



Protect Yourself  
From Crime!



## Protect Yourself From Crime!

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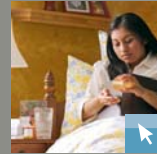
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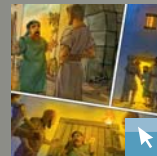
YOUNG PEOPLE ASK . . .

### **WHAT IF I HAVE A HEALTH PROBLEM? (Part 1)**

“By the time I was 11,” says Yeimy, “I needed a wheelchair to get around. I’m unable to perform simple tasks, such as lifting even light objects.” Read how Yeimy—and three other young people—cope with challenging health problems.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS/TEENAGERS)

## CHILDREN



Read illustrated Bible stories. Use the activity pages to help your children improve their knowledge of Bible characters and moral principles.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS/CHILDREN)

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## UNITED STATES

Over the past ten years, airport security screeners have confiscated some 50 million prohibited items, according to a U.S. Department of Homeland Security report. In 2011 alone, screeners prevented more than 1,200 firearms from being taken onto planes. Most of the owners said that they had simply forgotten they were carrying a gun.

## NORWAY

The Lutheran Church is no longer Norway's official state religion. In an unprecedented measure, the Norwegian Parliament voted to amend the constitution and loosen the bonds between Church and State.



## CZECH REPUBLIC

When surveyed, two thirds of Czech employees said that they feel obligated to answer work-related calls, e-mails, or text messages when they are not at work. More than a third consider it rude not to reply immediately.



## BRAZIL

Education authorities have begun to embed electronic chips into school uniforms in an effort to fight truancy. A parent gets one text message when sensors detect his or her child's arrival at school and a different message if the child is more than 20 minutes late.



## INDIA

Despite a surge of almost 50 percent in food production over the past 20 years and stockpiles of 71 million tons of rice and wheat, India still struggles to feed its people. Only about 40 percent of stockpiled grains reach Indian homes. Corruption and waste are part of the problem.





## How to Discipline Your Teenager



### THE CHALLENGE

The family rule is cell phones off by 9:00 p.m., but twice this week you caught your daughter texting past midnight. Your son's curfew is 10:00 p.m., but last night—once again—he came home after 11:00.

Your teenager *can* do better. But first you need to know why he or she seems to be flouting your rules. The good news? What appears to be outright defiance may be something far less serious.



### WHY IT HAPPENS

**Unclear boundaries.** Some teenagers ignore rules in order to see what they can get away with. For example, if a parent has said that a certain misdeed would result in a particular consequence, a teenager might test the boundaries to see if the parent will follow through. Are such teenagers becoming hardened rebels? Not necessarily. The fact is, teens are more likely to be lax about obeying rules when parents have not been consistent in enforcing consequences or when the boundaries have not been clearly defined.

**Rigidity.** Some parents try to control their teenager with an endless list of rules. When the teen disobeys, the parent gets angry and imposes even *more* rules. Often, however, that only makes matters worse. “The more you try to gain control, the more your teenager resists,” explains the book *Parent/Teen Breakthrough*, adding: “The control approach feels like trying to spread cold butter on soft bread: it just tears the bread apart, and the solution isn’t to spread harder.”

Proper discipline can help. Different from “punishment”—which means to make someone suffer—“discipline” basically means to teach. So how can you teach your teenager to comply with your rules?



## WHAT YOU CAN DO

**Be clear.** Teenagers need to know precisely what is expected of them and what the consequences of disobedience will be.—*Bible principle: Galatians 6:7.*

Suggestion: Write a list of your house rules. Then ask yourself: ‘Have I set too many? Have I set too few? Are some no longer needed? Should I make adjustments in accord with the level of responsibility that my teenager has demonstrated?’

**Be consistent.** Teenagers might become confused if they were let off the hook last week but then face consequences this week for a similar infraction.—*Bible principle: Matthew 5:37.*

Suggestion: Try to make the consequence more relevant to the “crime.” For example, if your teenager breaks a curfew, imposing an *earlier* curfew would be a related consequence.

**Be reasonable.** Show yourself to be a flexible parent by according your teenager more freedom as it is earned.—*Bible principle: Philippians 4:5.*

Suggestion: Sit down and discuss rules with your teenager. You might even have him or her weigh in on what consequences should be meted out for certain infractions. Teenagers are far more likely to comply with rules that they have had a hand in formulating.

**Build character.** Your goal is not just to get your teenager to obey orders but to help him develop a healthy conscience—an internal sense of right and wrong. (See the box “Build Positive Traits.”)—*Bible principle: 1 Peter 3:16.*

Suggestion: Look to the Bible for help. It is the best source of “discipline that gives insight,” and its wisdom can “give to the inexperienced ones shrewdness, to a young man [or woman] knowledge and thinking ability.”—Proverbs 1:1-4. ■

## KEY SCRIPTURES

“Whatever a man is sowing, this he will also reap.”  
—Galatians 6:7.

“Let your word Yes mean Yes, your No, No.”—Matthew 5:37.

“Let your reasonableness become known.”  
—Philippians 4:5.

“Hold a good conscience.”  
—1 Peter 3:16.

## BUILD POSITIVE TRAITS

Help your child think about the character traits for which he or she would like to be known. When faced with a challenge, young people can learn to make good decisions by asking themselves the following questions:

- What kind of person do I want to be?—Colossians 3:10.
- What would a person with a Christlike personality do when faced with this challenge?—Proverbs 10:1.

The Bible contains many true-life examples of men and women whose actions defined them as being either good or bad. (1 Corinthians 10:11; James 5:10, 11) Use these examples to help your son or daughter build positive character traits.

(See *Awake!* of October 2012)



## Protect Yourself From Crime!

“My friends usually walked me home after dark. But one evening I was so tired that I decided to call a taxi.

“The driver didn’t take me home. Instead, he drove me to an abandoned field, where he tried to rape me. I screamed with all my might, and he backed off. When he came toward me again, I screamed and ran.

“In the past I had often thought, ‘How can screaming help?’ But I’ve learned that it works!”—KARIN.\*

\* Names have been changed.

**I**N MANY lands, crime is an ever-present danger. For example, in one country a judge stated: “The sad reality is that it’s not if, but when, you will become a victim.” In other places, crime may be less common. Even so, it is unwise to become complacent, for complacency can lead to vulnerability.

Whether you live in a high-crime or a low-crime area, how can you make life safer for you and your loved ones? One practical step you can take is to heed this principle found in the Bible: “The wise see danger ahead and avoid it, but fools keep going and get into trouble.” (Proverbs 22:3, *New Century Version*) Indeed, police authorities advocate the taking of preventive measures—avoiding crime in the first place.

Physical injury and material loss are not the only consequences of crime. Many victims also suffer lasting mental and emotional harm. How important, then, that we do what we reasonably can to increase our safety! With that goal in mind, consider how you can take steps to protect yourself from four kinds of crime—robbery, sexual assault, cybercrime, and identity theft.



## ROBBERY

**What is it?** Robbery is theft using force or threats of force.

**How does it affect people?** After a string of armed robberies in Britain, a prosecutor observed that although the victims suffered no physical harm, all suffered mental anguish. “Several of them report ongoing anxiety and sleep difficulties,” she said, “and virtually all of them say that their daily working lives have been gravely affected by what they experienced.”

### What can you do?

- **Be aware.** Thieves are opportunists. They like to prey on the unsuspecting. So watch the people who are watching you, be aware of your surroundings, and do not dull your senses or impair your judgment by overdrinking or misusing drugs. “When a person is drinking alcohol or using drugs,” it is harder for him “to think clearly and evaluate a potentially dangerous situation,” says a health encyclopedia.

- **Protect your property.** Secure your vehicle and the doors and windows of your home. Never admit a stranger. Keep valuables out of sight; do not flaunt them. “Wisdom is with the modest ones,” says Proverbs 11:2. Thieves—including desperate children—often target people who parade expensive jewelry and electronics.

- **Seek advice.** “The way of the foolish one is right in his own eyes, but the one listening to counsel is wise.” (Proverbs 12:15) If you are traveling, heed the advice of informed locals, including the authorities. They can point out places to avoid and show you how to protect yourself and your belongings.



Thieves are opportunists; be aware of your surroundings



## SEXUAL ASSAULT

**What is it?** Sexual assault is not limited to rape but includes other forms of sexual contact involving threats, force, or intimidation.

**How does it affect people?** “The saddest thing is [that] it doesn’t just affect you while you’re being abused,” explains a rape victim. “It stays with you and haunts you for a long time and changes your outlook on life. It also changes the lives of your loved ones.” Of course, the victim is not responsible for the sexual assault. The aggressor bears that responsibility.

### What can you do?

- **Do not ignore your feelings.** “If a place or person makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy—leave,” advises a police department in North Carolina, U.S.A. “Don’t let anyone convince you to stay if your instincts are telling you otherwise.”

- **Act confidently; be focused.** Sexual predators hunt for the unsuspecting and vulnerable. So walk confidently and stay alert.

- **React quickly.** Scream. (Deuteronomy 22:25-27) Escape or fight back using the

element of surprise. And, if possible, run to a safe place and call the police.\*



## CYBERCRIME

**What is it?** Cybercrime refers to crime conducted online. It includes tax and welfare fraud, credit card fraud, and the nondelivery of purchases. It also includes scams, such as fraudulent investments and online auctions.

**How does it affect people?** Cybercrime costs the victims—and society as a whole—billions of dollars. Consider an example. Sandra received an e-mail that she assumed was from her bank asking her to update her online banking details. Minutes after sending her personal particulars, she was alarmed to see that \$4,000 (U.S.) had been transferred from her account to a foreign bank. Sandra quickly discovered that she had been scammed.

### What can you do?

- **Be wary!** Do not be fooled by professional-looking Web sites, and keep in mind that legitimate financial institutions will not ask you to e-mail highly confidential information. Before buying or investing online, ascertain the company's reputation. "Anyone inexperienced puts faith in every word, but the shrewd one considers his steps," says Proverbs 14: 15. And be cautious when dealing with companies located in foreign lands. If problems arise, it can be harder to resolve them.

- **Analyze a company and its policies.** Ask yourself: 'What is the company's physical address? Is the phone number

correct? Will my purchase involve hidden costs? When will my order be delivered? Can it be returned or refunded?'

- **Be suspicious if an offer looks too good to be true.** The greedy and those who want something for nothing are prime targets for online thieves. The bait may include big money for minimal work, a loan or credit card even though you may have a poor credit rating, or large returns on "low-risk" investments. "Take your time in evaluating the legitimacy of any investment offer," says the U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC). "The higher the promised return, the higher the risk. Don't let a promoter pressure you into committing to an investment before you are certain it's legitimate."



## IDENTITY THEFT

**What is it?** Identity theft involves illegally obtaining and using information about someone else's personal identity in order to commit fraud or some other crime.

**How does it affect people?** Thieves may use your identity to obtain credit cards or loans or to open new accounts. Then they rack up debts in your name! Even if you eventually get the debts canceled, your financial reputation may remain tarnished for years. "Having a zero credit rating affects everything—it's even worse than having money taken," says a victim.

### What can you do?

- **Protect sensitive information.** If you bank or shop online, change your passwords regularly, especially if you have used a public computer. And as mentioned earlier, be highly suspicious of e-mails requesting sensitive personal information.

\* Most victims of sexual assault know their attacker. For further information, see "How Can I Protect Myself From Sexual Predators?" on page 228 of the book *Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work*, Volume 1. This book is accessible online at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).







Identity thieves do not use computers only. They try any means they can to get their hands on important documents, such as bank statements, checkbooks, credit cards, and social security numbers. So keep these things safe, and shred *all* sensitive documents before discarding them. Of course, if you suspect that a document has been lost or stolen, report this *immediately*.

- **Keep track of your accounts.** “Awareness is an effective weapon against . . . identity theft,” states the FTC, adding: “Early detection of a potential identity theft can make a big difference.” So check your accounts regularly, and look out for unusual transactions. If possible, get a copy of your credit report from a reputable agency, and note the accounts and credit cards linked to your name.

Of course, in today’s world there are no guarantees. Even the most cautious individuals have become victims of crime. That said, we always benefit from adhering to the wisdom and understanding found in the Bible. “Do not leave it, and it will keep you. Love it, and it will safeguard you.” (Proverbs 4:6) Better still, the Bible promises an end to crime.

## Soon, an End to Crime

Why can we be confident that God will do away with crime? Consider the following:

God promises a peaceful new world, where crime will not exist

- **God wants to end crime.** “I, Jehovah, am loving justice, hating robbery along with unrighteousness.”—Isaiah 61:8.

- **He has the power to stop crime.** “He is lifted high with power. And He is right and fair and good.”—Job 37:23, *New Life Version*.

- **He has promised to destroy the wicked and preserve the righteous.** “Evildoers themselves will be cut off.” “The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it.”—Psalm 37:9, 29.

- **He has promised his loyal ones a peaceful new world.** “The meek ones themselves will possess the earth, and they will indeed find their exquisite delight in the abundance of peace.”—Psalm 37:11.

Do those words touch your heart? If so, please take the time to examine the Bible to learn more about God’s purpose for mankind. No other book is so rich in practical wisdom. And no other book gives us a genuine hope for a crime-free tomorrow.\* ■

\* More information on important Bible teachings can be found in the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* Get a free copy from Jehovah’s Witnesses, or read it online at [www.jw.org](http://www.jw.org).



## A Jewish Woman Explains Why She Reexamined Her Faith

Racquel Hall was born to a Jewish-Israeli mother and an Austrian father who had converted to Judaism. Her maternal grandparents were Zionists who immigrated to Israel in 1948, the year it became an independent State. *Awake!* asked Racquel what made her look more closely at her Jewish faith.

### Tell us about your background.

I was born in 1979 in the United States. When I was three, my parents divorced. Mother raised me according to Jewish traditions and sent me to yeshivas, or Jewish schools. When I was seven, we moved to Israel for a year, and I attended school in a work community called a kibbutz. Then Mother and I moved to Mexico.

Although there was not a synagogue in the area, I kept up my Jewish customs. I would light candles for the Sabbath, read our Torah, and pray with the aid of a siddur, or prayer book. At school, I often told my classmates that my religion was *the* original one. I had never read what is commonly called the New Testament, which focuses on the ministry and teachings of Jesus Christ. In fact, Mother warned me not

to, for fear of my becoming polluted by its teachings.

### Why did you decide to read the New Testament?

Upon turning 17, I moved back to the United States to finish my secular education. There, an acquaintance who said that he was a Christian told me that my life would be incomplete without Jesus.

"People who believe in Jesus are lost," I replied.

"Have you even read the New Testament?" he asked.

"No," I answered.

"In that case," he said, "aren't you being ignorant, expressing an opinion on something you know nothing about?"

His words cut deeply, for I had always considered it foolish to give opinions blindly. Chastened, I took his Bible home and began to read the New Testament.

### How were you affected by what you read?

To my surprise, I discovered that the New Testament writers were Jewish. Also, the more I read, the more I saw Jesus as a kind, humble Jew who wanted to help people, not exploit them. I even went to the library and borrowed books about him. None of these, however, convinced me that he was the Messiah. Some even referred to him as God—a view that made no sense to me. After all, whom did Jesus pray to—himself? What is more, Jesus died. Yet, the Bible says of God: “You do not die.”<sup>1</sup>

### How did you deal with those issues?

Truth does not contradict itself, and I was determined to find the truth. So I prayed to God sincerely and tearfully—for the first time without the aid of my siddur. No sooner had I finished than there was a knock on the door. It was two of Jehovah’s Witnesses. They gave me one of their Bible study aids. This publication, along with the subse-

quent discussions that I had with the Witnesses, convinced me that their beliefs are based on the Bible. For example, the Witnesses recognize Jesus, not as part of a Trinity, but as “the Son of God”<sup>2</sup> and “the beginning of the creation of God.”<sup>3</sup>

Soon thereafter, I returned to Mexico, where I continued to study Messianic prophecies with the Witnesses. I was amazed at how many prophecies there are! Still, I remained somewhat skeptical. I wondered: ‘Was Jesus the *only* one who fit the profile?’ and ‘What if he was simply a clever actor playing out the role?’

### What was your turning point?

The Witnesses showed me prophecies that no impostor could act out. For example, more than 700 years in advance, the prophet Micah said that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem, Judea.<sup>4</sup> Who can control where he is born? Isaiah wrote that the Messiah would be killed as a despised criminal, yet he would be buried with the rich class.<sup>5</sup> All these predictions were fulfilled in Jesus.

The final piece of evidence involved Jesus’ ancestry. The Bible said that the Messiah would be a descendant of King David.<sup>6</sup> Because the an-

cient Jews kept public and private genealogical records, if Jesus had not been of David’s family line, his enemies would have shouted this from the rooftops! But they could not, for Jesus’ link to David was incontestable. Crowds even addressed him as “the Son of David.”<sup>7</sup>

In 70 C.E.—37 years after Jesus died—Roman armies devastated Jerusalem, and the genealogical records were either lost or destroyed. Thus, to be identified genealogically, the Messiah *had* to appear before 70 C.E.

### How did this realization affect you?

At Deuteronomy 18:18, 19, it was foretold that God would raise up in Israel a prophet like Moses. Anyone “who will not listen to my words that he will speak in my name, I shall myself require an account from him,” God said. My in-depth study of the *whole* Bible convinced me that Jesus of Nazareth was that prophet. ■

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1. Habakkuk 1:12.

2. John 1:34.

3. Revelation 3:14, *King James Version*.

4. Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1.

5. Isaiah 53:3, 7, 9; Mark 15:43, 46.

6. Isaiah 9:6, 7; Luke 1:30-32.

Matthew chapter 1 records Jesus’ paternal ancestry, and Luke chapter 3, his maternal ancestry.

7. Matthew 21:9.



Cyrus' tomb

# CYRUS THE GREAT

According to our modern calendar, on the night of October 5/6, 539 B.C.E., the seemingly impossible happened to the city of Babylon, capital of the Babylonian Empire. On that fateful night, the city was overthrown by an army of Medes and Persians, commanded by Persian King Cyrus, also known as Cyrus the Great. His strategy was brilliant.

## QUICK FACTS

- Cyrus, it is believed, was born about 600 B.C.E. He died in battle in about 530 B.C.E.
- Cyrus' tomb can still be seen in Pasargadae, a city of ancient Persia founded by Cyrus and now an archaeological site in Iran.
- The Cyrus Cylinder, a nine-inch-long (23 cm) clay document, commemorates Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and the liberation of exiles, including Jews. The cylinder has been called "one of the most important discoveries in biblical archaeology."
- The Persian people still hold Cyrus in high esteem.

## HOW CYRUS CAPTURED BABYLON

"When Cyrus set his sights on Babylon it was already the most venerable of Middle Eastern cities—perhaps of all cities in the world," states the book *Ancient World Leaders—Cyrus the Great*. Babylon sat on the Euphrates River, which also filled moats surrounding the city's massive walls—a combination of defenses that made the city seem impregnable.

Upstream from Babylon, Cyrus' men diverted the Euphrates, causing the water level in the city to fall. The soldiers then waded into the river to the city gates, which had been left open, and took Babylon with little resistance. According to Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon, the Babylonians felt so secure behind their city's defenses that on the night of the attack, many were feasting, including the king! (See the box "The Handwriting Is on the Wall.") Moreover, Cyrus' conquest fulfilled some amazing Bible prophecies.

Tomb: © Robert Harding Picture Library/SuperStock;  
cylinder: © The Trustees of the British Museum



The Cyrus Cylinder



# Cyrus' conquest of Babylon was foretold in the Bible

## AMAZING PREDICTIONS

The prophecies of Isaiah are especially noteworthy because they were recorded about 200 years in advance—perhaps 150 years before Cyrus was even born! Consider the following:

- A man named Cyrus would conquer Babylon and free the Jews.—Isaiah 44:28; 45:1.
- The Euphrates River would dry up, opening the way for Cyrus' army.—Isaiah 44:27.
- The city gates would be left open.—Isaiah 45:1.
- Babylon's military would 'cease to fight.'—Jeremiah 51:30; Isaiah 13:1, 7.

## A MIRACULOUS DELIVERANCE

Earlier, in 607 B.C.E., Babylonian armies razed Jerusalem and led most of the survivors into exile. How long would the Jews be held? God said: "When seventy years have been fulfilled I shall call to account against the king of Babylon and against that nation . . . and I will make it desolate wastes to time indefinite."—Jeremiah 25:12.

As mentioned, Cyrus captured Babylon in 539 B.C.E. Soon thereafter, he released the Jews, who began to arrive in their homeland in 537 B.C.E.—exactly 70 years after their deportation. (Ezra 1:1-4) As for Babylon, it eventually became "desolate wastes"—again confirming the accuracy of Bible prophecy.

## WHY SHOULD YOU CARE?

Consider this: The Bible foretold (1) the 70-year exile of the Jews, (2) Cyrus' conquest of Babylon and key aspects of his strategy, and (3) the ultimate desolation of Babylon. Such advance knowledge could not come from mere men! A more reasonable conclusion is this: "Prophecy was at no time brought by man's will, but men spoke from God." (2 Peter 1:21) Surely, the Bible merits our consideration. ■

### "THE HANDWRITING IS ON THE WALL"

On the night of Cyrus' surprise attack, Babylonian King Belshazzar was feasting with "a thousand of his grandees" when a hand miraculously appeared. Before the eyes of all, the hand wrote "MENE, MENE, TEKEL and PAR-SIN" on the plaster of the palace wall.\*—Daniel 5:1, 5, 25.

The prophet Daniel interpreted the riddle to terrified Belshazzar. In brief, Daniel told the king that his kingdom was "finished," that he had been "weighed in the balances" and found wanting, and that Babylon had been "given to the Medes and the Persians." (Daniel 5:26-28) Every word came true. Moreover, to this day in some languages, the saying "The handwriting is on the wall" means that catastrophe, or failure, is imminent.

\* The terms refer to monetary weight. For a detailed explanation, see chapter 7 of the book *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!* published by Jehovah's Witnesses.





# THE NATURE OF GOD

## What kind of body does God have?

*“God is a Spirit.”*

—John 4:24.

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** The Bible describes God as a spirit being. (2 Corinthians 3:17) As such, he is far superior to us and beyond our physical senses. He is “the King of eternity, incorruptible, invisible,” says 1 Timothy 1:17. The Bible also states: “At no time has anyone beheld God.”—1 John 4:12.

Our Creator is so superior to us that we cannot even begin to imagine what he looks like. “To whom can you people liken God, and what likeness can you put alongside him?” says Isaiah 40:18. Even the awe-inspiring physical heavens pale in comparison with the Almighty.—Isaiah 40:22, 26.

There are, however, intelligent creatures who can see God and even speak with him face-to-face. How so? Because they too are spirits, and they live in heaven. (1 Kings 22:21; Hebrews 1:7) Concerning these superhuman creatures, who are also called angels, Jesus Christ said: “[They] always behold the face of my Father who is in heaven.”—Matthew 18:10.



## Is God omnipresent?

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** The Bible does not teach that God is omnipresent, or present everywhere at all times, like some impersonal force. Rather, as Jesus' words found at Matthew 6:9 and 18:10 show, God is a person—a "Father"—and he resides in heaven, his "established *place* of dwelling."—1 Kings 8:43.

Toward the end of his life, Jesus said: "I am leaving the world and am going my way to the Father." (John 16:28) After his death in the flesh and resurrection as a spirit, Christ ascended "into heaven itself, now to appear before *the person of God*."—Hebrews 9:24.

These facts about God matter. Why? For one thing, because God is a person, we can learn about him and draw close to him. (James 4:8) For another, the truth about God protects us from false worship, such as the worship of lifeless images and objects. "Little children, guard yourselves from idols," says 1 John 5:21.

*"You must pray, then, this way: 'Our Father in the heavens.'"*—Matthew 6:9.

## How were humans formed in God's image?

**WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS** As humans, we have the potential to reflect God's personality traits, such as his love, justice, and wisdom. In fact, the Bible says: "Become imitators of God, as beloved children, and go on walking in love."—Ephesians 5:1, 2.

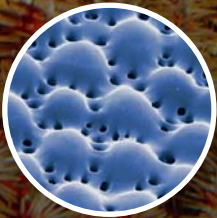
God also made us free moral agents, which enables us to choose right over wrong and to express love for others in a variety of ways. (1 Corinthians 13:4-7) We also have the ability to be creative, to enjoy beauty, and to stand in awe at the amazing world around us. Above all, we have received a spiritual capacity, a natural desire to learn about our Creator and his will for us.—Matthew 5:3.

**How Bible truth can help you.** The more we learn about God and imitate him, the more we live the way he intended us to live. As a result, we experience more joy in life, along with genuine satisfaction, inner peace, and contentment. (Isaiah 48:17, 18) Yes, God knows that his endearing qualities resonate in the human heart, drawing honesthearted people to him and setting them on the path to everlasting life.—John 6:44; 17:3. ■

*"God proceeded to create the man in his image, in God's image he created him; male and female he created them."*—Genesis 1:27.



# The “Seeing” Skeleton of the Brittle Star



Crystalline bumps on the skeleton serve as high-quality microlenses

Brittle star: © Fotosearch.com; Inset: Courtesy Professor Joanna Aizenberg, Harvard

THE reef-dwelling brittle star has an amazing form of armor on its upper surface. This part of its skeleton is studded with microscopic lenses that turn the animal's armor into a compound eye.

**Consider:** When scientists examined the skeletal plates of the brittle star, they saw “an unusual pattern of densely packed, crystal-clear bumps, each thinner than a human hair,” says the magazine *Natural History*. These crystalline bumps, made of calcium carbonate (calcite), proved to be high-quality microlenses that focus light onto what seem to be photosensitive nerves just below the plates. Moreover, the lenses have the exact shape needed to produce the desired image.

According to chemist Joanna Aizenberg, the brittle star's dual-purpose shell “demonstrates an important principle: in biology, materials are often optimized for multiple functions.”

Taking a lesson from the biology of the brittle star, researchers have devised a simple, low-cost method of producing arrays of microlenses made of calcium carbonate. The many applications of these arrays include telecommunications, where they are used to conduct light signals through optical fibers.

**What do you think?** Did the “seeing” skeleton of the brittle star come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

