

“Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, . . . hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”—1 Corinthians 13:4-8.

When parents display that kind of love, their children thrive. Colette, mentioned earlier, who lives in France, wrote: “I often told my children that I loved them. I also told them that they are gifts from God and that as such they needed good care. They, in turn, had to be polite and respectful toward me and their [noncustodial] father. These principles helped to establish a climate of trust and respect in our home.”—Psalm 127:3.



**Wise parents teach their children the wholesome values found in the Bible**

Anna, who lives in Poland, wrote: “When my children have disagreements, I remind them of Jesus’ words that what we want others to do to us, we should do to them.” (Matthew 7:12) Roberto, mentioned earlier, faces an issue common to many single parents. He comments: “The children are confronted with two sets of values—yours and those of the other parent. In upholding Bible values, I know I won’t be the favorite parent that day or week.” Moreover, he says: “The other parent may give gifts to the children in hopes that they develop a preference for that one. Such pressures are hard to resist, but good communication with the children helps.”

It is not always easy to live by Bible standards, but the results are well worth the effort! Says Sarah, a single parent in South Africa: “I am glad that my children have been raised with Jehovah’s guidance. Yes, we’ve had our challenges, but God has always been there for us.”

# 6

## Look to God for Help

“When my husband walked out on me and the children, I petitioned God to support us. He answered my prayer. We have lacked nothing essential. He has both helped us and guided us.”—MAKI, JAPAN.

**I**N TODAY’S increasingly secular world, people in general give little thought to God. Yet, our Creator is interested in us and wants us to succeed in life. His feelings are well expressed at Isaiah 41:10: “Do not be afraid, for I am with you. . . . I will really help you.”

In the preceding article, we considered how God helps us by means of the wholesome values found in the Bible. (2 Timothy 3:16) But the Bible is much more than a guide. It reveals God’s wonderful personality and his love for us. Hence, as many Christian parents—single and married—have discovered, when we apply Bible teachings, we actually *experience* God’s goodness.

*Robert, Austria:* “Jehovah God is a better father or mother than any one of us. He knows what our children need, and he knows how to protect them. So I often pray to him with my daughter.”

*Ayusa, Japan:* “It brings me joy to see my son show his confidence in Jehovah’s support



**Do you look to God for help in raising your children?**

when he says, ‘Jehovah is with us, so everything will be all right.’”

*Cristina, Italy:* “When a problem seems beyond my ability to solve, I pray to Jehovah, leaving it in his hands. Instantly, I feel an inner peace, knowing that the problem will get sorted out in the best way.”

*Laurentine, France:* “I can confirm that Jehovah has blessed me as a single parent. He really does come to the rescue of the afflicted and the fatherless or motherless.”

*Keiko, Japan:* “God is impartial. He wants to show his tender care to all families, whether they have two parents or just one.”—Acts 10:34.

Reflecting God’s compassion and concern for us, Jesus Christ said: “Come to me, all you who are toiling and loaded down, and I will refresh you . . . , for I am mild-tempered and lowly in heart, and you will find refreshment for your souls.” (Matthew 11:28-30) To be sure, Jesus and his heavenly Father, Jehovah God, want us to feel secure under their loving care. At Psalm 34:8, we read: “Taste and see that Jehovah is good.” Yes, God wants you to see for yourself that his advice works, that he has *your* best interests at heart. Will you accept his fatherly invitation?

## I Was Moved by My Mom’s Example

No matter how busy or tired she was, she would stop whatever she was doing to come to my bedside to pray with me. Her prayers helped me to realize that I could actually become a friend of Jehovah God.—Amanda, U.S.A.

# The Haltere of the Fly



*Without halteres, this housefly (left) and the crane fly would quickly crash to the ground*

● Why is the common housefly able to perform complex and precise aerobatic maneuvers? When hit by a gust of wind, why can the insect quickly right itself and maintain its course? The answer involves, in part, two tiny appendages called *halteres*, one located behind each wing.\*

**Consider:** A haltere is like a tiny drumstick with a knob on the end. During flight, the halteres swing up and down at the same frequency as the wings but in the opposite direction. Scientists have discovered that halteres serve as an ingenious type of gyroscope, helping flies to remain stable during flight.#

With their clubbed ends, halteres “beat in one particular direction, like the

pendulum of a clock,” says the *Encyclopedia of Adaptations in the Natural World*. If, during flight, a fly abruptly turns, whether intentionally or because of a sudden gust of wind, “the stem of the haltere will twist,” states the encyclopedia. “This twisting is detected by a dense cluster of nerve endings attached to the haltere, and the information is fed to the brain so the fly can take the appropriate action to stay . . . on course.” As a result, flies are highly agile and hard to catch.

Engineers see countless applications of haltere-inspired technology in such things as robots, micromechanical flying insects, and space vehicles. “Who would have thought a small, unlovely creature like the fly could teach us so much?” wrote aerospace researcher Rafal Zbikowski.

**What do you think?** Did the gyroscopic haltere of the fly come about by evolution? Or was it designed?

\* Halteres are found on two-winged insects, such as flies, mosquitoes, and gnats.

# Gyroscopes commonly consist of a frame supporting a disk that spins rapidly about its axis. The disk tends to maintain its axis of spin despite external movement, magnetic fields, or gravity. Therefore, gyroscopes can be used to make highly useful compasses.





## THE BIBLE A BOOK OF ACCURATE PROPHECY



*This eight-part series in “Awake!” is examining an outstanding feature of the Bible—its prophecies, or predictions. The articles will help you to answer these questions: Are Bible prophecies merely the work of clever humans? Do they bear the hallmark of divine inspiration? We invite you to weigh the evidence.*

### “The End Will Come”

**D**O YOU feel incensed when corrupt governments oppress and exploit their citizens? Does it offend your sense of justice when big business fattens the rich at the expense of the poor? Are you angered when religious leaders fleece their flocks or teach outright falsehoods? If so, you may be pleased to learn that the Bible too condemns these evils. This article will consider (1) Bible prophecies that foretell the end of all wickedness and wicked people and (2) the reason why these prophecies merit our full trust.

#### **The End of Wickedness**

The preceding article in this series considered the composite sign Jesus gave, which in-

dicates the nearness of the end of the present world. That sign includes a global proclamation of the good news of God’s Kingdom—God’s government that will soon rule the entire earth. (Daniel 2:44; Matthew 24:3, 14) When that proclamation work is finished, “the end will come,” said Jesus. You may be surprised to learn that the first thing that God will remove will be false religion, which misrepresents him. In the Bible, false religion is symbolized by a harlot named “Babylon the Great.”—Revelation 17:1, 5; see the box “Identifying Babylon the Great,” on page 13.

**Prophecy 1:** “[Babylon the Great’s] plagues will come, death and mourning and famine, and

*she will be completely burned with fire, because Jehovah God, who judged her, is strong.”—Revelation 18:2, 8.*

**Fulfillment:** The Bible reveals that at his appointed time, God will move the world’s political powers to turn against Babylon the Great and destroy her. They will “make her devastated and naked” and “eat up her fleshy parts.” (Revelation 17:16) In other words, they will expose her shameful character and plunder her immense wealth. Her destruction will be quick and so complete that not a trace of her will remain.—Revelation 18:21.

The political rulers may think that their deed was of their own making. However, the fulfillment of this amazing prophecy will confirm that Babylon’s end was an act of God. He will have “put it into their hearts to carry out his thought.”—Revelation 17:17.

**Prophecy 2:** *“In the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these [man-made] kingdoms, and it itself will stand to times indefinite.”*  
—Daniel 2:44.

**Fulfillment:** Having disposed of false religion, God will turn his attention to other organizations—political and commercial—as well as to wicked people. (Proverbs 2:22; Revelation 19:17, 18) Like a landlord who evicts destructive tenants, God will “bring to ruin those ruining the earth.” He will destroy those who fill it with violence and sexually degrading practices.—Revelation 11:18; Romans 1:18, 26-29.

Who will survive? The Bible answers: “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed

## IDENTIFYING BABYLON THE GREAT

How do we know that the symbolic woman named Babylon the Great, described in the Bible book of Revelation, pictures all false religion? Consider the evidence:

- She could not be a literal woman because the imagery in Revelation is in the form of “signs,” or symbols.—Revelation 1:1.

- Babylon the Great sits on waters, which represent “peoples and crowds and nations.” (Revelation 17:1, 5, 15) A literal woman cannot do that. False religion, however, gets its support from its huge membership.

- This symbolic woman is a “great city that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth.” In other words, she is organized and has international influence.—Revelation 17:18.

- A spiritual harlot, Babylon the Great forms alliances *with* “the kings of the earth.” Moreover, these mourn her destruction. (Revelation 17:1, 2; 18:9) So she cannot be a political entity.

- The commercial leaders also mourn her destruction. (Revelation 18:15) Hence, she cannot be a secular commercial power.

- The Bible describes the blending of the worship of God with a love for the world as spiritual adultery. (James 4:4) Babylon the Great fits that profile. Also, she promotes spiritism, a religious practice.—Revelation 18:23.

- The ancient city of Babylon, after which Babylon the Great is named, was a *profoundly* religious city.—Isaiah 47:1, 12, 13; Jeremiah 50:1, 2, 38.

Thus, we can say with confidence that Babylon the Great pictures the combined false religions of the world.

find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:11; 72:7.

Can we trust Bible prophecies? Can we be sure that God will terminate wickedness and suffering and preserve the righteous? Yes!

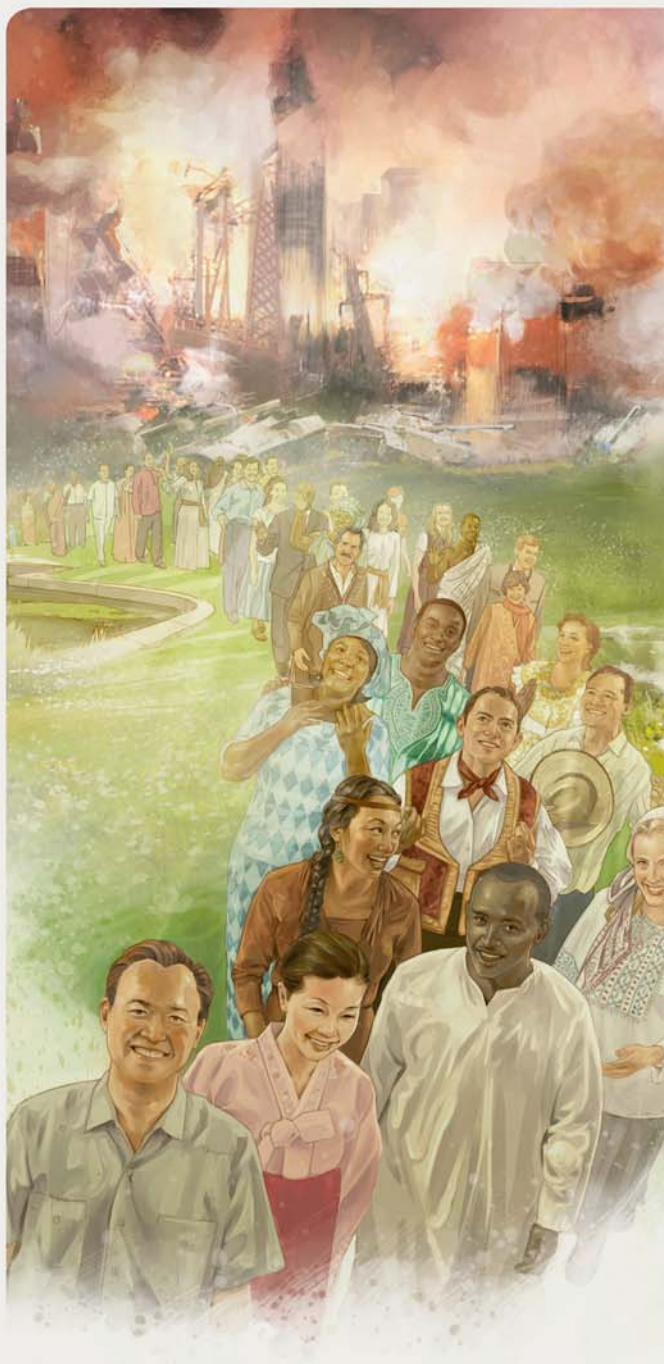
### **Bible Prophecies Are Trustworthy**

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jehovah God is the Author of the Bible and that everything he has promised he will do. (2 Timothy 3:16) Is this belief reasonable?

If you had a lifelong friend who truly loved you and never lied to you, would you believe him if he promised to do something good for you and if what he promised was within his means? Undoubtedly you would. God is even better than any human friend we may have. “God never tells a lie!”—Titus 1:2, *Contemporary English Version*.

God does not approve of blind faith, or credulity. Accordingly, he inspired the Bible writers to record many prophecies that only he, the Almighty, could fulfill. A number of those prophecies and their amazing fulfillment were discussed in the first six installments in this series of articles. (See the box “Fulfilled Bible Prophecies,” on page 15.) We can be confident, then, that God will fulfill the predictions that involve our future, including those mentioned in this article.

Yes, the Creator *will* bring an end to false religion, oppressive rulership, and the greedy commercial world. Would you like to learn more about what will happen after those events occur? The next issue of *Awake!* will help you. It will contain the final article in this series.



**God’s Kingdom will bring an end to all false religion, corrupt governments, and greedy commerce**



# FULFILLED BIBLE PROPHECIES

Below is a list of the many remarkable Bible prophecies that were discussed in the first six installments of this series. As those articles showed, these prophecies proved to be accurate!

## PROPHECIES ABOUT ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS

- The descendants of the faithful man Abraham would become a great nation, later called the nation of Israel.—Genesis 12:1, 2.

- Abraham's descendants would return to the land of Canaan after living in a foreign land for four generations.—Genesis 15:13, 16.

- Abraham's descendants would take possession of "the entire land of Canaan."—Genesis 17:8.

- Because the Israelites rebelled against God, he would allow them to be conquered and taken captive.—Jeremiah 25:8-11.

- God would restore the Jews to their homeland after they spent 70 years in captivity.—Jeremiah 25:12; 29:10.

- The Babylonian world power would be overthrown, and in time Babylon would become rubble.—Isaiah 13:19, 20.

## PROPHECIES ABOUT THE MESSIAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS

- The Messiah, or Christ, would stem from the family line of King David.—Isaiah 9:7.

- The future Messiah would be born in Bethlehem.—Micah 5:2.

- The Messiah would appear 483 years after "the going forth of the word to restore and to rebuild Jerusalem." That word was given in 455 B.C.E.—Daniel 9:25.

- Before his execution, the Messiah would be severely flogged.—Isaiah 50:6.

- The Messiah would be executed as a despised criminal, yet he would be buried with "the rich class."—Isaiah 53:9.

- Christ's followers would spread his message throughout Judea, Samaria, and the rest of the known world.—Acts 1:8.

- Christians would be persecuted.—Mark 13:9.

- Deceitful and oppressive individuals would infiltrate the Christian congregation, causing many to become apostate.—Acts 20:29, 30; 2 Peter 2:1, 2.

## PROPHECIES ABOUT THE LAST DAYS

The time of the end would be marked by

- Worldwide preaching of the "good news of [God's] kingdom."—Matthew 24:14.

- Warfare, even on a global scale.—Matthew 24:7; Revelation 6:4.

- Food shortages.—Matthew 24:7.

- Great earthquakes.—Luke 21:11.

- Terrible diseases.—Luke 21:11.

- Hatred and violence.—Matthew 24:10, 12.

- Greedy, self-centered people and money lovers.—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

# THE COMMON LOON

## A BIRD TO BE HEARD



**T**HE eerie wail of the common loon is a sound few people forget.\* Conveying the solitude of the wilderness, the cry can be heard at remote freshwater lakes and rivers in Canada, Europe, and the northern United States.

A handsome waterbird, the loon is the state bird of Minnesota, U.S.A., and it appears on Canada's dollar coin—the loonie. The bird is migratory, however, and winters mostly in coastal areas farther south. What makes the common loon a bird to be heard?

### Wails, Hoots, Tremolos, and Yodels

Loons have some impressive vocalizations. Their haunting *wail* is heard in the evening or at night and carries for miles. A less intense call is the *hoot*, which is used to keep in touch with mates, chicks, and other loons on the

same lake. The *tremolo* is an alarm signal. Described as “insane laughter,” the tremolo is the only call that loons make in flight.

The *yodel* is a male-only call and “seems to be associated with territorial defense,” says the journal *BirdWatch Canada*. “Each male has his own characteristic yodel,” and “the heavier the loon, the lower the pitch.” Moreover, when a male “changes territory, he changes his yodel,” and “it makes its yodel as different as possible from that of the previous resident,” the journal states.

### Attractive, Adroit, and Awkward

The loon has a very dark, almost black, iridescent-green head, with red eyes and a long, pointed black bill. Its general plumage changes according to the season.

Having large webbed feet, loons are efficient predators, powerful swimmers, and adroit divers. In fact, they may dive as deep

\* Also called great northern diver and great northern loon.

## LOON FACTS

**Length:** About three feet (1 m) from bill tip to outstretched feet

**Wingspan:** Up to 55 inches (140 cm)

**Weight:** An average of about 9 pounds (4 kg) but may go to nearly 14 pounds (6.3 kg)

**Bone structure:** A number of solid bones (unlike normally hollow

avian bones), which add weight but help in diving

**Flying speed:** About 75 miles per hour (120 km/h) during migration

**Diet:** Preferably fish but also crayfish, frogs, leeches, salamanders, shrimps, snails, and other aquatic animals

*A loon chick resting on its parent's back*



*A common loon vocalizing*



as 200 feet (60 m), occasionally staying submerged for several minutes at a time!

The loon's takeoffs and landings, however, are not its strong points! Because of its weight, the bird needs a "runway" to get airborne, and it may flap and run along the water for hundreds of yards (m) before taking off. Hence, loons prefer large bodies of water. When landing, the loon comes in at high speed with legs stretched out behind, as though its "undercarriage" had failed. It then hits the water on its belly and skims along until coming to a stop.

Although well-suited for swimming, the loon's big webbed feet and their location way back on its body make walking—and even standing—awkward. Hence, loons build their nests where they can easily slip into the water.

Both parents take turns incubating the eggs (usually two), which are olive colored

and camouflaged with dark spots. They hatch after an average of 29 days. When they are two days old, the chicks can swim and even make short dives. When they need to rest, they simply hitch a ride on a parent's back. After two or three months, when the young are able to fly, they leave their parents.

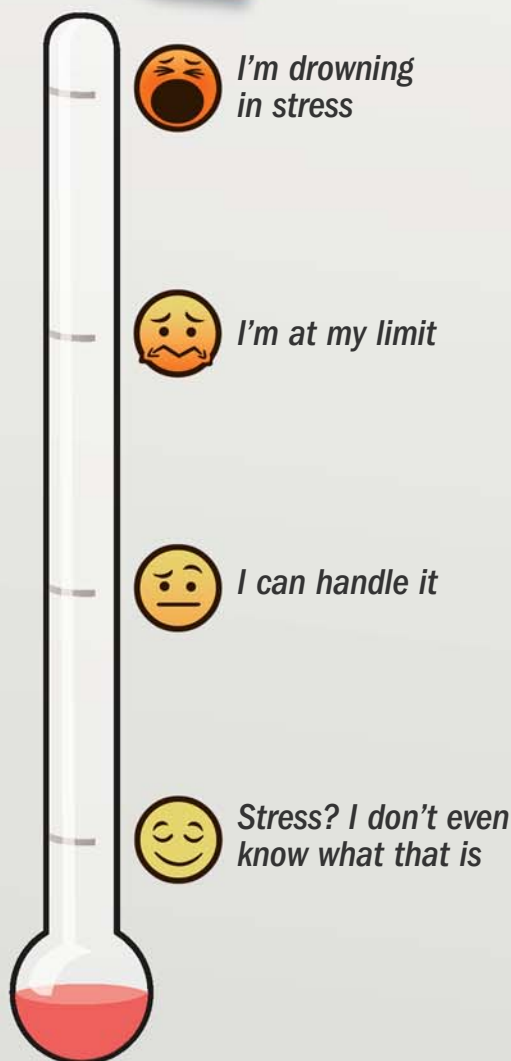
The loon's enemies include eagles, gulls, raccoons, and—worst of all—humans. Lead fishing weights and oil spills poison the birds. Chemical pollution from acid rain reduces the fish stocks on which loons depend. Waves from moving boats swamp their nests. And lakeshore development sends the reclusive loon away from its breeding habitat.

That said, the loon population remains healthy. Hence, this dashing handsome bird with its inimitable calls and amusing ways should enchant bird lovers for many years to come.



# How can I deal with stress?

How much stress are you under?  
Mark the meter below to indicate  
the amount.



**H**ANDLING stress is like pulling a heavy shipping container. A large truck can haul it across the country with ease. But a car cannot. Pulling such a load even a short distance could ruin a car's engine. The same could be true of *your* "engine" if you're overwhelmed with stress.

Is the situation hopeless? Not at all! To keep from burning out, you'll need either to lighten your load or to get a more powerful "engine." Actually, you can do *both*. Let's see how.

## **Lighten Your Load**

### **THE CHALLENGE: Overscheduling.**

*"Someone will ask me to help out with something or to socialize when I really have things that I need to do. I just don't want to let anyone down."*—Karina.\*

### **THE REMEDY: Learn to say no.**

"Wisdom is with the modest ones," says the Bible. (Proverbs 11:2) Modesty, or accepting your limitations, empowers you to say no when the load will be too heavy for you to carry.

Of course, saying no isn't always an option—for example, when your parents remind you about your chores! But if you let everyone add to your load, you'll eventually give out. Even the biggest trucks have a load limit.

**Tip:** If it's hard for you to turn down someone outright, try saying, "Let me get back to you." Then, before giving a definite reply, ask yourself, 'Can I really afford to invest the time and energy needed for this activity?'

\* Some names in this article have been changed.

### THE CHALLENGE: Procrastination.

*"If a task seems difficult, I'll put it off. But then I'll worry about the fact that I still have to do it. When I finally start on it, I have to rush, which stresses me out."*—Serena.

### THE REMEDY: Get started—even if you don't finish now.

"Do not loiter at your business," advises the Bible. (Romans 12:11) Confronting a hard task is bad enough, so why add to the load by procrastinating? That just keeps it before you longer!

To create incentive, make a to-do list. Break down big tasks into manageable sizes.

**Cut out the clutter!** When you have to rifle through chaos to find your homework or clean clothes to wear, you raise your stress level. For a less hectic morning, set aside five minutes to tidy up before going to bed

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"I love lists," says a young woman named Carol. "Usually I put the things I dislike the most first, and then as I check them off, it gets easier. Before you know it, you can move on to the things in your life that are more fun!"

## WHAT YOUR PEERS SAY



**Patricia**—When I'm stressed, sports, such as jogging, cycling, or gymnastics, help me to calm down. Also, I share my feelings with my parents or my best friend—people whom I can trust and who understand me. Having their support really helps.



**Zachary**—I've noticed that I tend to worry too much, which stresses me out and only makes the situation worse. So I try to consider the bigger picture. How do my problems compare with those of others who might not even have a place to live or food to eat?



**Gregory**—Something that helps me to manage my stress level is a daily planner. It helps me to be organized and up-to-date on everything I need to do. That way, I never fall behind. I can politely and honestly accept or decline responsibilities based on the amount of free time I have.



**Hailey**—If I know I have chores to do, I make a schedule the night before, noting the time at which I need to have each task done. For example, when I clean the house, I set a goal to have the kitchen cleaned by a certain time, the bedrooms done two hours later, and so on. It works really well!

**Make sure your “engine”  
can handle your load**



**Tip:** If you struggle to get started on a task, set a timer for 10 or 15 minutes and begin working on it right away. When the alarm goes off, you’ll have 10 or 15 minutes of the job completed. Now that you’ve started, you might be surprised at how much easier it is to do more on the task.

### **Get a More Powerful “Engine”**

● **Take care of your body.** Experts agree that a healthful diet, regular exercise, and proper sleep will help you to get more done.\* Don’t worry—taking care of your body isn’t all that complicated. A few simple steps will get you started. Take sleep, for example. Try the following.

1. Get enough sleep. Set regular times to go to bed and to get up, at least on school days and workdays.

2. Allow yourself enough time to unwind. Don’t exercise within three hours before going to bed, and avoid heavy snacks and caffeine as bedtime nears.

3. When it’s time to go to bed, try to make your bedroom dark, quiet, and comfortable.

\* For tips on diet and exercise, see chapter 10 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

● **Connect with others.** Don’t hesitate to turn to your parents and friends for assistance. Will that really help? Yes, for studies show that emotional support reduces the damage that increased stress can cause to your heart, blood vessels, and immune system.

Those findings agree with the Bible, which says: “Anxious care in the heart of a man is what will cause it to bow down, but the good word is what makes it rejoice.” (Proverbs 12: 25) When “anxious care” weighs you down, true friends can offer you a “good word” of encouragement, which may be just what you need to make it through.

Do you still need help in coping with stress? See the following chapters in the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volumes 1 and 2, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

### **VOLUME 1**

**Chapter 18:** How Can I Cope With Stress at School?

**Chapter 21:** How Can I Manage My Time?

### **VOLUME 2**

**Chapter 26:** How Can I Control My Emotions?

**Chapter 27:** Why Do I Feel That I Have to Be Perfect?

Beginning with the January 2013 issue of *Awake!* “Young People Ask” articles will be found exclusively online at **[www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org)**

### **WHY NOT ASK YOUR PARENTS?**

**What kind of stress do you face in your life? What methods of coping with stress have you found to be the most effective?**





# They Never Gave Up on Me

AS TOLD BY KEITH LYONS

**I loved alcohol and violence. Then one day I received some tragic news that caused me to reexamine my life. Let me explain.**

**I** WAS born in 1943 in Rubottom, Oklahoma, U.S.A. Throughout my childhood, violence was my way of life. During my senior year in high school, I began to drink. Since my father was a violent alcoholic, my drinking led to an odd type of friendship with him. We went to dances and other social events together just to drink and fight.

I married in 1966, and my wife, Shirley, and I had two children, Angela and Shawn. Nevertheless, I continued abusing alcohol. To supplement my income, I began to grow and sell marijuana. I also worked as a bouncer at local bars, which afforded me the opportunity to satisfy my thirst for alcohol and violence. At that point in my life, I was not afraid of anybody or anything, and I cared little about the feelings of others.

## **“Don’t Bring Anybody to Talk to Me!”**

Shirley’s cousin moved to California where, after studying the Bible, he became one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. On his return to Oklahoma, he shared what he had learned with Shirley, who quickly recognized the ring

of truth. After a thorough study of the Bible, Shirley too decided to become a Witness, and she was baptized in 1976. I wanted nothing to do with her religion. “Don’t bring anybody to talk to me!” I said. “It’s not going to work.”

Shirley never compromised her loyalty to Bible principles, and she continued to show love for me. In fact, before she and the children would leave to attend Christian meetings at the local Kingdom Hall, she would kindly invite me to go with her. Likewise, Angela would say, “Dad, we wish you’d go with us.”

Because of my involvement with illegal activities, I often carried a pistol. Moreover, I would disappear for days at a time, which created marital tension. Upon my return I would try to smooth things over with Shirley by attending a few meetings. The Witnesses always treated me kindly, and their teachings seemed to make sense.

In time, a congregation elder offered to study the Bible with me. I accepted his offer. Unfortunately, though, what I learned had little effect on me—primarily because

I continued associating with my old friends. Aware of this, the elder shared with me some Bible principles about the dangers of bad association. (1 Corinthians 15:33) Even though

**Realizing the power of prayer increased my love for Jehovah and boosted my confidence in his guidance**

his advice was based on the Bible, I took offense, stopped studying, and became even more involved with my former activities. How my foolish pride hurt Shirley and the children!

**“We Still Love You”**

In 1983, I received some tragic news. My nephew, whom I had grown quite fond of, had died. This affected me deeply, moving me to reflect on my life. I could see that I was hurting my marriage and my family—yes, all that I considered worthwhile. This sobering realization was my turning point. At my nephew’s funeral, an elderly Witness named John kindly put his arm around me and said, “I just want you to know that we still love you.” That was the encouragement I needed! I called John the next day and said that I wanted to resume my study of the Bible, hoping that this time I would make some rather belated changes.

During our first study, we discussed prayer and I told John that I would give it a try. The next day I began searching for honest work, but without results. While driving in my pickup, I prayed out loud, “Jehovah, if you want me to stay in this area, you had better find me a job.” Then I thought, ‘This is silly—driving down the road talking to myself.’ Clearly, my faith in God as the “Hearer of prayer” had a long way to go—as did the quality of my

prayers! (Psalm 65:2) Amazingly, though, I received a job offer the very next day!

Thereafter, I began to pray more often and in earnest. Time and again, I saw Jehovah’s blessing. I had always believed in God, but these experiences helped me to see the truthfulness of 1 John 5:14, which says: “No matter what it is that we ask according to his will, he hears us.” Realizing the power of prayer increased my love for Jehovah and boosted my confidence in his guidance.—Proverbs 3: 5, 6.

When I began to attend Christian meetings again, the Witnesses warmly welcomed me. Moreover, I began to appreciate that they really did “love one another intensely from the heart,” and this moved me deeply. (1 Peter 1:22) I also began to appreciate the truth of



**With my wife, Shirley**

Proverbs 13:20, which states: “He that is walking with wise persons will become wise, but he that is having dealings with the stupid ones will fare badly.”

For years I had caused hardship and pain to my family, but now I was trying to be peaceable as well as a better husband, father, and communicator. I began to apply the Bible’s counsel that “husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies” and that fathers should “not be exasperating [their] children, so that they do not become downhearted.”—Ephesians 5:28; Colossians 3:21.

Understandably, the changes I was making had a wonderful effect on my family. Because of this, Jesus’ words at Matthew 5:3 rang loud and clear: “Happy are those conscious of their spiritual need.” At last, I had found true happiness!

In June 1984, my daughter, Angela, was interviewed at an assembly of Jehovah’s Witnesses. She described the kind of person I once was and then spoke about the changes I had made. She finished by saying how thrilled she was to see me sitting in the front row among those who would be baptized that day.

How thankful I am that Jehovah does not give up on people like me! I am also very grateful to Shirley and our children for not giving up on me. A genuine Christian, Shirley loyally applied the admonition at 1 Peter 3:1: “Wives, be in subjection to your own husbands, in order that, if any are not obedient to the word, they may be won without a word through the conduct of their wives.” Her loyalty, patience, and fine conduct through all my wayward years kept the door open for me until I finally came to my senses.

Since my baptism, I have often used her example to encourage others who have unbelieving mates not to give up on them. “When the time is right,” I tell them, “Jehovah can use the power of his Word, the Bible, and your good conduct to help your marriage mate change—even if at first that may seem unlikely.”

## Big Rose Entered the Kingdom Hall

After becoming one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, I occasionally crossed paths with former acquaintances. One of those was a woman commonly known as Big Rose. She had numerous tattoos and a reputation as a drug addict and an alcoholic. She was also known to settle disputes with firearms. How surprised I was when one day I saw her enter our Kingdom Hall to attend her first meeting!

Rose immediately recognized me, for I used to frequent the bar she once owned. She told me that during her last prison stay, she had studied the Bible with the Witnesses and, like me, had made major changes in her life. Now she too was free of her addictions and former ways. Determined to serve the true God, she was baptized in 1990. When she died in 2005, I was honored to give her funeral talk.

ANSWERS TO PAGES 30 AND 31

1. 1 matches F. 2. 2 matches B. 3. 3 matches A. 4. 4 matches E. 5. 5 matches C. 6. 6 matches D. 7. 3,600. 8. D.



## Flaunting—Is It Worth the Price?

“Slipping into a pair of designer jeans or designer anythings can raise the insecure from the doldrums of nothingness to the fantasy level of ‘I’m somebody, and if you don’t believe me, just look at my label!’”—Psychologist Chaytor D. Mason.

**I**N ORDER to be admired, some people flaunt their designerwear or other fancy belongings. In one Asian land, for example, the “newly rich love luxury products—imported French handbags, Italian sports cars—and even more, they love to show off [their wealth],” says an article in *The Washington Post*.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with enjoying the fruitage of one’s labor. The Bible says: “Every man should eat and indeed drink and see good for all his hard work. It is the gift of God.” (Ecclesiastes 3:13) But is it wise to flaunt, or parade, our possessions? What does the Bible say?

### “The Rich Have Many Friends”

When the rich or those who pretend to be rich flaunt their belongings, what kind of friends might they attract? The Bible gives us a clue in this wise saying about human nature: “No one likes the poor, not even their neighbors, but the rich have many friends.”—Proverbs 14:20, *Good News Translation*.

The implication is this: The “many friends” of the rich are friends, not so much of the people themselves, but of *their wealth*. Their so-called friendship is rooted in self-interest, as is their flattering speech. The Bible calls

such speech “a false front for covetousness,” or greed.—1 Thessalonians 2:5.

So ask yourself, ‘What kind of friends do I want? Friends who love me for what I have or true friends who love me for what I am?’ The Bible shows that our behavior can contribute to the kind of friends we attract.

### “Wisdom Is With the Modest Ones”

Another problem associated with showing off wealth is well illustrated in the Bible account of King Hezekiah, who lived in ancient Jerusalem. On one occasion Hezekiah showed “all that was to be found in his treasures” to dignitaries from Babylon. Evidently, his great wealth impressed the visitors. However, it may also have excited their greed. After they left, God’s prophet Isaiah bravely told Hezekiah that one day all his treasure would “actually be carried to Babylon.” Nothing would be left. Those words came true! Years later the Babylonians returned and hauled off all the riches that belonged to Hezekiah’s family.—2 Kings 20:12-17; 24:12, 13.

Likewise today, people who flaunt their wealth may risk losing it, or at least some of it. A report on crime and safety in Mexico stated: “Ostentatious displays of wealth are magnets for thieves in Mexico City. Wearing expensive jewelry, watches, and dis-



**Do you want friends  
who love you for what  
you have or friends who  
love you for what  
you are?**

plays of large amounts of cash draw unwanted attention.” How much better to heed the Bible’s advice not to “brag about” one’s riches. (Jeremiah 9:23) “Wisdom is with the modest ones,” says Proverbs 11:2.

### **See the Good Qualities in Others**

Instead of having an egotistical ‘look-at-me’ attitude, a modest and humble person delights in the good qualities and strengths of others. Philippians 2:3 states: “There must be no room for rivalry and personal vanity among you, but you must humbly reckon others better than yourselves.” (*The New English Bible*) At Galatians 5:26, we read: “Let us not become egotistical, stirring up competition with one another, envying one another.”

Similarly, people with godly wisdom know that unselfishness and mutual respect are the pillars of true friendship and that such friendship does not fail when wealth fails. Instead, it grows stronger with time. “A *true companion* is loving *all the time*,” states Proverbs 17:17. Above all, a wise person strives to please God. He knows that God is not impressed with outward appearance but looks at “the secret person of the heart”—what we are on the inside. (1 Peter 3:4) Hence, he works hard to cultivate the appealing qualities that characterize what the Bible calls “the new personal-

ity.” (Ephesians 4:24) Some of those qualities are mentioned at Micah 6:8: “What is Jehovah asking back from you but to exercise justice and to love kindness and to be modest in walking with your God?”

True, in today’s world modesty is anything but acclaimed, which is no surprise to Bible students. How so? When discussing “the last days,” the Bible foretold that humans, by and large, would be “greedy, boastful, . . . conceited . . . , and swollen with pride.” (2 Timothy 3:1-5, *GNT*) In that social setting, people who flaunt their goods should feel perfectly at home. God, however, encourages us to “keep away from such people,” lest we become like them.

### **HAVE YOU WONDERED?**

- **What personality traits please God?**  
—Micah 6:8.
- **How should we view the good qualities and strengths of others?**—Philippians 2:3.
- **Why should prevailing attitudes toward flaunting not surprise us?**—2 Timothy 3:1-5.

# MEDIEVAL MASTERS of Mechanics

**A**UTOMATION has taken over industry—especially the routine and repetitious tasks. But when did automatic, programmable devices first appear on the scene? Was it just a couple of centuries ago during Europe’s industrial revolution? You may be surprised to learn that automatic machines were invented much earlier.

During the early part of the era known as the golden age of Islamic science, from the 8th to the 13th century C.E. and beyond, Middle Eastern scholars translated into Arabic scientific and philosophical texts that preserved the works of such renowned Greeks as Archimedes, Aristotle, Ctesibius, Hero of Alexandria, and Philo of Byzantium.\* Having these and other sources, the Islamic Empire—which stretched from Spain across North Africa and the Middle East to Afghanistan—possessed the knowledge that made it possible for them to make automatic machines.

Those machines, says historian of technology Donald Hill, could “continue working for long periods—hours, days or even longer—without human intervention.” Why? The engineers had invented effective control mechanisms that made automation possible. The machines used water from elevated tanks to provide a steady supply of energy. Automatic switching opened and closed valves or changed the direction of water flow. The machines also had feedback systems, as well as what Hill calls “precursors of fail-safe devices.” Consider some examples.

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\* Regarding the translation work undertaken by Arabic scholars, please see “How Arabic Became the Language of the Learned,” in the February 2012 issue of *Awake!*



## The Ingenious Banu Musa

The three Banu Musa—Arabic for “sons of Musa”—lived in ninth-century Baghdad. They drew on the works of their Hellenistic forerunners Philo and Hero, as well as Chinese, Indian, and Persian engineers, to make over 100 devices. According to science writer Ehsan Masood, these include water fountains that changed their patterns at intervals, clocks with visual gimmicks, and vessels that served drinks automatically and replenished themselves using clever combinations of floats, valves, and siphons. According to historian of science Jim Al-Khalili, the sons of Musa also built rudimentary life-size automatons—a “tea girl” that actually served tea and a flute player, “possibly the earliest example of a programmable machine.”

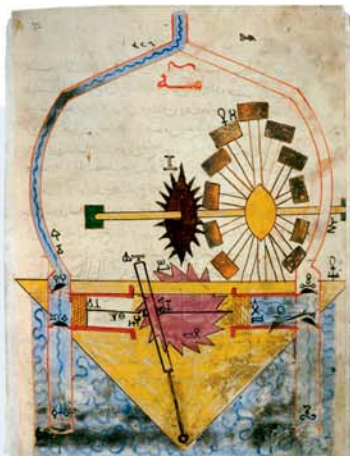
These automatic systems had much in common with modern machines. However, “they used mainly water under pressure rather than electronics, but many of the operating principles are the same,” says science writer Ehsan Masood.





▲ **Waterwheels, such as these in Hama, Syria, were built throughout the medieval Islamic Empire**

**Al-Jazari's two-piston suction pump**



**Al-Jazari's 13th-century manuscript illustrating his Elephant Clock**



## Al-Jazari —“Father of Robotics”

In 1206, Ibn al-Razzaz al-Jazari completed his work, sometimes translated *Compendium on the Theory and Practice of the Mechanical Arts*. It has been called “a study in systematic machine design.” Some of al-Jazari’s technology went far beyond that published by the Banu Musa, and his descriptions and diagrams are so detailed that modern engineers can recreate his devices.

Al-Jazari’s book illustrates water-raising devices, water clocks, candle clocks, water dispensers, musical automata, and a pump that converted the rotary motion of a waterwheel into the back-and-forth movement of a piston that pumped water with great force. Historians give al-Jazari

the credit for designing hydraulic pumps three centuries before the same basic design appeared in the West.

Al-Jazari also produced whimsical, yet functional, clocks. The one illustrated here has been reconstructed in a Dubai shopping mall. The timing mechanism is a perforated bowl that sits in a water reservoir inside the elephant’s belly. The bowl be-

comes full in 30 minutes and then sinks, triggering a series of actions that utilize ropes and balls that are released from the “castle” on the elephant’s back. When the half-hour cycle ends, the water bowl is automatically refloated, and the process starts over. This device and other automatic machines attributed to al-Jazari have earned him the title “father of robotics.”

The story of man’s ingenuity is truly amazing! Yet, that story is more than just interesting history. It also gives us a sense of perspective. At a time when many boast about modern technology, we are reminded of just how much we owe to the brilliant and fertile minds that preceded us.

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# A Key to Understanding **THE BIBLE**

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**“How do you know that your interpretation of the Bible is correct? It can be interpreted in all kinds of ways!”**

Have you heard people say that? Yet, did you know that it is possible to examine the Bible in such a way that it actually sheds light on itself? The secret is this: If the surrounding verses do not make the meaning of a particular statement clear, compare that statement with others in the Bible that discuss the same subject. In this way, we let the Bible, not personal opinion, guide our thinking.

Consider, for example, the Bible's teaching on the condition of the dead. Below are six passages taken from different parts of the Bible. Notice how they form a harmonious picture.

- ***“The dead praise not the LORD, neither any that go down into silence.”—Psalm 115:17.\****
- ***“Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help. His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.”—Psalm 146: 3, 4.***
- ***“The living know that they shall die: but the dead know not any thing.”—Ecclesiastes 9:5.***
- ***“The grave cannot praise thee, death can not celebrate thee . . . The living, the living, he shall praise thee, as I do this day.”—Isaiah 38:18, 19.***

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\* The scriptures are taken from the *King James Version*.



- ***“The soul that sinneth, it shall die.”—Ezekiel 18:4.***
- ***Concerning the recent death of his friend Lazarus, Jesus Christ said: “Our friend Lazarus sleepeth; but I go, that I may awake him out of sleep. Then said his disciples, Lord, if he sleep, he shall do well. . . . Then said Jesus unto them plainly, Lazarus is dead.”—John 11:11-14.***

Do you see the harmony in these verses? Yes, contrary to popular beliefs, the Bible teaches that the dead are actually dead. They are not alive in heaven or somewhere else but are in a deep sleep, as it were, not conscious of anything. Hence, they cannot praise God or even think.\*

**The main point is this:** When we examine the Bible by subject, its basic teachings become clear. Of course, this approach, which Jehovah's Witnesses use, calls for effort. (Proverbs 2:1-5) But that is true of most things that are really worthwhile.

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\* The Bible teaches that the dead who are in God's memory will be 'awakened,' or resurrected, at God's appointed time in the future.—See Job 14:14, 15; John 5:28, 29; Acts 24:15.

### Risks of “Heading” in Soccer

In soccer, ball control with the head—or “heading”—is part of the game. However, recent studies using advanced imaging techniques and cognitive tests have raised concerns over the safety of repeatedly heading a soccer ball. According to researchers at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York, U.S.A., the practice “increases the risk for brain injury and cognitive impairment.” Detectable injury was observed among amateurs who headed the ball more than 1,000 to 1,500 times a year—which amounts to just “a few times a day for a regular player.”

### Hybrid Vehicles More Dangerous to Pedestrians

“Advocacy groups have raised pedestrian safety concerns for HEVs [hybrid electric vehicles],” states a U.S. Department of Transportation report. “Their concern is that HEVs seem relatively quieter and may not emit the sounds that pedestrians and bicyclists rely on for warning as [a] vehicle approaches them on the street or at an intersection.”

Indeed, while performing certain maneuvers, “the HEV was two times more likely to be involved in a pedestrian crash” than conventional vehicles, says the report. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration has thus proposed that hybrid and electric cars be required to emit some kind of noise while moving at low speed.



In Germany, about **33 percent of children born in 2010 were born out of wedlock**, compared to only 15 percent in 1993.—*ÄRZTE ZEITUNG* and *THE LOCAL*, GERMANY.

According to **2010 census data**, 69.4 percent of children in the United States live with two parents, 23.1 percent live with their mother only, 3.4 percent live with their father only, and 4.1 percent do not live with a parent.—U.S. CENSUS BUREAU, U.S.A.

Natural disasters cost the global economy an estimated \$380 billion (U.S.) in 2011. **The Japanese earthquake was the “costliest disaster of all time**, with losses of \$210 billion—not including the nuclear incident at Fukushima.”—*NEW SCIENTIST*, BRITAIN.

**Worldwide, the most frequently stolen food item is cheese.** Just over 3 percent of the world’s retail supply is lost every year, mainly as a result of shoplifting and employee theft.—CENTRE FOR RETAIL RESEARCH, BRITAIN.



## Match the Pictures to the Text

**Read Genesis 1:1-31.** Draw a line connecting each picture to the matching Bible verses. (The pictures are not in the correct order.)

● “FOR FAMILY REVIEW” answers on page 23



A

1. Verses 3-5

2. Verses 6-8



D

3. Verses 9-13

4. Verses 14-19



E

5. Verses 20-23

6. Verses 24-31



B



F



C

**FOR DISCUSSION:** How do we know that the creative days were not 24-hour days? **CLUE:** Read Genesis 2:4; Psalm 90:4. What do you learn about Jehovah from his creative works? **CLUE:** Read Psalm 115:16; Romans 1:20; 1 John 4:8; Revelation 4:11.

**FAMILY ACTIVITY:** Plan a field trip as a family. Visit a zoo, garden, or planetarium to learn details about your favorite animals, plants, or planets. Next, share with your family what you have learned about Jehovah from studying his creation.

## Collect and Learn

Cut out, fold in half, and save



JONATHAN

BIBLE  
CARD

23



### QUESTIONS

- A.** Jonathan was the eldest son of \_\_\_\_.
- B.** True or False? Jonathan's father threw a spear at Jonathan.
- C.** Whom did Jonathan especially love, and why?

98 C.E.

Last Bible  
book written

1 C.E.

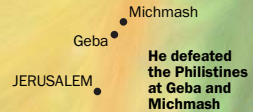
Born about  
1138 B.C.E.

4026 B.C.E.

Adam  
created



JONATHAN



**PROFILE** Though heir to the throne and likely 30 years older than David, Jonathan supported David as God's king-designate. (1 Samuel 23:15-18) He even risked his life to protect David from Saul, Jonathan's jealous father. (1 Samuel 20:1-42) Jonathan's example of humility teaches us to be happy for others who receive good things from God.

### ANSWERS

- A.** King Saul.—1 Samuel 14:47, 49.
- B.** True.—1 Samuel 20:33.
- C.** David. He saw David's courage and love for Jehovah as he fought Goliath.—1 Samuel 17:1-18:4.

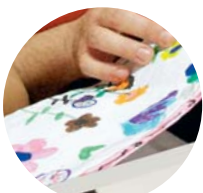
## Peoples and Lands

**7.** Our names are Pyae Sone Aung, aged 11, and Hsu Myat Yadanar Lwin, aged 7. We live in Myanmar. About how many of Jehovah's Witnesses live in Myanmar? Is it 3,600, 6,300, or 10,000?

**8.** Which dot shows where we live? Circle it, draw a dot where you live, and see how close you are to Myanmar.

## Children's Picture Search

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



# What Children Need From Parents

● Children today are exposed to an unprecedented amount of violence as well as morally degrading practices. Hence, as never before, our little ones need moral and spiritual guidance. Where can parents turn for help in training their children? Many successful parents have turned to the Bible, recognizing that its guidance on life and moral values remains unsurpassed.

In order to help parents teach their children, Jehovah's Witnesses have prepared the book *Learn From the Great Teacher*. The 48 chapters in the book include the following: "Obedience Protects You," "Why We Should Forgive," "Why We Should Not Lie," "Help to Overcome Our Fears," and "Why We Need to Work."

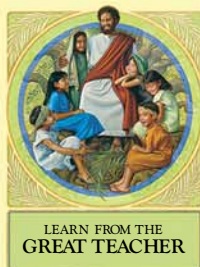
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