

Awake!

No. 1 2016



Attitude

Makes a Difference!



3 COVER SUBJECT

Attitude Makes a Difference!

Can a person's attitude affect how successfully he or she will deal with challenges?

What would you say?

- Yes
- No
- It depends

The Bible says: “If you become discouraged in the day of distress, your strength will be meager.”

—Proverbs 24:10.

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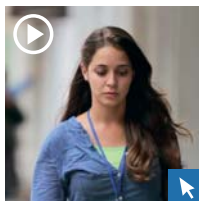
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Vol. 97, No. 1 / Bimonthly / ENGLISH

Produced Each Issue: 57,761,000. Available in 103 Languages

This publication is not for sale. It is provided as part of a worldwide Bible educational work supported by voluntary donations. Unless otherwise indicated, Scripture quotations are from the modern-language *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*.

Awake! (ISSN 0005-237X) Issue 1 February 2016 is published bimonthly by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.; L. Weaver, Jr., President; G. F. Simonis, Secretary-Treasurer; 1000 Red Mills Road, Walkkill, NY 12589-3299, and by Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Canada, PO Box 4100, Georgetown, ON L7G 4Y4. Periodicals Postage Paid at Brooklyn, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to **Awake!** 1000 Red Mills Road, **Walkkill, NY 12589-3299**.
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COVER SUBJECT

Attitude Makes a Difference!

Which of the following do you think has the biggest effect on your happiness?

- ☐ your circumstances
- ☐ your genes
- ☐ your attitude

SOME would choose “circumstances,” perhaps saying, “I would be happy . . .

“if only I had more money”

“if only I had a great marriage”

“if only I had better health”

In reality, though, attitude often trumps circumstances and genes when it comes to happiness. And that is good news. Why? Because unlike your circumstances or your genes—over which you have little or no control—you can control your attitude.

“GOOD MEDICINE”

A Bible proverb states: “A joyful heart is good medicine, but a crushed spirit saps one’s strength.” (Proverbs 17:22) In other words, your attitude makes a difference!

It can affect whether you attain a goal or give up or whether a tragic event brings out the best in you or the worst.

Some people might be skeptical of that idea. They might reason:

- ‘*Why hide my hardships behind a mask of optimism?*’
- ‘*No amount of positive thinking will change my situation.*’
- ‘*I would rather be a realist than a dreamer.*’

Those thoughts might seem valid. Still, there are benefits to adopting a positive outlook. To illustrate, consider the following scenarios.

At their place of employment, **Alex** and **Brian** each work hard on separate projects. After analyzing their work, the supervisor points out key errors in each project.



Alex: “I put so much time and effort into this project, and I still didn’t get it right! I’ll never succeed at this job. No matter how hard I work, it’s never good enough. Why do I even try?”



Brian: “My boss highlighted aspects of my work that he liked, but I made a few fundamental mistakes. I’ve learned some valuable lessons that will help me do better next time.”

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Six months from now, which one will be a more capable employee—Alex or Brian?
- If you were an employer, which of those two men would you be more likely to hire or keep on your payroll?
- When *you* face disappointment, which of those two men do *you* react like?

Andrea and **Brittney** suffer from bouts of loneliness. Each of them has a different way of coping with the situation.



Andrea focuses most of her attention on herself. She refuses to do things for others unless they do things for her first. She reasons, ‘Why should I waste my time on people who give me nothing in return?’



Brittney makes a concerted effort to be kind to people and to do things for others, whether they seem appreciative or not. She lives by the Golden Rule—to treat others as she would like to be treated. (Luke 6:31) For Brittney, doing good is its own reward.

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

- Which of these two women would *you* rather have as a friend?
- Which one is more likely to feel satisfied with her relationships?
- If you suffer from bouts of loneliness, is your approach more like Andrea’s or more like Brittney’s?

You probably know people who fit the profile of Brian and Brittney. You might even feel that *you* are like them. If so, undoubtedly you can see that your attitude can make a difference in your life. On the other hand, what if you are more like Alex or Andrea? Consider three ways the Bible can help you to adopt a more positive view of life’s struggles.

1

AVOID PESSIMISM



THE BIBLE SAYS: “If you become discouraged in the day of distress, your strength will be meager.”—Proverbs 24:10.

WHAT IT MEANS: Pessimism will sap you of the strength you need to improve your situation or to help you deal with it.

EXAMPLE: Juliza’s childhood was anything but happy. Her father was an alcoholic, and her family was poor. They moved from place to place. At first, Juliza was pessimistic about her lot in life. But that changed. What helped? “Even before my parents overcame their difficulties,” Juliza says, “the Bible helped me to improve my outlook. And to this day, thoughts from

the Bible keep my thinking from spiraling downward. Now, when people display traits I don’t like, I try to understand why they behave the way they do.”

As Juliza learned, the Bible is a book of sound principles. Its advice can help you to cope with negative circumstances. For example, Ephesians 4:23 says: “Continue to be made new in your dominant mental attitude.”

As that verse implies, your outlook is not set in stone. You *can* “be made new” in your thinking. However, making such a change is an ongoing process. That is why the verse says that we should “*continue* to be made new.”

2

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE



THE BIBLE SAYS: “All the days of the afflicted one are bad, but the one with a cheerful heart has a continual feast.”—Proverbs 15:15.

WHAT IT MEANS: If you see everything negatively, you will feel “afflicted” and every day will appear “bad,” or gloomy. But if you focus on positive things, you will have “a cheerful heart” and even feel joyful. The choice is yours.

EXAMPLE: After several surgeries to remove a brain tumor, Yanko had physical limitations that affected his movement and speech. Feeling that these would stop him from reaching his goals, Yanko was deeply discouraged for years. Then he changed. How? “Instead of focusing on my limita-

tions,” he says, “I learned to occupy my mind with encouraging subjects.”

One way Yanko does this is by reading passages from the Bible. “This keeps my thoughts positive,” he says. “I haven’t totally put aside my long-term goals, but I’m focusing on the smaller goals that I can reach now. When discouraging thoughts creep into my mind, I reflect on the many reasons I have to be happy.”

Like Yanko, you can confront your pessimistic thoughts and replace them with something positive. If you are dealing with negative circumstances—perhaps a health problem, as was the case with Yanko—ask yourself: ‘Is the situation really hopeless? Have I reached a dead end, or is this merely a road-block?’ Learn to keep negative thoughts out by concentrating on something constructive.



THE BIBLE SAYS: “There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.”
—Acts 20:35.

WHAT IT MEANS: Unselfish giving brings deep satisfaction to the giver. Why? Because we were created to do more than simply look after our own needs. (Philippians 2:3, 4; 1 John 4:11) Experiencing the joy of giving can do much to help us cope with negative circumstances in life.

EXAMPLE: Josué suffers from spina bifida, a severe defect in his spinal column. He is often racked with pain. But Josué enjoys a productive life helping others. “Rather than say, ‘I can’t do that,’” says Josué, “I enjoy thinking of practical ways to help people with their daily needs. I find ways to do things for others, and this fills my life with happiness.”



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Look for opportunities to be self-sacrificing. For example, can you prepare a meal for a sick neighbor? Do you know elderly ones who need help with tasks around the home?

Care for your attitude in the same way you would cultivate a garden. Root out the poisonous weeds of pessimism and negativity. Sow seeds of realistic optimism, and fertilize your life with actions that produce positive emotions. You

will reap an emotional crop that will make your life much more rewarding. And it will confirm the fact that attitude makes a difference! ■

For the sake of their health, some people learn to say no to certain foods; you can do the same with negative attitudes

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

You see us in our public ministry. You may have read about us in news reports or heard things about us from others. But how much do you really know about Jehovah's Witnesses?



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Check each statement *true* or *false*.

TRUE FALSE

- ☐ ☐ **1** Jehovah's Witnesses are Christians.
- ☐ ☐ **2** Jehovah's Witnesses are creationists.
- ☐ ☐ **3** Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in doctors.
- ☐ ☐ **4** Jehovah's Witnesses accept the entire Bible.

TRUE FALSE

- ☐ ☐ **5** Jehovah's Witnesses use only their own Bible translation.
- ☐ ☐ **6** Jehovah's Witnesses changed their Bible to fit their beliefs.
- ☐ ☐ **7** Jehovah's Witnesses shun community involvement.
- ☐ ☐ **8** Jehovah's Witnesses look down on people of other religions.

For the answers, see the following pages.

1



TRUE. We try to follow closely the teachings and behavior of Jesus Christ. (1 Peter 2:21) However, in a number of ways, we differ from other religious groups that are called Christian. For example, we have found that the Bible teaches that Jesus is the Son of God; he is not part of a Trinity. (Mark 12:29) We do not believe that the soul is immortal or that there is any basis in Scripture for saying that God tortures people in an everlasting hell. Nor do we believe that those who take the lead in religious activities should have titles that elevate them above others.—Ecclesiastes 9:5; Ezekiel 18:4; Matthew 23:8-10.

2



FALSE. We believe that God created everything. But we do not agree with many who believe in creationism. Why not? Because a number of creationists' ideas conflict with the Bible. For example, some assert that the six days of creation were literal 24-hour days. But the word "day" in the Bible can refer to a considerable length of time. (Genesis 2:4; Psalm 90:4) Then, too, some creationists teach that the earth is just a few thousand years old. However, the Bible indicates that the earth and the universe existed long *before* the six days of creation.¹—Genesis 1:1.

3



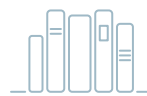
FALSE. We do accept medical treatment. In fact, some of us are physicians, as was the first-century Christian named Luke. (Colossians 4:14) However, we reject any treatment that conflicts with Bible principles. For example, we do not accept blood transfusions, because the Bible forbids taking in blood.—Acts 15:20, 28, 29.

Even then, we seek the best possible medical care for ourselves and our families. In fact, blood conservation treatments that were developed to help Witness patients are now being used to benefit all in the community. In many countries, any patient can now choose to avoid blood-transfusion risks, such as blood-borne diseases, immune-system reactions, and human errors.

4



TRUE. We believe that the entire Bible is "inspired of God and beneficial." (2 Timothy 3:16) That includes both the Old Testament and the New Testament, as they are commonly called. Generally, we refer to these sections of the Bible as the Hebrew Scriptures and the Christian Greek Scriptures. In this way, we avoid giving the impression that some parts of the Bible are outdated or irrelevant.



5

FALSE. We use many translations in our study of the Bible. In languages in which it is available, though, we especially appreciate the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* for its use of God's name, for its accuracy, and for its clarity. Consider the use of God's name, Jehovah. In the introduction of one Bible translation, there is a list of the names of 79 people who in some way contributed to the production of the translation. Yet, this same Bible omits the name of the very Author—Jehovah God! In contrast, the *New World Translation* restores the divine name in the thousands of places where it existed in the original text.²



6

FALSE. When we have discovered that our beliefs were not completely in line with the Bible, we have adjusted our understanding. Long before we started producing the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* in 1950, we used available translations and formed our beliefs accordingly.



7

FALSE. Our ministry benefits many in the community. We have helped many people to overcome harmful addictions, such as the abuse of drugs and alcohol. Our literacy classes help thousands around the world to learn to read and write. We also help when disaster strikes by providing practical relief assistance to both Witnesses and non-Witnesses. We try to give the emotional and spiritual support that victims sorely need at such times.³



8

FALSE. We follow the Bible's advice to "respect everyone"—regardless of their religious beliefs. (1 Peter 2:17, *Today's English Version*) For example, though in some countries there are hundreds of thousands of us, we do not try to pressure politicians or lawmakers into restricting or banning the work of other religious groups. Nor do we campaign to have laws passed that would impose our moral and religious convictions on the community. Instead, we extend to others the same tolerance that we appreciate receiving from them.—Matthew 7:12.

This article contains information selected from our official website, jw.org. To learn more, go to ABOUT US > FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS. ■

1. For that reason, we have no objection—as do some creationists—to credible scientific research that indicates the earth may be billions of years old.

2. The *New World Translation* has another distinction: It is distributed without charge. As a result, millions are able to read the Bible in their mother tongue. The *New World Translation* is now available in some 130 languages. You can even read it online at www.jw.org.

3. One of the ways we use donations is in providing relief for victims of disasters. (Acts 11:27-30) Since the work is performed by unpaid volunteers, the funds that are allocated go toward actual relief, not administrative salaries.



How to Make Real Friends



THE CHALLENGE

Thanks to technology, you can connect with more people—and do so more conveniently—than at any other time in history. Still, the relationships you have might seem rather shallow. One young man put it this way: “I feel as if my friendships could just fizzle out. On the other hand, my dad has friends he’s been close to for decades!”

Why is it such a challenge these days to enjoy enduring and meaningful friendships?



WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW

Technology may be partly to blame. Texting, social networking, and other social media have made it seem possible to maintain a friendship without being in someone’s presence. Meaningful conversations have been replaced by rapid-fire texts and tweets. “People are having fewer face-to-face interactions,” says the book *Artificial Maturity*. “Students spend more time in front of a screen and less time with each other.”

In some cases, technology can make friendships seem closer than they really are. “Recently,” says 22-year-old Brian,* “I realized that by texting my friends to see how they were, I was doing a lot of the work. Then I stopped texting them to see how many of *them* would take the initiative to contact *me*. Honestly, it’s been very few. Apparently, some friends weren’t as close as I thought.”

But cannot texting and social media help you keep in touch with people and thereby *strengthen* your friendships? Yes—especially if you also have an *offline* relationship with those people. Often, however, social media merely builds bridges to others without drawing you any closer to them.

* Some names in this article have been changed.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Define real friendship. The Bible describes a friend as someone who “sticks closer than a brother.” (Proverbs 18:24) Is that the kind of friend you want? Is that the kind of friend you *are*? To help you answer those questions, write down three qualities that you would want a friend to have. Then write down three qualities that *you* bring to a friendship. Ask yourself: ‘Which of my online contacts display the qualities that I value in a friend? Which qualities would those friends say *I* bring to the friendship?’
—*Bible principle: Philippians 2:4.*

Establish priorities. Online friendships are often based on a shared interest, such as a hobby. However, having common *values* is more important than having similar *interests*. “I may not have a lot of friends,” says 21-year-old Leanne, “but the ones I do have make me want to be a better person.”—*Bible principle: Proverbs 13:20.*

Get out and meet people. There is nothing quite the same as face-to-face conversation, where you and another person can observe the subtle nuances of voice tone, facial expression, and body language.—*Bible principle: 1 Thessalonians 2:17.*

Write a letter. Old-fashioned as it may seem, letter writing sends the message that you care enough about someone to give him or her your *undivided attention*. That kind of focus is rare in today’s multitasking world. For example, in her book *Alone Together*, Sherry Turkle writes of one young man who says he cannot remember ever receiving a personal letter in his life. Referring to the time when people wrote letters, he says: “I miss those days even though I wasn’t alive.” Why not make use of this ‘old technology’ to make friends?

The bottom line: Real friendship involves more than just keeping in touch. It requires that you *and* your friend display love, empathy, patience, and forgiveness. Those qualities ultimately make a friendship rewarding. But they are difficult to display when you only talk online. ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

“Look out not only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others.”
—Philippians 2:4.

“The one walking with the wise will become wise.”—Proverbs 13:20.

“We made every effort to see you in person.”—1 Thessalonians 2:17.



ALISABEL

“All of us need someone to talk to when we’re feeling down. Friends are the ones who really understand us and know how to make us feel better. They not only can share our happiness but can also give us a hand when we fall.”



JORDAN

“When I was younger, I was very reserved and didn’t exert myself to make friends. That was the saddest period of my life. I finally broke out of that shell. It’s important to have friends who can help you through the tough times and share the good times with you.”



A Visit to Liechtenstein



IT IS one of the smallest countries in the world, situated in the Alps between Switzerland and Austria. Over the centuries Celts, Rhaetians, Romans, and Alemanni have all lived in this region. Today about two thirds of Liechtenstein's population are descendants of the Alemanni tribe, which settled in this region about 1,500 years ago.

German is the official language of Liechtenstein, although local dialects vary from village to village. Two of Liechtenstein's typical dishes are *Tüarka-Rebel*, a specialty made of corn, and *Käsknöpfle*, a cheesy pasta dish.

Journeying through the country offers visitors views of snow-covered mountains, green valleys, vineyards, and a variety of vegetation. For example, in this alpine microstate can be found nearly 50 types of wild orchids. Liechtenstein also has museums, theaters, and wineries. Thus, in summer and winter alike, tourists come to visit.



Colorful ethnic clothing

Wild orchids



Käsknöpfle



The Alte Rheinbrücke wooden bridge is more than a hundred years old

Jehovah's Witnesses have been active in Liechtenstein since the 1920's. Currently, there are about 90 of them in the country, teaching the Bible's message to locals and visitors. ■

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Which of these describes Liechtenstein?

- A. One of two countries in the world that are completely surrounded by landlocked states.
- B. Home to more than 50 different types of mammals.
- C. Home to about 1,600 different plant species.
- D. A country without an army.

Answer: All four statements are true.

FAST FACTS

Population: 37,000

Capital: Vaduz

Official language: German

Religion: Primarily Roman Catholic

The book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* is published by Jehovah's Witnesses in German, the official language of Liechtenstein, and is available online at www.jw.org.





HEAVEN

Heaven is a subject of both wild speculation and heated controversy. Yet, what the Bible teaches about it is far different from what many have been taught.

What is heaven?

WHAT SOME PEOPLE SAY There are diverse beliefs about heaven and its purpose. For example:

- Many professed Christians would agree with the *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, which calls heaven “the ultimate home of the blessed who die in the Lord.”
- Judaism focuses more on the present life than on the afterlife, says Rabbi Bentzion Kravitz. But he suggests that “in heaven the soul experiences the greatest possible pleasure—a greater perception and feeling of closeness to God than it had previously.” Kravitz acknowledges, however, that “although Judaism believes in heaven, the Torah speaks very little about it.”
- Hindus and Buddhists believe that heaven exists on many spiritual levels. It is a temporary stop, after which a person is either reborn on earth or transcends to Nirvana or Buddhahood—a state that is higher than heaven.
- Some reject any religious notion of heaven and say that the whole idea is childish nonsense.

WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES In the Bible, the word “heaven” has more than one meaning. For example:

- Genesis 1:20 describes the creation of birds that “fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens.” In this case, the word “heavens” refers to our atmosphere, the observable sky.
- Isaiah 13:10 mentions “the stars of the heavens and their constellations”—what we would call outer space.
- The Bible speaks of God’s “dwelling place in the heavens” and says that there are “angels in heaven.” (1 Kings 8:30; Matthew 18:10) Note that the words “heavens” and “heaven” are not simply metaphors, but describe an actual place of residence.*

* Of course, God’s nature is spiritual, not physical. (John 4:24) Hence, his dwelling place must be a spiritual realm separate from our physical or tangible universe.

“Look down from heaven and see from your lofty abode of holiness and glory.”—Isaiah 63:15.



Do all good people go to heaven when they die?

The Bible does not teach that the earth is merely a temporary home where we await death and a subsequent afterlife in heaven. The Bible makes clear that death was never a part of God's original purpose for humans. Consider:

- God told the first human couple: “Be fruitful and become many, *fill the earth*.” (Genesis 1:28) Earth was to be man's permanent home, where he could live forever. Death would come to the first man and woman only if they disobeyed God. Sadly, they chose to disobey. —Genesis 2:17; 3:6.
- The disobedience of that first man resulted in death, not only for himself and his wife but also for their offspring. (Romans 5:12) Did that leave the human race without hope?
- The Bible says that “there are new heavens *and a new earth* that we are awaiting according to his promise.”* (2 Peter 3:13) By means of his Kingdom, God will restore our earth to the condition he intended for it, “and death will

be no more.” (Revelation 21:3, 4) Is that speaking of life in heaven or on earth? For something to “be no more,” it had to be there in the first place. But death has never existed in heaven. Logically, then, that verse refers to what will happen *on earth*, where we were meant to live and where we yearn to be with our loved ones. The Bible also reveals that the dead will be brought back to life and reunited with their loved ones. —John 5:28, 29.

Many people have been thrilled to learn what the Bible really teaches about heaven. For example, a former Catholic named George says: “I found the Bible teaching about living forever on earth to be comforting. It made more sense than going to heaven.”* ■

* The Bible teaches that under God's Kingdom, only a limited number of humans—144,000—are selected to rule in heaven with Jesus.—1 Peter 1:3, 4; Revelation 14:1.

“As for the heavens, they belong to Jehovah, but the earth he has given to the sons of men.”—Psalm 115:16.

* The term “new earth” is not a literal new planet; rather, it is a symbolic term referring to a society of people living on the earth who receive God's approval.—Psalm 66:4.



Heaven is a topic of much speculation



The Color-Changing Ability of the Cuttlefish

CUTTLEFISH can change their color and camouflage themselves, becoming almost invisible to the human eye. According to one report, cuttlefish “are known to have a diverse range of body patterns and they can switch between them almost instantaneously.” How do cuttlefish do it?

Consider: The cuttlefish changes color by using the chromatophore, a special kind of cell found under its skin. Chromatophores contain sacs that are full of colored pigment and that are surrounded by tiny muscles. When the cuttlefish needs to camouflage itself, its brain sends a signal to contract the muscles around the sacs. Then the sacs and the pigment within them expand, and the cuttlefish quickly changes its color and pattern. The cuttlefish may use this skill not only for camouflage but also to impress potential mates and perhaps communicate.

Engineers at the University of Bristol, England, built an artificial cuttlefish skin. They sandwiched disks of black rubber between small devices that function like cuttlefish muscles. When the researchers applied electricity to the skin, the devices flattened and expanded the black disks, darkening and changing the color of the artificial skin.

Research on cuttlefish muscles—“the soft structures that nature is so good at making,” according to engineer Jonathan Rossiter—could lead to clothing that changes color in a fraction of a second. Rossiter says that people might wear cuttlefish-inspired clothes for camouflage—or simply for fashion.

What do you think? Did the ability of cuttlefish to change color come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■

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